

INSPECTION REPORT

DALTON SCHOOL J I & N

Dalton, Huddersfield

LEA area: Kirklees

Unique reference number: 131849

Headteacher: Mrs Denise Bullock

Reporting inspector: Mrs Sue Chesters
23196

Dates of inspection: 25th – 29th September 2000

Inspection number: 225258

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant, Junior and Nursery

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Mayfield Avenue
Dalton
Huddersfield
Yorkshire

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs P Eaton

Date of previous inspection: N/A

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Sue Chesters 23196	Registered inspector	English Geography Music English as an additional language	How well is the school led and managed?
Bill Walker 19366	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils and students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? How well is the school led and managed?
Jill Bavin 16038	Team inspector	Under fives Special educational needs The education of the visually impaired	
Mary Farman 22452	Team inspector	Mathematics Art History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
John Hardy 11969	Team Inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology	How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
John Williams 22516	Team Inspector	Science Religious education Physical education Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the Dalton area of Huddersfield. It is much larger than most primary schools, with 535 pupils on roll, compared with the national average of 226 pupils. The school is an amalgamation of two former schools. It was formed from Dalton Infant and Dalton Junior schools in September 1998. It is therefore not possible to make a comparison with pupil numbers at the time of the previous inspection.

This is the first inspection of the newly-formed school. It has an attached unit for visually impaired children. There are 108 pupils (20.1 per cent) identified as having special educational needs. This figure is in line with national figures. There are 15 pupils with a statement of special educational needs, which is higher than average. Six of these are in the unit. Seventeen pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds but none are at a low stage of acquisition of English. These numbers are lower than the national averages. Twenty-one per cent of pupils receive free school meals which is average. The vast majority of children receives some form of nursery or pre-school experience and their social and communication skills are well established when they start school. Children enter the nursery at the age of three and enter the reception classes in the year in which they become five. At this stage, they have average levels of attainment for the age group.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. It has made rapid improvement over the last two years and is well placed to make further strides forward. It places great emphasis on raising standards. The quality of teaching is consistently good and often very good. This has a very positive effect on pupils' learning. Leadership and management are very effective. The headteacher and staff work closely together in the pursuit of higher standards. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to learn efficiently. The school has average income per pupil and gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The consistently good quality teaching directly influences pupils' learning and results in good progress.
- The headteacher provides very good professional leadership and is supported very well by a hard working and dedicated staff. The school monitors all of its work most effectively.
- Pupils achieve above average standards in English and mathematics at Key Stage 1. Standards in art are above average at both key stages.
- Strengths, particularly at Key Stage 2, are writing, library skills and investigational mathematics.
- There is very good provision for the pupils in the unit for the visually impaired.
- There is good provision for children in the Foundation Stage and pupils with special educational needs.
- There is a good curriculum. It is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of all pupils.

What could be improved

- Provision for information and communication technology so that it is used across all subjects of the curriculum.
- The role of the governing body so that it becomes more involved in budget setting, developing the school improvement plan and acting as a critical friend to the school.
- Investigative skills in science.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The infant school was last inspected in 1995 and deemed to give good value for money. However, the junior school, inspected in 1994, was deemed unsatisfactory and put into special measures. Subsequent visits from HMI in 1996 and 1997 recognised that, whilst the main school had improved and was giving sound value for money, the unit for the visually impaired remained unsatisfactory. However, since its amalgamation and the appointment of the new headteacher, it has made very rapid improvement. It has addressed the issues raised at the time of the last inspections and has established worthwhile aims and values on which it is basing its school improvement plan.

Standards in mathematics and music at Key Stage 1 have improved and are now average in music and above average in mathematics. At Key Stage 2, standards in English, mathematics, science, information technology, design and technology, history and geography have improved and are now average. Art, at both key stages, is now above average and religious education at Key Stage 2 is in line with the

expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Provision for the pupils in the unit for the visually impaired has made a significant improvement and is now very good. Provision for the Foundation Stage is now good, as is the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The school has implemented the literacy and numeracy strategies effectively. It has reviewed all other subjects of the curriculum and has introduced the Curriculum 2000 successfully.

The quality of teaching has improved significantly. It is never less than satisfactory and often good, very good or excellent. There are now very good systems in place to monitor the effect of teaching on pupils' learning. Leadership and management are very good and procedures for monitoring and evaluating all the work of the school have been successfully implemented. Staff morale is good and senior staff and subject leaders have clearly defined roles. The accommodation now provides a very pleasant working environment. Resources in most subjects are now good. These are major improvements which have been accomplished in a comparatively short space of time since the appointment of the new headteacher.

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
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	n/a	n/a	D	C
Mathematics	n/a	n/a	C	B
Science	n/a	n/a	E	E

Key

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

As the school is an amalgamation of two former schools and came into being in 1998, there is no comparative data available for 1997 and 1998. At Key Stage 1, results in the tests and tasks of 1999 were close to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics, when compared with all schools nationally. When compared with similar schools, that is those defined as being in the same free school meals benchmark group, standards in reading and writing are well above and in mathematics they were above the national average. The results of the national tests in 2000 show further improvements in reading and writing. Standards in science have been maintained and a higher proportion of pupils than previously reached the higher Level 3. Although there is no national data available to compare the 2000 figures, there is predicted improvement in standards at Key Stage 1 overall and clear improvement in the challenge presented to the higher-attaining pupils.

At Key Stage 2, results in the national tests in 1999 show the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 was average in mathematics, below average in English and well below average in science. The number of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in these tests was below average in English and mathematics and well below in science. When compared with similar schools, standards in English are average, in science they are well below average but in mathematics they are above average. The 2000 test results indicate an improvement in all subjects, although these figures cannot yet be matched to comparative national data. There is also a clear improvement in the challenge to higher-attaining pupils in these three core subjects, with more pupils reaching the higher level in national tests.

In work seen during the inspection, levels of attainment at Key Stage 1 were above average in reading, writing, mathematics and art and average in all other subjects. At Key Stage 2, standards are average in all subjects except art, where they are above. Standards in religious education, at both key stages, are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The quality of learning in most lessons is good and the school is on course to meet its targets for English and mathematics for 2001.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. The overwhelming majority of pupils show appropriate attitudes to their work and to staff and school life. However, there is a small, but significant, minority of boys throughout the school who do not. The school works hard to address this problem and has good strategies in place but the attitudes of this small group remain unsatisfactory.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. The vast majority of pupils behave well, both in lessons and around the school, and this has a beneficial effect on learning. However, there is a very small minority of pupils who lack consistent self-control.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Most pupils relate well to adults and to each other. They share ideas and work tasks appropriately. The majority enjoy taking responsibility for jobs around school and are keen to help with routine tasks.
Attendance	Satisfactory and in line with national averages. Pupils arrive promptly and lessons start on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. One hundred per cent of lessons seen were at least satisfactory. Three quarters of teaching was good or better. Fifty-two per cent of lessons were good, 21 per cent were very good and 2 per cent were excellent. The teaching of the children in the Foundation Stage is good. The quality of teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy is good. Very good lessons were seen in the Foundation Stage, in English, mathematics, religious education, art, design and technology and physical education at Key Stage 1 and in English, mathematics, science, religious education and art at Key Stage 2. Excellent lessons were seen in literacy at both key stages. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievements. They use day-to-day assessment very well to present good challenge for all pupils. They have good strategies to manage pupils' behaviour and plan lessons effectively, stating clear objectives of what they want pupils to learn in each session. The teaching and support staff work as an effective team.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. It has good breadth and balance and is relevant to the needs of all pupils. Good attention is paid to all subjects including personal, social and health education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils make good progress. The systems and procedures for monitoring the work of these pupils are good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school has high expectations of good behaviour. There are good systems in place to deal with incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour which are implemented consistently by all teachers. Teachers teach pupils right from wrong and encourage them to work together sociably and respectfully.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils well. Personal support and guidance is good. Procedures for monitoring personal development and behaviour are very good. Assessment of the pupils' academic progress is good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management provided by the headteacher are very effective. Together with the deputy headteacher and hard-working, dedicated staff, she provides very good and clear leadership for the school. The governing body gives good support to the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body meets its statutory obligation satisfactorily. In the last two years, it has been developing its role in a number of areas and now has good expertise in staffing and personnel matters.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a clear view of its work and analyses effectively what works well and why. The quality of the procedures for monitoring teaching is particularly good.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is good. The school uses available resources efficiently and effectively.

Since the amalgamation, the school has made good progress in important areas of school improvement. The school now has worthwhile aims and values which direct its work. It effectively evaluates its performance and takes decisive action to ensure that teaching and learning are good. There is a good number of suitably experienced and qualified staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. Learning resources for most subjects are good. Accommodation is very good. It is bright, pleasant and provides a stimulating learning environment.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What a few parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The teaching is good. • Their children are expected to work hard and do their best. • Their children are being helped to become mature and responsible. • Their children make good progress. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework. • The information they receive about their children's progress. • The channels of communication by which they can approach the school with their problems. • The range of extra-curricular activities.

Thirty-three parents attended the meeting with the registered inspector prior to the inspection and 142 questionnaires were returned. Inspectors agree with the positive views of parents. The amount of homework is appropriate. It is set on a regular basis and gives effective support to the work children do in lessons. The quality of information provided for parents is good. No substantive evidence was found to support the concerns parents have about approaching the school with problems. However, the headteacher is aware of these concerns and has already made plans to work with senior members of staff and parents to resolve this. The range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory and the opportunities provided enrich pupils' experiences.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. At the time of the 1995 inspection of Dalton Infant School, pupils at Key Stage 1 achieved standards in line with national expectations in writing, mathematics, science, religious education, art, design and technology, geography, history and physical education. There were strengths in English, particularly speaking and listening and reading, and in information technology where attainment was above national expectations. Standards in music were below expectations. In the 1994 inspection of Dalton Junior School, Key Stage 2 pupils achieved average standards in reading, mathematics, science, music and physical education. In writing, information technology, religious education, art, design and technology, geography and history standards were below national expectations. National test results and inspection findings confirm that there has been a considerable improvement in standards since the publication of these two reports. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are now in line with national expectations in all National Curriculum subjects and exceed them in English, mathematics and art. Standards have also risen at Key Stage 2 and, by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, their attainment is in line with national expectations in all subjects except art, where standards are better than average.
2. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 2, or above, was above the national average in reading and writing and well above in mathematics. The percentage reaching the higher Level 3 was below the national average in reading and mathematics yet above average in writing. However, standards in reading and writing are well above average in comparison with similar schools, and are above average in mathematics. In all three areas, the rate of improvement over the past four years has matched the national trend and has shown a marked improvement in the last two years. Teacher assessments in science show that an average proportion of pupils reached the expected Level 2 last year, whilst an above average number attained the higher Level 3. The results of the tests taken and assessments made in the summer of 2000 confirm these improved levels of attainment. Inspection evidence shows that current levels of attainment at Key Stage 1 are above expectations in English and mathematics and in line in science.
3. Standards of attainment when pupils left the school in July 1999, at the end of Year 6, were below the national average in English and well below average in science but average in mathematics. In comparison with similar schools, results in science are well below average. However, they are in line in English and above average in mathematics. The results of tests taken in the summer of 2000 show a marked improvement in English and mathematics. There is a particularly significant improvement in standards in science. The rate of improvement in each of the three subjects over the last four years is in line with the national trend and is particularly rapid in the last two years. Inspection evidence shows that current attainment is close to the national average in English, mathematics and science. The school is on course to meet its targets this year. Standards have improved in all three subjects since the earlier inspection report. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in the National Curriculum tests has increased, representing a good improvement over the achievement of the higher attainers seen at the time of the last inspection.
4. Recent improvement in teaching and curriculum provision in English and mathematics have brought about a rapid improvement in standards in Key Stage 1. However, pupils in

Key Stage 2 have not benefited, long-term, from this improved provision and standards have not risen to the same extent.

5. Standards throughout the school are satisfactory in information and communication technology, design and technology, history, geography, physical education and music. They are good at both key stages in art. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Over time, progress and learning are good in most subjects, except in information and communication technology and design and technology, where they are satisfactory.
6. Children enter the nursery and reception years with standards across all areas of learning which are those expected for the age groups. The vast majority of children move from nursery into reception and their social and communication skills are satisfactory when they begin their reception year. Children listen appropriately and confidently answer questions. They begin to build up a sight vocabulary when reading and learn to form letters correctly. Many count to at least 10 and recognise two-dimensional shapes and most primary colours. They make good progress at the start of the reception year and most achieve, or exceed, the set goals for the Foundation Stage¹ and are ready to start National Curriculum programmes of study as they enter Year 1. Many children are on target to achieve, or have already achieved, these goals for most areas of learning. This is a direct result of the good quality teaching and the good curriculum provision, which places clear emphasis on each area of learning and has good links with the National Curriculum.
7. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented effectively and is already showing a positive effect on pupils' learning. This goes some way to explaining current improvement in the attainment in Key Stage 2. The literacy hours are well planned and teachers teach literacy skills well. Pupils enjoy using their reading and writing skills in other subjects, such as religious education, history and science. The impact of this has raised standards across the curriculum. The National Numeracy Strategy has also been fully implemented. It is well planned and is already beginning to have a beneficial impact on standards in mathematics, particularly mental arithmetic.
8. The majority of pupils make good progress in most subjects as they move through the school. The setting arrangement in Year 6, for mathematics and English, means that pupils of like ability are taught together and this is having a marked effect on raising standards. Pupils with good prior attainment make good progress and they attain standards well above those expected of their age group. Pupils with special educational needs, including those in the unit for visually impaired, make good progress towards the targets identified on their individual education plans. They receive a good level of well-focused teaching when they are withdrawn from class and good quality support when they are taught within the class. They attain standards in line with their abilities.
9. The overall good level of progress through the school, both in lessons and over time, is the result of the good quality teaching. In particular, the teachers' careful management of pupils and classroom organisation allows learning to take place successfully. Teachers teach the skills that pupils need to succeed in the challenges set. They plan their lessons meticulously, with an appropriately small number of objectives which are specific and achievable. The impact of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is helping to improve English and mathematics. The school very carefully monitors pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy and uses this information well to set realistic yet challenging

¹ Foundation Stage is the provision for children aged three to the end of the reception year. QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) has produced a set of Early Learning Goals for the end of the Foundation Stage. These goals are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the age of five. There are six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development.

targets for future improvement. There is little significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls, although in mathematics the boys outperform the girls.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. The overwhelming majority of pupils show a keen desire to attend the school and work with enthusiasm and commitment. This reflects the picture that existed during the previous inspection. Relationships between pupils are sound and are good between the pupils and the staff in the school. Their interest and involvement in lessons and in extra activities outside lesson times, for example the information and communication technology club, are good.
11. Most pupils have a positive approach to learning and participate enthusiastically in whatever task they are set. These positive features were identified at the time of the last inspection and continue in the school now. The vast majority of pupils is well motivated. They ask and answer questions eagerly showing a keen interest, whatever the focus of the lesson. They concentrate well and co-operate and collaborate with their work as required. Most listen to or observe the contributions of their peers, for example in physical education, and make constructive, sensitive comments on aspects of the work seen. When required to work independently during literacy or numeracy sessions, most pupils display a good rate of productivity, needing little adult supervision or encouragement. On the occasions where enthusiasm develops into higher noise levels, almost all pupils respond positively to requests for quiet.
12. Whilst a very small proportion of parents had some reservations about standards of pupil behaviour, the evidence of this inspection is that unacceptable behaviour is limited to a small, but significant, minority of pupils, usually boys, in some classes. These pupils realise the effect of their actions on life in the school. They attempt to resist the considerable tolerance displayed by the school. However, the strategies the school has in place ensure that this small minority does not affect the learning of the majority. Teachers are very aware of this minority of pupils who are capable of oppressive, unhelpful behaviour and continue to introduce strategies to negate the impact they have on lessons.
13. Behaviour around the school and in the outdoor areas is good. There was no poor behaviour observed at lunchtimes or break-times during the inspection. The school has taken steps to provide training for the staff involved in supervising pupils during these times so that they can take positive actions for the benefit of the whole school community. The school recognises that whilst incidences of anti-social behaviour cannot ever be totally eradicated, they are extremely rare and are dealt with swiftly and effectively. There has been one permanent exclusion in the last two years and four fixed-term exclusions.
14. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are mainly positive, ensuring an ethos of mutual respect. This results in the creation of a constructive, supportive working environment that benefits most pupils, enhancing levels of attainment. For example, in a Year 5 English lesson, pupils had a good rapport and relationship with the class teacher. This resulted in a purposeful working atmosphere which produced good learning. Similarly, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, the relationships within the class supported the learning well, resulting in a calm atmosphere being created and allowing good progress to be made. Pupils with special educational needs and those from ethnic minority backgrounds are well integrated into the life of the school. Most pupils realise how their actions affect others and almost all pupils respect the views of others and recognise the individual's right to have their own beliefs.

15. Pupils with special educational needs work well in lessons. They have good relationships with the learning support assistants who work with them and mostly take pride in their achievements. They often demonstrate this by offering to contribute to the whole class discussion at the end of sessions.
16. The school makes good provision for the personal development of the individual pupil, with opportunities to take responsibility through helping others. For example, the system of 'befrienders' allows pupils to share problems they may have with other pupils. The emphasis is not to receive advice but to talk about their problems. Pupils also take part in paired reading and contribute to assemblies. They are involved in a range of duties, such as acting as receptionists in the school office. The school ensures that opportunities for personal development are available to all pupils regardless of their individual needs.
17. Pupils' attendance remains good, as it was at the time of the last inspection. It compares favourably with national figures and there are few unauthorised absences. The majority of pupils arrive at school on time. They know the procedures to follow if they arrive after the register has closed. They enter the building sensibly at the appropriate time and move to their classrooms with the minimum of fuss or delay. Registrations are businesslike and pupils occupy the time productively. There are no significant variations between the attendance of different groups.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching is good and has a very positive effect on pupils' learning. In three quarters of lessons observed, the quality of teaching was good or better. Of these lessons, nearly one quarter was very good. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed during the inspection. This is a strength of the school and a good improvement, particularly at Key Stage 2, since the last inspection.
19. In the previous inspection, a significant number of lessons were judged unsatisfactory or poor. These lessons had common features. They were characterised by overlong exposition which failed to gain pupils' interest and then switched, without opportunity for discussion, to pupils filling in worksheets, with the teacher supervising rather than teaching. Plans took little account of either the requirements of the National Curriculum or the range of abilities in each class. Standards in teaching have improved significantly. This is a reflection of the very effective monitoring systems that the headteacher has introduced. Teachers consistently ensure that pupils have a clear picture of what it is they are to learn during each lesson and plan work to meet the needs of all pupils. Subject knowledge has improved and planning now covers all elements of the National Curriculum. There is a good behaviour policy which teachers use consistently to ensure that the majority of pupils behave well in lessons. Teachers now use assessment particularly well, constantly monitoring what their pupils have learned and understood to indicate what they need to teach next.
20. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is consistently good. In eighty-five per cent of lessons seen, the teaching was good or better. Nearly a quarter of lessons were very good. In Key Stage 1, three quarters of lessons were good. Almost one third was very good. In Key Stage 2, almost three quarters were good or better and one fifth was very good.
21. The teaching of literacy is good in all key stages. Teachers plan effectively to the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy. They have good subject knowledge and question pupils effectively, carefully matching the questions to assess what the pupils have learned. They know the pupils in their class well, even though it is early in the

academic year, and ensure that they are challenged appropriately. Teachers are working hard to continue to raise standards in this area.

22. Numeracy teaching in all key stages is always at least satisfactory. Just under a half of the lessons seen during inspection are very good. Teachers have worked hard to adjust what they do in lessons to meet the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy. In the very good numeracy lessons, teachers give very clear explanations, retaining the pupils' attention and ensuring that good learning takes place. They use very effective questioning techniques, enabling pupils to explain the strategies which they use to solve problems. The mental arithmetic sessions, in most numeracy lessons, are good and pupils show a sense of urgency when giving answers.
23. The teaching of the pupils under the age of five in the reception classes is good. All staff working in the Foundation Stage have a good knowledge of the needs of young children and they are secure in their understanding of how young children learn. They provide a wide range of practical activities which involve the children in their learning and develop and extend them appropriately. Teachers teach basic skills well and there is an appropriate emphasis on the teaching of reading, writing and number.
24. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. Pupils benefit from early identification of their need and clear and measurable targets for action that are reviewed every half term. Teachers and learning support assistants provide sensitive and encouraging support that enhances pupils' self-esteem. They also thoughtfully provide opportunities for pupils with special educational needs to take responsibility, while ensuring that there is sufficient structure for pupils to succeed. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from receiving support within the class. They work in small groups on tasks adapted to meet their needs. This small group approach also benefits those pupils who are attaining very well.
25. Teachers' subject knowledge is sound although some teachers are less secure in some aspects of information and communication technology. Most teachers use language specific to the subject that they are teaching effectively. This helps pupils to develop a good understanding of the subject. For example, in science lessons the teacher insists that pupils use the correct terms such as 'solute', 'soluble', 'solvent' and 'solution'. She referred to these consistently during the lesson, ensuring that the pupils learned the meanings.
26. The teachers clearly understand the need to develop the pupils' learning through carefully structured work and they challenge pupils well. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, the pupils were challenged throughout by the teacher's very secure knowledge of methods of multiplication and division. The consequence was that the pupils responded well to this interesting and challenging lesson and so their pace of learning was fast.
27. Planning is good. The teachers in the reception classes plan very well in all of the areas of learning for young children in the Foundation Stage. In literacy and numeracy, the teachers plan very closely within the structured frameworks of the national strategies. This is a strength of their work. Teachers set out clearly what it is they expect the pupils to learn during the lesson. They share this with the pupils at the beginning of the lesson. This is a consistent feature of teaching throughout the school. In most lessons, teachers revisit the aims which they have planned and remind the pupils what it is they are to learn. This ensures that pupils have a very clear understanding of what they are learning and the expectations of the lesson. However, whilst in the plenary sessions of lessons teachers always look at what pupils have done, they do not necessarily discuss with the pupils whether or not they have achieved what it was intended that they should learn.

28. Teachers' expectations of the pupils and their work are good. Teachers question pupils well and work is mostly well matched to pupils' individual needs. They know the higher-attaining and gifted pupils in their classes and these groups now mostly receive work well matched to their needs. The setting arrangement in Year 6, whereby pupils of like ability are taught together, is having a good impact on progress as teachers plan tasks to challenge their pupils.
29. Apart from a minority who find sustained concentration difficult, pupils work well in groups, pairs and individually. Teachers encourage them to concentrate on their work and not to waste any time. Pupils collaborate well in class and listen to each other as they discuss their work. Pupils are prepared to be critically supportive of each other as they deliberate about their work and talk about improvements. The good relationships in lessons, between pupils and adults, adds to the quality of the work produced and the way in which pupils learn. Teachers' expectations of the pupils are high throughout the school. The teachers set demanding challenges for pupils of all abilities. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and to the very best of their ability. However, whilst teachers plan some opportunities for pupils to extend their learning through practical work, there is little opportunity for pupils to pursue topics of interest for themselves. There is room for teachers to develop this aspect of the curriculum further.
30. Teachers organise their lessons efficiently. They group pupils effectively and this helps them to learn well. Staff use the format of the literacy and numeracy lessons effectively to support teaching in other subjects. They use cross-curricular links well. Teachers plan for pupils to use information and communication technology effectively in some subjects; for example in music and some literacy lessons. However, computers are underused as tools supporting other subjects.
31. The management of pupils throughout the school is good. Consequently, pupils work for the most part in a busy, interested and active manner. Teachers use good strategies to manage pupils' behaviour. There are clear procedures to deal with pupils who find it difficult to behave well. These procedures are used consistently throughout the school. Teachers work hard to engage pupils' interest and this results in pupils having good attitudes to their work.
32. Teachers organise time and resources satisfactorily. They keep the pupils actively involved in their lessons. Teachers begin lessons punctually and encourage pupils not to waste time. They allocate time for pupils to think about their tasks and consolidate their work. They use a wide range of resources safely and to good effect. For example, teachers use television monitors to display coins during a mathematics lesson to good effect. They teach pupils to use tools safely in art and design and technology lessons, and in physical education lessons remind their pupils of the safe ways of getting out the apparatus. Teachers use their extra classroom support effectively.
33. The quality of day-to-day assessment is particularly good. Teachers question pupils effectively to assess each individual pupil's grasp of the concepts being taught. They mark pupils' books regularly in an encouraging and supportive manner. However, the very good marking seen in subjects such as English and mathematics is not always seen in other subjects. Marking does not consistently give guidance to pupils and tell them what they are to do next to improve the quality of their work. The day-to-day assessment of pupils' individual levels of attainment is now systematically and consistently recorded throughout the school. Teachers use the information gathered to evaluate the success of their lessons and make adjustments in light of their findings. Teachers set a variety of homework and pupils have reading, spelling and mathematics regularly.

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

34. The school provides a well balanced curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage and all its pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. All National Curriculum subjects and religious education are taught. There is an improved emphasis on the development of pupils' skills in investigative mathematics. The school is providing all pupils with more opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills across the curriculum. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspections. However, throughout the school pupils still do not have enough opportunities to fully develop their investigative skills in science. The school is developing the use of information technology across the curriculum. This is particularly noticeable in art. The use of information technology is, however, under-developed in most subjects. The curriculum for the foundation subjects is good and covers them in sufficient depth. This shows a significant improvement in curriculum provision since the previous inspections. The school prepares pupils well for future work at secondary level. The school has policies and schemes of work in place for all subjects, including religious education. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
35. The school makes effective provision for pupils' physical and personal development. The science curriculum includes a suitable health education programme that includes sex education. The school makes good use of the local police to implement an effective drugs awareness programme. The school is successfully implementing the National Literacy Strategy. This is having a positive impact on pupils' reading and writing skills. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is proving effective in raising pupils' standards in mathematics. The school places a suitable emphasis on the investigative element of work in mathematics, art and music but is less successful in implementing this in science. The time allocation for the foundation subjects is adequate. Homework is set on a regular basis and gives an effective level of support to work pupils do in lessons. The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. It includes football, a maths club, music and visits to places of interest. These activities broaden and enrich pupils' experiences. For example, there are opportunities for pupils throughout the school to learn to play musical instruments. Pupils enjoy these activities.
36. The curriculum for children under five in the nursery and reception classes is good and a significant improvement since the last inspection of the infant school. The basis for this curriculum is the recently implemented Early Learning Goals initiative. The curriculum prepares children well for work at Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum. The school is continuing to develop and improve the quality of its provision for children in the Foundation Stage.
37. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Provision for spiritual development is mostly available through collective worship and religious education and is satisfactory. School assemblies provide good opportunities for pupils to be still and to reflect. These occasions are often enhanced by music or the lighting of a candle for pupils to focus on. Lessons in religious education give pupils good opportunities to consider the beliefs held by themselves and by others. The school's ethos makes a good contribution to pupils' developing sense of self-worth. However, staff do not plan for opportunities to enhance pupils' spiritual development throughout the curriculum, in subjects such as science, mathematics and technology.
38. Provision for moral development is good. School assemblies usually provide opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of right and wrong, and promote an understanding of responsibility. Staff work hard to encourage good behaviour and are successful with most pupils. Opportunities to discuss moral issues arise in the planned

discussion times for each class, when pupils consider subjects such as friendship and teamwork. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop social skills and extend their responsibilities throughout the school. For example, a recent development is the 'School Council' with pupil representatives from Years 1 to 6. The school's positive ethos underpins initiatives such as the 'befriending' scheme whereby pupils support each other through difficulties. The school also makes very good use of its links with the community to run drug awareness and health education projects.

39. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils appreciate their national heritage with musicians from a local music school and through celebrations of traditional Christian festivals. They increase awareness of their own culture with special events such as a 'hobbies awareness day' and through the literature studied on an intensive literacy course, 'Playing for Success'. There are good opportunities for pupils to appreciate cultural diversity through events such as an African dance workshop, a 'Celebration of Culture' shared with local schools, incorporating Indian and Chinese dance as well as stories from Jamaica, and regularly celebrating festivals from the major world religions.
40. The school makes good provision for pupils on the school's register of special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs have good access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. The quality of support that they receive successfully enhances their access to the full National Curriculum alongside their peers. The school complies with the Code of Practice² for special educational needs and carefully devises programmes of support tailored to meet individual needs. This results from parents, class teachers and older pupils sharing ideas or information and contributes positively to the good progress that pupils make.
41. The school ensures that all pupils, regardless of age, ability or gender, have equal access to the curriculum. This is noticeably effective in the case of pupils with special educational needs. They integrate well into classroom work and work well with their classmates. The school regularly reviews its arrangements for setting pupils into ability groups for English and mathematics. This enables the school to provide an effective match of pupils' ability to their group placement. The school monitors analyses and evaluates the impact of the curriculum on the standards pupils achieve. This ensures that the planned curriculum meets pupils' needs and abilities. All pupils have opportunities to join in the extra-curricular activities.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. The school fulfils its aim to provide a secure and well ordered environment. The educational and personal support and guidance of pupils is good. Weaknesses in assessment and planning identified at the previous inspection of Dalton Junior School have been effectively addressed. The good practice found in Dalton Infant and Nursery School has been developed to the benefit of all pupils. Teachers are very sensitive to the needs of those in their charge. They know them well and work hard to ensure their welfare. The trusting relationships which the pupils enjoy with their teachers give them the confidence to share their worries and help them to cope with the problems that arise in everyday life. In an unusual initiative, the school also arranges for suitably trained older pupils to be available to listen to the concerns of younger peers who may not wish to approach an adult. Governors have a responsible attitude towards health and safety. The policy is clear and detailed and makes good provision. Governors have recently

² Code of Practice: this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

reviewed the child protection policy. The school's arrangements comply fully with locally agreed procedures.

43. Over the last two years, the school has given a very high priority to encouraging good behaviour and eliminating bullying. There has been big investment in training to ensure that all staff members are familiar with the aims of the whole school policy. Monitoring procedures are effective in maintaining consistency. Teachers have high expectations and demonstrate the effectiveness of the policy through their skilful handling of headstrong pupils. Whilst there is still some poor behaviour and some bullying, those responsible are in no doubt that such incidents are not tolerated by the school and that swift action will be taken when they come to notice and appropriate sanctions will be applied. Frequent reminders are given to both parents and pupils about the importance of regular and prompt attendance. Careful monitoring takes place, consistent with the recently revised policy. Teachers show much sensitivity for the welfare and safety of pupils, particularly the younger ones, by allowing them to enter the building early and escorting them from the premises at the end of the day.
44. The school's systems for evaluating and supporting pupils' academic development are good. Considerable progress has been made since the previous inspections, when it was judged that there were weaknesses in the recording procedures (Key Stage 1) and methods for assessment (Key Stage 2). A clear and rigorous new policy for assessment, recording and reporting has now been implemented systematically throughout the school. The assessment procedures for the children in the nursery and reception classes are good and used well. Children are carefully assessed in relation to the Early Learning Goals and other aspects of their development relevant to their age. All staff are involved and full use is made of the perceptions of parents. The results are used to identify the specific needs of the children as they enter the nursery and again when they enter the reception classes. Records are kept and used effectively to plan future work and to set targets for future learning.
45. Assessments in English and mathematics are made through national standardised tests in each year from Year 2. The results of both statutory, and optional standardised tests supplemented recently, are carefully analysed to evaluate pupils' progress from year to year. This procedure is used effectively to raise standards by highlighting individual pupils who would benefit from help, for example through additional literacy support or with comprehension skills. It is also used well in the upper classes of Key Stage 2 to facilitate setting by ability groups and to provide smaller teaching groups in mathematics based on prior ability. Teachers are able to set realistic and challenging targets for individuals and groups of pupils, both higher and lower attainers, based on past performance. Less formal assessments are made across all curricular areas and are used effectively to inform the teachers' planning. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from well established procedures which meet the national Code of Practice and ensure the early identification of need and the targeting of support. The school works closely with parents and outside agencies to provide a good quality of education for these pupils.
46. Teachers know their pupils well. The careful monitoring of their academic records is mirrored by less detailed but effective monitoring of their personal development, behaviour and attendance. The pastoral care programme is very well structured to cater for the needs of all pupils. Good use is made of "Circle Time"³ to deliver the school's curriculum for personal and social education. Imaginative initiatives, such as the 'befrienders' scheme and the provision of a 'quiet room' for vulnerable or troubled pupils, epitomise the sympathetic approach taken by the school towards those in its charge. The

³ During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. It is agreed by all pupils that no interruption should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference or interruption from other children.

good level of educational and personal support provided for all pupils has a positive effect in raising their achievements.

47. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is careful and considered and takes account of parents' views. Individual education plans contain useful targets for action. Staff work well together to ensure that they are reviewed frequently and so kept up to date.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. The beneficial partnership with parents that was praised at the time of the previous inspection of Dalton Infant and Nursery School is now a feature of the recently amalgamated Junior, Infant and Nursery school. The headteacher and all members of staff have worked very hard to involve parents in helping to raise the standards of attainment across the whole school. Virtually all parents appreciate the school's endeavours and have expressed warm appreciation for the dedication and professionalism of the teachers. They recognise that much progress has been made during the last two years in all aspects of the educational provision made for their children. However, a minority of those who completed the parental questionnaire do not consider themselves well informed about their children's progress and feel inhibited from approaching the school with their problems. The headteacher is aware of these concerns and has already made plans to work with senior members of staff and parents to resolve them.
49. A wide range of constructive links between school and home have been developed, many of them over the last year. They have built on the good practice that was already in place, the headteacher having a clear intent to extend the best provision to the whole school. For example, the parents of pre-nursery children are given the option of a home visit and are invited to contribute to a shared statement about their child's needs. Later, there are opportunities for daily dialogue with teachers, parental consultation evenings and regular written communication through the use of home/school reading records and homework diaries. There are regular, informative newsletters which are much appreciated by parents. Annual reports are informative, well presented and comply fully with legal requirements. Through these and many other strategies, the school now has a well co-ordinated and consistent system to support pupils' learning.
50. Teachers have endeavoured to consult parents about, for example, the home/school agreement and the Literacy Hour but few parents have shown an interest in such dialogue, although they have signed the agreements. No parents, apart from governors, came to hear governors present their annual report to parents. However, meetings to discuss reading skills of children in the nursery and reception classes, and the preparation for the national standardised tests arranged for the parents of Years 5 and 6 pupils, have been very popular with parents and are proving to be productive for pupils. It is also of note that parents are made very welcome within the school building and have opportunities to approach teachers before and after school, simply to exchange pleasantries or to arrange an appointment to discuss any matter of concern. It is this facility which is much appreciated by parents and which is of potential benefit to all pupils, both academically and personally.
51. The parents of pupils with special educational needs, in the main school or the dedicated unit, are given very good support, thereby assisting their children to make good progress at the school. Staff involve the parents of pupils with special educational needs appropriately in their assessment and individual education plans.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The school is very well led. The headteacher, staff and governors work very well together and have a shared vision, firmly focused on raising standards and providing the best possible education for the pupils of the school. There has been very good improvement in the last two years following the appointment of the new headteacher. At the time of her appointment, the junior and infant schools were amalgamated. This was a time of great change and the school experienced great turbulence as it settled into one establishment. Issues raised at previous inspections, concerning the monitoring and evaluating of the two schools' work, have been very successfully addressed. Similarly, the concerns over the unsatisfactory teaching, seen at the previous inspection of the junior school, have been very effectively overcome through the very good monitoring systems which the headteacher has introduced. This now ensures good quality teaching throughout the school. The new school has reviewed its aims and values and established a clear view of its future. It is poised for further development and has good capacity in its systems to move forward in its constant quest to raise standards.
53. The headteacher gives very clear, professional leadership. She has many excellent qualities, among which are a dynamic presence in the day-to-day running of the school, a resolute determination that the school will run efficiently and that standards will improve. She uses these skills very well to lead the school, providing very committed, open-minded leadership. The very recently appointed deputy headteacher already provides strong, effective support for the headteacher. He has a clearly defined role, which he fulfils very competently. They are a very efficient team with complimentary skills, which they use well to guide the work of the school. They are supported very well by the hard working, dedicated staff. In a very short space of time, the headteacher has implemented many new initiatives. For example, in recent months, systems have been put in place to monitor and evaluate the educational provision and to quantify the effect on standards.
54. The school has committed and supportive governors who meet regularly as a whole. They share the headteacher's vision for the future of the school. The governing body fulfils all statutory requirements. It has an appropriate structure, which includes committees for finance, personnel and staffing, curriculum and premises. However, not all of these committees meet regularly. Although the governing body is involved in establishing and agreeing both the school's budget and its improvement plan, it has not yet fully taken up these responsibilities. Neither does it monitor the educational standards or success of the school's work. It is therefore not working effectively as a critical friend of the school.
55. The headteacher monitors teaching very well. She understands well the strengths and weaknesses within subject areas and works with staff to support and encourage improvement in weaker areas. The result of this strategy is seen in the overall good quality teaching present throughout the school. The subject leaders monitor the planning of their subjects and are becoming increasingly involved in analysing standards and using the information gathered to promote further development in individual areas.
56. The headteacher has developed and introduced a very good performance management strategy. It links well with the professional development of all staff. This contributes well to the good team spirit and staff morale witnessed during the inspection and enables channels of communication between staff and management to function effectively. There is a good induction system in place for new and newly-qualified staff.
57. The format of the school improvement plan is useful and comprehensive. It identifies and prioritises the needs of the school. Action plans are generated to cover developmental areas. These are costed and linked with the budget and relevant time limits and responsibilities are established. The current improvement plan is near completion and

clearly identifies areas where support is needed for the raising of standards. The rapid improvements made in establishing these procedures, and the systems to monitor their effectiveness, are now beginning to impact on standards.

58. The school has clear aims, which parents and staff acknowledge as worthwhile. It has a strong commitment to good relationships and strives to achieve equality for all members of the school community. It provides a very stimulating environment and is an orderly community in which pupils feel comfortable and secure. This contributes to the busy, purposeful ethos in which pupils learn well. Members of the staff direct much of their work towards school improvement and the raising of standards. The majority of parents supports the school and appreciates its caring ethos.
59. The recently appointed special educational needs co-ordinator leads this aspect of the school's work well. She is available to help staff to focus upon a pupil's individual needs and she uses the register sensibly to track the nature and level of need for each pupil with special educational needs. The school is committed to meeting the needs of all pupils within the classroom and her leadership ensures that support assistants work to support this inclusive ethos.
60. The school's strategies for short and medium-term financial planning are very efficient. The headteacher has worked closely with her senior management team, and others with management responsibility, to plan the budget in accordance with the school development plan. She has agreed the budget with the chair of the finance committee and has properly sought and received the approval of the full governing body. There is, however, no evidence from the minutes of meetings that governors have been closely involved in considering the priorities of the school before setting the budget. The finance committee has not met in the current financial year and the minutes of full governing body meetings contain little detail. Whilst it is clear from discussions that governors are very supportive, they are at present insufficiently involved to provide a sense of direction for the work of the school. They receive financial reports throughout the year which enable them to monitor expenditure retrospectively but their role in strategic planning, particularly for the longer term, is under-developed. This is illustrated by the absence of a school development plan beyond the current financial year.
61. The school makes good use of grants for specific purposes and the headteacher keeps detailed records of expenditure. Funds allocated for teaching pupils with special educational needs, including those who require additional literacy support, are used very effectively.
62. Day-to-day administrative and financial management is good. The office staff work very well as a team. They are appropriately trained to make good use of new technology and are familiar with the procedures set out in the school's finance policy. School routines run very smoothly and teachers are able to focus their attention primarily on the classroom. The most recent audit of the school's accounting procedures was carried out two years ago and made a number of recommendations. Most have been implemented but there is still a need for the headteacher and governors to authenticate the inventory that has been prepared, by signing and dating it and arranging for an annual physical check of the items listed to be made thereafter. The headteacher understands and applies the best value principles to secure economic, efficient and effective services for the school.
63. The school has an adequate number of teachers who are well qualified and suitably experienced to deliver the National Curriculum and religious education. This is consistent with the judgement made in the previous inspection reports on the two schools that have since been amalgamated. The priority given by the headteacher over the last two years

to the professional development of staff has had a very beneficial effect. It has been targeted on the school's priorities and the individual needs of teachers.

64. The school also makes good use of the expertise that exists amongst its own staff to support colleagues where appropriate, both with planning and in the classroom. A good example of this is the facility given to the mathematics and literacy subject leaders to monitor classroom practice and give feedback to individual teachers. Non-teaching staff members are employed effectively and they make a valuable contribution to the quality of educational provision. They are involved in planning and work closely with class teachers, particularly in the larger classes, and with pupils with special educational needs. The additional literacy support is very good. This all has a beneficial effect on the pupils' good progress. Teachers and support staff who are employed in the unit for the visually impaired pupils work very effectively and have been successful in integrating the visually impaired pupils within the main school, to the great benefit of themselves and their colleagues. Newly-qualified teachers benefit from a very good induction programme which ensures that they have ready access to support and guidance. They are given ample opportunity to continue their professional development. The programme is consistent with national guidelines.
65. The accommodation is very good. Careful planning and imaginative use of space has led to a teaching environment of high quality. Good quality displays of pupils' work serve well to celebrate achievement and enhance the opportunities for learning. The premises are kept very clean. The internal quadrangles are used effectively to provide a secure play area for under-fives and an environmental area for educational and recreational purposes. The school has not developed the potential of the hard outdoor play area. The headteacher and governors have wisely deferred any work until the fencing, currently under construction, is completed.
66. Learning resources overall are of good quality and in the case of design and technology they are very good. Expenditure has been very well focused and the deficiencies identified in the school development plan have now been eliminated. The headteacher is aware of the scope for further investment, particularly in books for English, geography and religious education. Most resources are in very good condition. They are clearly identified, neatly stored and readily accessible to all teachers.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67. In order to further improve the quality of education and standards achieved, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
- 1) raise the standards in information and communication technology by:
 - ensuring that the subject supports pupils' learning in all areas of the curriculum, particularly literacy and numeracy;
 - continuing the in-service training to extend the skills of all staff;
(*paragraphs: 31, 34, 79, 105, 117, 127-130*)
 - 2) improve the role of the governing body in monitoring the educational standards and success of the school's work by involving them in:
 - the development of the school improvement plan and associated financial planning;
 - having more regular meetings of the relevant sub-committees;
(*paragraphs: 54, 60, 64*)
 - 3) ensure that the using and applying aspect of science is covered in sufficient depth in all year groups.
(*paragraphs: 29, 35, 101, 104, 109*)

In addition to the key issues, the following less significant, but nevertheless important, areas should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- reviewing the marking policy, so that the good practice used in English and mathematics is uniform across all subjects;
(*paragraphs: 33, 93, 107*)
- strengthening further the links with parents in order to ensure that all pupils have good attitudes to school, particularly the attitudes of the small minority of boys throughout the school who do not always behave well.
(*paragraphs: 12, 29, 44, 48, 50, 90, 98, 114*)

UNIT FOR PUPILS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

68. The school has a specialist unit for pupils with visual impairment, with places for a maximum of two pupils per class in the school. At the time of the inspection, six pupils across the age range from the reception year to Year 6 were attending the unit. There is one pupil in the reception year, one pupil in Year 1, three pupils in Year 2 and one in Year 6. The unit is well staffed with one specialist teacher, who is also the co-ordinator for the provision, and three part-time assistants. One of these support assistants has an additional role as a technician. Additionally a support teacher, a bilingual support worker and a mobility officer from the service for pupils with visual impairment provide specialist sessions during the week. The co-ordinator is new to the school but this team is already working very well together to provide a very good level of provision for the pupils attending the unit.
69. There is a strong commitment to ensuring that pupils receive direct teaching in the specific skills that will enhance their learning and quality of life, but this is balanced by ensuring that pupils mostly learn alongside their peers. The strongly held belief, that pupils with a visual impairment should receive this finely balanced curriculum, drives the very good practice that affects pupils' day-to-day experience of learning. Pupils' needs are clearly identified in their statement of special educational needs and their very clear and detailed individual education plans. These are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that staff are constantly adjusting their work to meet individual pupils' needs successfully.
70. Pupils usually receive very good levels of support when they are working alongside their peers in mainstream lessons. When they are in separate specialist sessions, teaching is never less than good, sometimes very good and occasionally excellent. Staff are skilled at providing just the right amount of help and promoting pupils' independence in mobility and in learning in both situations. When teaching is excellent, staff adjust the level and style of help as they assess the pupil minute by minute, and do this while communicating a sense of enjoyment and fun that helps pupils to learn. Pupils appreciate the help that they are offered and the level of independence available to them both in classes alongside their peers and in specialist separate sessions. They respond with impressive levels of determination, a motivation to succeed and a strong sense of enjoyment.
71. Pupils make discernible gains in acquiring the skills identified as targets within their individual education plans in the separate, specialist sessions. For example, they increase their skills in using a white cane or using their hand to 'trail' safely along a route in mobility sessions. Their work in word processing or reading or writing braille is carefully matched to the literacy levels that are suitable for their age. Staff provide sensitive support in lessons and pupils with visual impairment work happily and productively alongside their peers in class. This situation represents a significant improvement in provision since the last inspection of the unit's work.
72. The unit is developing good links with parents, with home visits planned for the near future. Staff recognise the importance of discussing individual education plans with parents and carers, and of ensuring that families are well informed about their latest thinking regarding the specialist strategies they wish to offer each pupil, such as learning braille.
73. In summary, the commitment to providing pupils with the skills that enable them to learn effectively in class with their peers is in accordance with the latest guidelines for good practice. The developments over the last year and the arrival this term of the new co-ordinator mean that very good systems are in place to ensure that all intervention is focused accurately upon meeting each pupil's individual needs. These procedures are

highly effective, and the staff who are putting this into practice have a very good understanding of their pupils' needs and how best to meet them.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	101
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	59

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2	21	52	25	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	37	498
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		103

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	15
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	7	99

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	17

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	33

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.4

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
	1999	39	32	71

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	37	34	37
	Girls	30	31	32
	Total	67	65	69
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	96 (90)	92 (94)	97 (89)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	34	37	36
	Girls	32	31	28
	Total	66	68	64
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	93 (92)	96 (97)	90 (86)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (84)

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
	1999	33	39	72

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	14	21	16
	Girls	27	25	27
	Total	41	46	43
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	57 (72)	64 (48)	60 (68)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	16	23	20
	Girls	22	26	28
	Total	38	49	48
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	54 (46)	69 (65)	68 (72)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	17
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	11
Indian	4
Pakistani	12
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	354
Any other minority ethnic group	31

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	4	1
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)	21.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	347

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	37

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Number of pupils per FTE adult	12
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/00
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Total income	882,004
Total expenditure	849,703
Expenditure per pupil	1,586
Balance brought forward from previous year	32,301
Balance carried forward to next year	66,371

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 27%

Number of questionnaires sent out	535
Number of questionnaires returned	145

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	43	50	6	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	37	50	4	2	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	28	57	6	3	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	13	55	19	4	9
The teaching is good.	30	56	3	1	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	19	44	31	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	39	45	12	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	42	49	3	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	17	44	30	3	6
The school is well led and managed.	19	49	11	1	20
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	25	56	8	1	10
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	10	34	26	15	15

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

74. Provision for children throughout the Foundation Stage provides a good basis for their future learning and has many strengths. Children enter the nursery from the age of three and move into the reception classes during the year following their fourth birthday. Children benefit from the home visits that staff make before they start school and the exchange of information that takes place between families and nursery staff. Most children start attending the nursery with the mixed feelings of concern at leaving their familiar environment and of interest in a new experience that are expected at their age. The school provides structured and friendly routines that help children to settle successfully. Additionally, nursery staff encourage parents and carers to visit the nursery at the beginning and end of each session so that children see the important adults in their life talking together and sharing their interest in what the children do. These links support children's confidence and ease their smooth transition from home to school.
75. Staff in the nursery and reception classes work well together to plan a variety of suitable and shared activities that support the areas of learning and the Early Learning Goals. They ensure that children in the nursery and reception classes work and play alongside each other periodically in the outside area. This helps children to move smoothly from nursery to reception. Planning successfully identifies what children need to learn and is very closely linked with assessments of what children know, understand and can do. This careful system of planning and assessment to meet individual needs ensures that most children make good progress and meet the expected levels in all areas of learning. The vast majority of children will reach the expected levels in personal and social development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. A significant minority of children is likely to exceed expectations in some elements of literacy, physical and creative development.

Personal, social and emotional development

76. Staff promote children's personal and social behaviour well throughout all areas of the curriculum, both indoors and outdoors, and teaching of this area of learning is good overall. Staff provide consistent, positive, encouraging role models who treat children politely and courteously. As a result, children trust staff and behave well in lessons. They are usually polite with staff, with visitors and with each other. They have a good understanding of what is right and what is wrong. For example, they laugh at the foolishness of a 'princess' in a book who does not understand how to use her potty. Staff provide an environment where children are confident that their efforts will be appreciated and their work valued. This means that they are motivated to persevere with new tasks and they concentrate well in activities with an adult, such as coring apples and cutting fruit. Their interest in trying new experiences and their understanding of their own needs, as well as those of others, is at a level expected for their age. However, while staff plan conscientiously to focus upon particular activities, they are not consistently available to respond flexibly to children's own areas of interest as they arise within a session. Plans are not balanced equally between activities designed to promote children's understanding of diversity and to stimulate their own initiative and expression.

Communication, language and literacy

77. The teaching of this area of learning is good. In the nursery, staff make a very good start at promoting an interest in letter sounds and the way that books work. This is developed

well in the reception classes and the teaching of letter sounds gives most children a very good basis for reading. Another strength of the teaching is the way in which staff provide opportunities for children to recognise the values of reading and writing throughout most activities. For example, when children are making a fruit salad they refer to a list of ingredients and when they are painting there are written prompts that remind them how to mix colours. As a result, children are keen to read and write and often choose to make marks on paper of their own volition. A significant minority of children has an understanding of letter sounds and skills in writing that exceeds expectations for their age. Teachers enjoy telling or reading stories and communicate their enthusiasm infectiously to children. Children have regular opportunities to tell and enact their own stories in role-play areas, such as travel agents, estate agents or hospitals. However, in order to extend their speaking skills, children need more opportunities to discuss and negotiate with sensitive adult intervention. Children share their ideas and experiences to the extent expected for their age. In the role-play areas in the nursery, they work through their own individual ideas alongside each other. In the reception classes, they begin to try to share ideas and work through stories together. However, children do not sustain these ideas over time.

Mathematical development

78. The teaching of mathematical development is good overall. The strength of the provision lies in the way staff use counting and number during the daily routines and throughout various activities. As a result, children are interested in number and shape and use language associated with size and position to the extent expected for their age. In the nursery, children prepare the fruit for snack time with an adult and count how many pieces they need. During the inspection, one child used this experience in the 'fruit salad' activity and suggested cutting an apple 'into quarters'. In the reception classes, children enjoy identifying the features of squares and rectangles and begin to recognise the differences between them. They willingly count the number of sides and corners of three-dimensional shapes and achieve the levels of accuracy expected for their age. They also respond willingly to finding these shapes in their classroom and identify the squares in the plastic baskets that store pieces of equipment. In these sessions, the child with a visual impairment is very well supported by her assistant who gives her shapes to hold that parallel what her peers are seeing. Staff successfully help children to remain interested when they are recording mathematical activity, for example when children record their fruit preferences on a tally chart. Staff often use the outdoor area imaginatively to support children's mathematical development, whether by attaching numerals to tricycles, by counting with children as they balance across 'stepping stones', or by matching the language of position with children's physical movement.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

79. Staff promote children's knowledge and understanding of the world well and children make good progress. The strength of the provision in both nursery and reception lies in the way this area of learning is linked with all other areas of the curriculum, as well as developed in special projects. For example, in both nursery and reception, staff encourage close observation in drawing and painting sessions with some very good results, such as very well proportioned and accurately observed sketches of snails. On this occasion, children were encouraged, appropriately, to touch and smell the snail as well as observe it. Children in the Foundation Stage also develop an appropriate understanding of the past. In the nursery, children recall memorable events in their own past, such as a hospital visit. In reception classes, they develop an awareness of the passing of time through a special project, such as looking at themselves as babies. Occasionally staff miss opportunities for encouraging children to observe natural objects very closely, to explore through their senses and develop their own questions. While

children have limited access to technology, for example by operating a tape recorder to listen to a story, this aspect of children's learning is under-developed in the Foundation Stage. However, the strengths in the curriculum ensure that children develop an understanding of the world around them that reaches levels expected for their age. For example, in the nursery they demonstrate that they understand how a customer behaves in a 'garden centre' and in the reception classes children use their experience to guess what might be producing the sound in a shaker.

Physical development

80. By the end of the Foundation Stage most children have the level of co-ordination and the physical skills expected for their age. However, a significant minority of children has skills in riding a bicycle or in controlling a pencil or paintbrush that exceed expectations for their age. Staff promote physical skills well and children make good progress. It is a strength of the provision that care is taken to plan for and to assess children's physical skills regularly in outdoor sessions, as well as through other areas of the curriculum. Children quickly gain confidence in climbing, balancing, pedalling and crawling through tunnels. Staff use imaginative activities, such as a 'sponsored egg roll' to develop children's hand-eye co-ordination as they roll eggs down a wooden beam. In both the nursery and the reception classes, there is a variety of activities and resources, such as cutters in play-dough, and scissors and card, to help children practise and refine their manipulative skills. Staff work hard to ensure that adults lead activities that focus on all areas of development, including physical skills, However, there are times when children circulate around these activities with little adult support or intervention and opportunities for extending their skills are lost.

Creative development

81. Creative development is supported well throughout the Foundation Stage. All staff have high expectations of particular elements of this curriculum area. As a result, most children mix paint and use colour, with a maturity that exceeds expectations for their age. These high expectations, coupled with expectations of children's skills of observation and careful adult support, mean that children produce paintings in the style of other artists, such as Monet, Paul Klee and Aboriginal artists with an eye for detail that exceeds expectations for their age. A significant minority of children achieves very high standards in this aspect of their work. It is also a strength of the provision for creative development that children have good access to areas for imaginative activity. However, children have too few opportunities to express their own ideas in paint or to develop their own role-play areas. In the nursery, there is regular access to musical instruments and children experiment with volume and rhythm as expected at their age. Children in reception classes have limited access to musical instruments or opportunity for moving imaginatively to music. This aspect of children's learning is under-developed.

Summary

82. The provision for the Foundation Stage is good, with many strengths. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection. Staff plan adult-led activities effectively to meet children's needs, across all areas of the curriculum. There are very good procedures in place to review and identify each child's growing needs. Staff have clear targets for each child and this ensures that they prepare children well for their move into the National Curriculum. These recent developments contribute to the high proportion of children who attain expected levels in all or most of the Early Learning Goals. The recently appointed co-ordinator for provision in the Foundation Stage has a very good understanding of how children at this age learn best and is well placed to continue developments which enhance children's learning.

ENGLISH

83. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress during the time that they are in the school. The quality of learning is good and standards throughout the school have been improved since the last inspection of the schools (as they existed then). In the 1999 national tests, standards in reading and writing at Key Stage 1 were above average, although the number of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was below average in reading. This was well above average when compared with similar schools. At Key Stage 2, results were well below average and when compared with similar schools, were below average at the expected Level 4 but average at the higher Level 5. Teaching, particularly in literacy lessons, is good overall and results in pupils learning well. During the inspection, two excellent lessons were observed and several very good lessons, some of which had outstanding features. The standard of work in lessons, and over time, is good and results in above average attainment at Key Stage 1 and average attainment at Key Stage 2. The rate of learning in the last two years has accelerated and is having a positive effect on standards. This results in the good standards at Key Stage 1 and is beginning to have an impact on learning in Key Stage 2, where an upward trend in standards is discernible.
84. Currently, standards at Key Stage 1 are above average in speaking and listening, reading and writing. At Key Stage 2, standards are average in all aspects of the subject. However, pupils' writing skills, and their ability to retrieve information and use the library, are good. Writing has a high profile and the school is giving pupils a love of writing. They write at length and from the heart. Staff strive to strike a balance between the quality and content of the pupils' writing and the accuracy of the grammar, spelling and punctuation. This results in high quality writing in a variety of styles. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 write stories using such interesting beginnings as; "I am going to tell you a story. I haven't told it to anyone before because it is so hard to believe." They use this ability to write in depth in a variety of subjects. For example, they use interesting extended vocabulary and complex sentence structure when writing good accounts of scientific experiments or reports of historic events.
85. By the age of seven, pupils make good progress in speaking, listening and reading. Teachers give appropriate challenge to all ability groups and this results in good quality learning. The introduction of big books, both fiction and non-fiction, which teachers share with their classes, give pupils the opportunity to listen carefully to stories and ask and answer questions. Teachers encourage pupils to answer questions in well-constructed sentences. Year 2 pupils begin to speak clearly and confidently. When reading, they use their increasing knowledge of letter sounds, picture clues and context to help them read unfamiliar words. Pupils read their books confidently and accurately. Higher-attaining pupils have good ideas about what might happen next in a story and read with expression and appropriate intonation related to the punctuation. Most pupils know what an author is and what an illustrator does and some describe the difference between fiction and non-fiction books.
86. Over the last two years the rate of progress in speaking and listening in Key Stage 2 has accelerated. Currently, by the age of 11, pupils' skills are average but the improved rate of learning is now evident and standards are lifting. Speaking and listening has a high focus. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to listen carefully to stories and to each other talking about their work. For example, in mental arithmetic sessions, pupils are encouraged to discuss the strategies that they use to solve problems. In plenary sessions, in most subjects, pupils are encouraged to discuss their work. For example, in a Year 3 music lesson pupils demonstrated what they had learned in the lesson by talking about the composer and the title of the music that they had heard. By the age of 11, pupils speak out clearly and with assurance, engaging each other and adults in mature

conversations. For example, Year 6 pupils talk knowledgeably about the routines of school life and present their ideas and opinions in well reasoned arguments.

87. At Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in reading. Teachers introduce pupils to a wide range of books and authors. As a consequence, the majority of pupils develops a love of reading. They begin to build up a bank of favourite authors and seek out their books. Year 6 pupils study biographies and autobiographies in literacy lessons. This extends their knowledge and understanding of authors and their books and also introduces them to different styles of writing. In a class discussion, several Year 6 pupils expressed a liking for Roald Dahl books and named 14 of his books, which they had obviously read with enthusiasm. Teachers keep good records to monitor pupils' reading progress. They also use reading diaries, which act as a good two-way dialogue between home and school. Pupils, throughout the school, develop good research and library skills. The very pleasant library, which is spacious and well stocked, is of great benefit to pupils and teachers. Teachers teach the pupils how to use the library systems and this results in the good skills evident in all year groups.
88. Progress in writing at both key stages is good. Teachers concentrate on teaching the basic skills of grammar, spelling and handwriting in Key Stage 1. They have good subject knowledge and break down the skills which pupils are to learn into small, manageable steps. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, to develop the notion of rhyming words, the teacher used a variety of methods and resources to introduce words that rhymed. Pupils used a rhyming big book, word banks to generate rhyming strings and recited stories with predictable rhyming patterns. The teacher paced the lesson well to keep all the pupils interested and involved them all in the activities. As a result, the pupils learned quickly because they understood what they had to do. Teachers give regular opportunities for all pupils to practise their writing skills and place great importance on pupils expressing their thoughts through the written word. Consequently, pupils enjoy writing and take pride in writing two or three pages of interesting stories by the end of Key Stage 1.
89. At Key Stage 2, pupils continue to take pride in and practise their writing skills. By the age of 11, the majority of pupils writes in a legible, well-formed, cursive style. They make good progress and most achieve good standards. By the time they leave the school, most pupils spell accurately and use complex grammatical and punctuation skills effectively. Teachers guide pupils to write in a variety of styles and encourage them to experiment with different ways of expressing their ideas. Subsequently, by the end of the key stage, pupils write very well for particular purposes, such as recounting chronological events, persuasive arguments, reporting and composing biography. When writing a story, the higher-attaining pupils develop and sustain their ideas to reach a conclusion and hold the reader's interest well. They choose words sensitively and for effect. Mostly, they punctuate their work accurately, using paragraph indentation and speech marks effectively. For example, they write persuasively, from different points of view, to record debates, create stories from their own imagination and write poetry in different styles.
90. The good quality teaching in the literacy hours results in pupils' enjoying lessons and learning well. Most teachers know the subject well, explain their expectations clearly and make the literacy lesson interesting. This encourages the pupils to take an interest in reading and writing and provides good opportunities for pupils to learn effectively. They use their literacy skills well in other subjects, such as geography, history and religious education. However, information and communication technology is not used widely as a tool in literacy lessons. Teachers have good strategies to maintain discipline and use encouraging praise to motivate pupils. As a result, the vast majority of pupils behaves well throughout lessons. However, there is a small, but significant, minority of boys throughout the school who do not always respond appropriately to the teachers' expectations and they disrupt their own learning and very occasionally that of others. The

expectation of teachers, that pupils will listen carefully and work quietly, enhances the quality of learning for most pupils and results in them making good progress.

91. The subject leader manages the subject well and works hard to raise standards further. She is involved in monitoring the subject through the planning and the teaching and learning and has a clear vision for its future. The National Literacy Strategy has been successfully implemented and is a contributory factor to the maintenance of good standards.

MATHEMATICS

92. There is a significant improvement in pupils' standards in mathematics throughout the school. Most pupils in Year 2 are already achieving standards above those expected from pupils of similar age. This is an improvement since the previous inspection and a direct result of the impact of the National Numeracy Strategy and the quality of teaching. Pupils in Year 6 attain standards in mathematics that meet expectations for their age. This is a very significant improvement since the previous inspection. The improvement results from the greatly improved quality of teaching and the introduction of organising pupils into three ability groups. In the 1999 national tests, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 was well above average, although, the percentage reaching the higher Level 3 was below average. When compared with similar schools, these results were well above average at Level 2, but below average at Level 3. Results in the national tests at Key Stage 2 were below average at both the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5, although when compared with similar schools, they were close to average. The school's results show year on year improvement over the past two years. There are systems in place to ensure this continues.
93. Inspection findings show that pupils throughout the school receive a suitable level of challenge in their work. This meets their identified needs and abilities and is a direct result of teachers' careful assessment. An example of this is the extension work the school provides for a very able pupil in Year 6. The quality of teachers' marking is of a consistently high standard throughout the school. It gives pupils clear guidelines for improvement and the insistence on careful presentation of work is consistent in all classes. Recent changes of teaching personnel are having a positive impact on raising standards.
94. Across the school pupils have ample opportunities to use and apply mathematics in problem solving activities. They are confident in investigating properties of numbers, for example when working out comparative sizes of fractions in Year 6. Opportunities for this work begin in Year 1. Pupils confidently investigate different ways to make 10 and proffer the correct amount of money for items costing up to 10p. Teachers build well on these early skills and develop them effectively as pupils progress through the school. By Year 6 the pupils are confident in using their mathematical knowledge and understanding in other areas of the curriculum. For example, they apply it well to work in science and to creating patterns in art. This is a significant improvement for both key stages since the previous inspections.
95. The effective teaching and implementation of the numeracy strategy is developing pupils' number work well. They have a good level of skill in mental and oral work as a result of the daily mental recall tasks. Pupils of all abilities enjoy these sessions and participate eagerly. There is a marked improvement in standards throughout the school. By Year 2 pupils are developing their knowledge and understanding of multiplication skills well. This continues into Key Stage 2 and the higher-attaining pupils in Year 6 use these skills effectively to solve problems. They have a well developed understanding of fractions and their relationship with decimals. Pupils of average ability have less well developed skills

in their knowledge and use of multiplication tables. The teacher is aware of this and has suitable strategies for improvement in place.

96. Work on shape, space and measures is developing well by the time pupils enter Year 2. These pupils have a good understanding of the names and properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. When pupils enter Year 6, they show a suitable understanding of standard units of measurement. They apply these well to problem solving activities. Teachers ensure that pupils across the school acquire a good level of knowledge and understanding in their ability to deal with this aspect of mathematics.
97. Work on data handling and the use of information technology is satisfactory by Year 6. This is an area of development for the school.
98. The teaching of numeracy is overall good throughout the school. Just under half of all teaching is very good. None is less than satisfactory. This consistent quality of teaching is having a positive impact on the improvement in standards at both key stages. All teachers have suitably high expectations of what the pupils can achieve. This is evident in lessons and in the scrutiny of work. There is a very clear progression of knowledge, skills and understanding from Year 1 to Year 6 for all abilities. Most pupils respond with interest and enthusiasm to this good quality teaching. Some, however, refuse to be motivated and do not respond in a positive manner. This is a very small, but significant, minority of pupils. They are mainly boys at Key Stage 2. The teachers deal very well with these pupils and ensure that they do not impede learning and progress for other pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning. They receive an effective level of support in class. This enables them to work at a similar rate to their classmates. All teachers have high expectations of how pupils present their work. They reinforce this consistently through marking.
99. The management of mathematics is very good throughout the school. There is rigorous monitoring of what pupils achieve and the target setting is accurate. The school identifies areas for improvement and takes the necessary steps to address them. This is having a marked impact on the improvement in standards.

SCIENCE

100. Standards of attainment are average at the end of both key stages. These levels confirm a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Teacher assessments in science show that an average proportion of pupils reached the expected Level 2 last year, whilst an above average number attained the higher Level 3. When compared with similar schools, these results were in line with the average at Level 2 and above average at Level 3. At Key Stage 2, test results showed standards well below the national average at both the expected and higher levels and below average when compared with standards in similar schools.
101. The school has recently taken action to target specific groups of pupils to bring about further improvement. This is proving successful. Knowledge and understanding of all areas of the science curriculum show signs of improvement. However, the school acknowledges that there is much work to be done, in both key stages, to raise standards in experimental and investigative science, which remains a weakness.
102. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils make suggestions about how to find things out and carry out tests, explaining whether they consider them to be fair. They have developed an understanding of basic life processes and use this to establish the difference between living and non-living things. They devise different ways of sorting materials according to their main properties. Pupils in Year 1, for instance, learn that different materials are

chosen for specific purposes on the basis of their properties; warm clothes for a cold day, for example. They also develop their understanding of forces. Pupils in Year 2 investigate forces by using a push and pull machine. They record their work appropriately, making predictions about what they think will happen and then carefully observing what they see.

103. By the end of Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils have a sound grasp of scientific vocabulary and an increasingly secure base of knowledge. They develop an informed approach to investigations. They make well informed predictions when testing materials that conduct electricity, carry out fair tests and base conclusions on a sound understanding of scientific processes. They investigate whether certain substances are soluble or not and make suggestions for experiments to discover which changes in state are irreversible. They test which habitats different creatures favour and learn about how animals adapt to climatic conditions. They learn about the practical difficulties of storing water and of the harmful effects of pollution.
104. Their knowledge of forces is also sound. Higher-attaining pupils know that by changing the voltage of an electric motor the speed at which loads can be lifted will be affected. Pupils know many facts about the human body, a healthy lifestyle and the need for a skeleton to support the body joints. They have a good understanding of the conditions that affect plant growth and the relationships between plants and animals. Many explain the effects caused by the movement of the earth and how a solar eclipse occurs. The majority of pupils constructs a basic circuit correctly to light a series of bulbs. However, at present pupils are given too few opportunities to plan their own investigations, to select resources and to evaluate the validity of their conclusions.
105. Literacy and numeracy skills are used well to discuss, record and measure scientific findings in experiments and observations. Listening and speaking skills are at least satisfactory in all lessons and pupils measure with increasing accuracy. The use of information technology skills for research is satisfactory. However, pupils do not use information technology sufficiently for collecting, recording and displaying information.
106. The quality of teaching is good overall in both key stages; it is good or better in three-quarters of the lessons observed. One lesson is very good. A close scrutiny of pupils' completed work and discussion with pupils confirm that they make good progress overall. Teachers have a secure and confident subject knowledge, which they use effectively to extend pupils' thinking. They do this particularly well with well posed questions. This provides motivation and tests pupils' understanding so that teachers know what pupils understand. There is a good focus on developing appropriate vocabulary. Pupils in Year 6 learn the differences between the words 'solute', 'soluble', 'solution' and 'solvent', and learn to use them accurately. Similarly, pupils in Year 4 learn the correct names for different kinds of teeth in their study of animals.
107. In the most successful lessons, planning focuses on practising and improving key skills that are matched correctly to the stages of pupils' learning. Teachers have high but realistic expectations of what pupils can do and challenge them well through good levels of questions and discussion. A good example of this was seen in a Year 6 lesson. Pupils were asked how, exactly, their experiment to test the solubility of several solids in water can be made fair. Much profitable discussion followed. The teacher tested their thinking about scientific investigations by very skilful leading questions. In the best lessons, teachers regularly gather groups of pupils together to clarify points and also to give extension work to stretch the higher-attainers. The best lessons are conducted at a good pace to prevent pupils from losing interest. Teachers use the assessments made during lessons to guide them in what to teach next, to ensure progress by all pupils. Marking effectively guides pupils in how to improve their work. Pupils with special educational

needs and those who speak English as an additional language are fully integrated in science lessons and participate well, especially orally. They make good progress and are sensitively and effectively supported.

108. In several lessons, teachers make very good use of well briefed non-teaching assistants. They know exactly how best to help with small group activities and make a good contributions to pupils' progress. In all lessons, teachers manage time and deploy resources particularly well. This high level of organisation ensures that pupils are kept appropriately busy and this has a beneficial impact on their learning.
109. The school makes good use of the information it gains from regular assessments. Results are analysed very carefully and trends are identified. For instance, the weakness in investigative science was identified by the school from the results of national assessments. The school has taken swift action to modify the teaching emphasis to remedy this and staff training sessions are planned. Teachers' lesson planning is monitored regularly to ensure consistency of provision.

ART

110. Standards in art throughout the school are above expectations for pupils of this age. This is a very significant improvement, particularly for pupils in Key Stage 2, since the previous inspection. The school provides a well-balanced curriculum that covers both elements of the National Curriculum.
111. By the age of seven, pupils have a good understanding of the properties of media such as pastels, powder paint, pencils and clay. They link their drawings with work in science and English. For example, pupils observe halved fruit closely and use pastels and paint to produce pictures. They illustrate stories and books carefully and effectively. They pay close attention to colour, texture and pattern when they make collage pictures. Their ability to cut, glue and stick is well developed. The pupils use their knowledge of materials to produce eye-catching two- and three-dimensional work. Examples of this are their woven seascapes and the detailed pencil sketches inspired by the work of L.S. Lowry.
112. These above average standards continue throughout Key Stage 2. In Year 3, pupils experiment with materials to make printing rollers. They discuss, evaluate and improve their work and experiment confidently. As pupils progress through the key stage, they build on and develop their skills well. By Year 5, the pupils show increasing control in their use of a variety of media. They are confident in their use of pencils to amend and develop their initial ideas. Pupils make good use of their sketchbooks, discuss their work critically and suggest ideas for improvement. They have well developed observation skills and quickly spot the difference in the eyes of 'Postman Joseph Roulin'. By Year 6 pupils use their observation skills well to create mood in their pencil sketches. This is developed well by the influence of prints by artists such as Edvard Munch, Chagall and Picasso. They give increasing attention to detail and accuracy in their work. All pupils show a good level of confidence in translating sketches on to larger pieces of paper. Pupils create three-dimensional artefacts well and demonstrate a good understanding of movement in their clay figure models. These high standards are a direct result of the good quality teaching throughout the school.
113. Pupils throughout the school learn well as they consolidate and develop their techniques, skills, knowledge and understanding. The pupils with special educational needs integrate very well with their classmates and make good progress in their learning. All pupils use and apply their knowledge of techniques, such as mark making and line drawing to good effect. The teachers ensure that all pupils have opportunities to use a suitably wide range

of media and materials. This enables the pupils to make good progress in learning about the properties of materials and how to use them effectively. They use computer generated art to produce very effective pictures in the style of Matisse. Pupils quickly learn how to achieve different effects as they use a range of pencils, and experiment confidently with line and pattern. They have time to reflect on their achievements and make significant gains in their ability to evaluate, change and improve their work.

114. The teachers make sure that pupils know what is expected of them in their work and behaviour. The activities interest the pupils and they work hard to achieve good results. Pupils enjoy their work in art. They are eager to talk about what they are doing and keen to achieve well. All members of staff ensure that pupils have opportunities to develop, expand and use their own ideas in their work. The teachers reinforce acceptable behaviour well and the vast majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning. There is, however, a significant minority of pupils in most classes who do not have positive attitudes to learning. These pupils constantly repeat their disruptive behaviour and restrict their learning and progress.
115. The overall quality of teaching throughout the school is good. Just under a half of the teaching is very good. This has a direct impact on pupils' standards and achievements. The teachers are confident and effectively transmit this to their pupils. The thorough and careful planning shows clearly what it is teachers expect pupils to learn each lesson. Teachers share this with pupils and carefully explain their expectations of achievement. All teachers make effective use of questions and, when suitable, discussion to move pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding forward. They teach skills and techniques systematically and ensure that pupils develop them well. The teaching about artists and their work enables pupils to develop awareness of art from a range of times and cultures. Teachers provide valuable opportunities for pupils to discuss and reflect on art and artists. This makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

116. Standards in designing and making are appropriately developed by the end of both key stages. The subject supports work in literacy and numeracy well; for example, in one Year 6 lesson, pupils were required to evaluate the properties of different materials to use for the sole of a slipper. The teacher encouraged the use of a range of adjectives taking the opportunity to develop the pupils' literacy skills. By Year 2, pupils generate ideas by shaping, assembling and rearranging materials. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 made glove puppets. The design process was followed well with pupils producing detailed designs. The finished products were close representations of the original designs. In Year 4, pupils considered production methods, producing box designs for pizzas. This followed a disassembly process and pupils subsequently designed and made pizzas to fit the box. By Year 6, pupils have used a good range of materials. In all cases, pupils design and plan before making, and teachers emphasise the process of evaluating their work. Standards have improved, particularly in Key Stage 2, on those reported in the previous inspection. The emphasis on the importance of the design process has helped to improve the quality of work and it has made pupils realise the need for good planning. Pupils are proud of what they achieve and are pleased to discuss their finished products.
117. Teaching is at least satisfactory and much is good. Teachers have embraced the subject and work well together to ensure that pupils have every opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills through appropriate design and make activities. There is room for the development of more links to other subjects. When these links are made they are

effective; for example, in a Year 4 information and communication technology lesson, pupils designed advertising leaflets related to the pizza project. This reinforced the knowledge and understanding of both subjects very effectively.

118. The subject is well managed by a recently appointed, enthusiastic subject leader. There is a good range of materials and an appropriate range of tools. The quality of pupils' learning benefits significantly from the support provided in lessons by the good quality support assistants. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have full access to the curriculum. As a consequence, all pupils' designing and making skills are appropriately developed over time. They enjoy the subject and the majority respond well in lessons. Pupils take care with their work and that of others.

GEOGRAPHY

119. The quality of learning at both key stages is satisfactory and pupils achieve satisfactory standards. This is an improvement over that found two years ago, particularly in Key Stage 2. Standards at the time of the inspection of the junior school were unsatisfactory. During this inspection, no direct teaching was observed. However, from scrutinising pupils' work and teachers' planning and from talking with pupils, it is clear that pupils make satisfactory progress, both in lessons and over the time that they attend the school.
120. Geography is taught as a separate subject. It has an appropriate allocation of curriculum time and is taught alternately with history and design and technology. The subject leader has revised the curriculum, in light of Curriculum 2000, to give full coverage of National Curriculum requirements. She monitors teachers' planning and has prepared an appropriate action plan, aimed at improving provision in order to raise standards. Good cross-curricular links are made to other subjects, such as science, mathematics and religious education. For example, work on map co-ordinates links with numeracy and comparing changes in countries' boundaries since Old Testament times through maps, effectively uses geographical skills well in religious education.
121. At Key Stage 1, pupils acquire satisfactory skills in investigating places and themes through weather topics. They learn geographical terms such as hill and river when exploring their surroundings. They use globes and maps and plan elementary routes. Key Stage 2 pupils extend these skills through topics such as water and weather. They study the effect of micro-climates on the environment. They undertake traffic surveys and comparative studies of different areas from their own, such as Llandudno. Pupils use their literacy skills well to research and write about these topics.

HISTORY

122. Evidence for standards in history is taken from pupils' work on display around the school, past work, teachers' planning and discussion with the subject leaders. This all indicates a considerable level of improvement since the previous inspections. Standards by the ages of seven and 11 meet those expected.
123. The younger pupils' work shows a sound understanding of chronology and of the division of time into periods. They compare past events with those in their own lives and distinguish fact from fiction. The school makes very effective use of the visually impaired unit's resources when pupils learn about Louis Braille. This gives pupils valuable first-hand experience of the impact people from the past have on present day life.
124. As pupils progress through Key Stage 2, they increase their understanding of how past events influence the present. They sequence events accurately. An example of this is the work on the development of events in England beginning with the Celts. Teachers

encourage pupils to be aware of history around them, at home and on holiday. Pupils develop a sound awareness of how people lived in Roman times. They develop this through work in English and art. Work on display shows that pupils have an increasing factual knowledge of some of the main events in Roman and Viking times. They are successfully developing their awareness of how change took place and why people invade other countries.

125. Pupils at both key stages use their literacy skills satisfactorily in history. They write accurate factual accounts, as well as imaginative narratives.
126. Teachers base their planning firmly on the National Curriculum. The quality of planning is good. This ensures that pupils cover a suitable range of work and make good progress in developing skills, knowledge and understanding. The scheme of work gives a good level of support to teachers. Resources, books, posters and artefacts are good in quality and quantity. They are well organised and readily accessible for use. The subject leaders have a good overview of standards in the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

127. Standards are similar to those found nationally by the end of Year 2. At the end of that year, pupils develop sound skills, particularly in word-processing and they explain their work well. Pupils in Year 6 have a good grounding in the subject and achieve standards that are appropriate for their age. Their achievements match those of pupils in similar schools. Across the school, pupils' skills are under-used. Some work is carried out in classes to reinforce or develop particular subject specific skills, for example to improve numeracy skills. Pupils also use computer skills confidently for such activities as improving their knowledge of words with similar sounds in literacy lessons.
128. Throughout the school, pupils develop their skills systematically and, with the regular focused lessons in the computer suite, they begin to achieve well. For example, pupils in Year 3 confidently combine text and graphics to illustrate their stories. In Year 4 pupils develop their word-processing skills further, gaining a sound understanding of spell checkers as an aid to producing accurate copy. Some good links are made between information and communication technology and other subjects; for example, in Year 3 mathematics lessons pupils use computers to organise data. Year 5 pupils insert data into a spreadsheet and create appropriate formulae in order to explore the 'what if' questions. By Year 6, pupils confidently enter information which they have previously collected onto spreadsheets, finding alternative ways of presenting the results. All pupils develop sound basic skills in logging on and off the computer, using relevant menus and icons to access programs and responding to instructions that appear on the screen.
129. The school has addressed the weakness raised in the previous report. It has made good progress in implementing a good curriculum and is beginning to raise standards as well as improving assessment procedures. Pupils now benefit from regular focused teaching in the well resourced, if small, technology suite. However, the ratio of computers to pupils remains well below the national average of 13:1. The school makes good use of national guidance and is meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, further development is required to fully utilise the technology in all curriculum areas.
130. Teaching is at least satisfactory and often good. Although, during the inspection, good teaching was observed in both key stages, some staff are still lack confidence in their knowledge of the subject. Where teaching was most effective, preparation and planning was good resulting in tasks being set that provided challenge for all pupils. Less effective teaching occurred where teachers were insecure in their understanding of the equipment or the software being used or when lessons were heavily teacher directed. Teachers use

demonstrations well, particularly when using the 'big screen'. Teachers work very effectively with classroom assistants and ensure that pupils receive clear guidance. Pupils with special educational needs, in particular the visually impaired, have very good support. Relationships are sound and pupils work co-operatively and share resources well when required. Adults interact well with pupils enabling them to gain confidence as they develop their skills.

MUSIC

131. Standards have improved since the last inspection, when they were below national expectations in the infant school and in line with expectations in the junior school. Standards throughout the school now meet the expectations for pupils of this age. The quality of teaching and learning is now good for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. This improvement is largely due to the enthusiasm of the specialist subject leader and the guidance given to staff through the good quality scheme of work.
132. The school promotes a broad and balanced curriculum, which covers the listening and appraising and performing elements of the subject well. This enables pupils to reach satisfactory standards. The school enjoys a good working relationship with the Peripatetic Music Service and a number of Key Stage 2 pupils undertake weekly instrumental tuition. The work of the peripatetic teachers makes a valuable contribution to the school's music.
133. Pupils throughout the school sing tunefully and with enthusiasm. They listen to a good variety of music and begin to form their own likes and dislikes. Teachers are careful to choose good recordings for pupils to hear. They take time to talk about the music's style and history. Consequently, pupils begin to evaluate music carefully and with understanding.
134. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers adopt an enthusiastic approach, communicating well with the pupils and encouraging them to participate. In the good lessons, teachers use their good subject knowledge to explain effectively what they want the pupils to learn. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, the teacher gave a very clear description of how to distinguish beat from rhythm. She encouraged the pupils to listen carefully and this resulted in better understanding and improved performance. Teachers provide a good range of interesting activities for their pupils. They use subject-specific language in lessons. For example, they teach pupils the correct definitions and terminology for beat, rhythm, dynamics and tempo. As a result, pupils talk knowledgeably about their work. Teachers encourage pupils to produce written evidence of their own music. For example, in Year 6, pupils use a variety of symbols to write down the rhythm and beat pattern of their compositions. Good use is made of the specialist skills of the subject leader in teaching classes in different year groups. This ensures continuity of learning for pupils and acts as in-service training for members of staff who feel less secure in their subject knowledge.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

135. At the end of both key stages most pupils achieve the standards expected for their age. A significant number achieve good standards in dance, gymnastics, games and swimming. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
136. Young pupils learn the importance of warm-up when taking part in exercise. They have a well developed understanding of the function of the heart and of the health related benefits of exercise. They run in different directions, changing direction as instructed, jump with feet together and bend their knees on landing. Older Key Stage 1 pupils

continue to achieve sound standards in dance. Games skills are well developed by the end of Key Stage 2. Year 3 pupils practise their throwing and catching skills, learning that their best throws are directed to the midriff of the catcher. Pupils in Year 4 develop a range of balancing skills, learning to take their weight on different parts of their bodies. Pupils in Year 5 practise making bridges using different parts of their bodies and then add linking movements to build up a sequence. In school swimming lessons, older pupils develop their water competence via a series of exercises designed to improve their stroke production, in the basic swimming strokes. By the time they leave the school, the majority of pupils achieve the national standard of swimming 25 metres unaided. At the present time, the school does not organise school teams or enter competitions.

137. There is equal access to all activities and the majority of pupils make sound progress overall as they develop and improve their skills. Progress in dance lessons leads to refinement of movements, improvement in physical control and appreciation of space. In athletics, pupils benefit from a range of well thought out activities each designed to offer them further challenge. In swimming lessons, pupils develop confidence in the water and improve their strokes. The school provides a limited number of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils with talent and dedication to achieve their potential. Both boys and girls have opportunities to make progress in developing appropriate skills in an out-of-school soccer club.
138. The quality of teaching in physical education lessons is never less than satisfactory. During the inspection, three lessons were good and one was very good. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and performance. These they share with the pupils who know exactly what is required of them. They plan challenging activities into their lessons which they conduct at a good pace. This keeps everyone involved and interested. A strong feature of a very good lesson was the way that the teacher used pupils to demonstrate, and then evaluated their performance to show them how to improve.
139. Pupils' response in physical education lessons is good. Pupils dress appropriately and are enthusiastic. The vast majority of pupils are enthusiastic about their lessons and participate fully. High levels of enjoyment are evident in the activities seen. Pupils work hard to develop their skills and the majority work well co-operatively during group and team activities. They are happy to demonstrate, taking pride in their physical prowess.
140. The school makes good use of outside help such as coaching sessions from local professional teams. The new subject leader has devised a plan for the development of the subject. A recently adopted scheme of work ensures that the school meets all National Curriculum requirements. The school has hard play areas and use of a large sports field. The school hall is of a good size for physical education and is well equipped. Two further halls can be used as necessary.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

141. Pupils achieve standards in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. This represents an improvement in Key Stage 2 since the last inspection.
142. Pupils in Year 1 are introduced to the Bible and learn of its significance as a special holy book through stories, such as those of Jonah and Noah. They discuss what they know about Harvest Festival and study the Jewish festival of thankfulness, Sukkot. Older Key Stage 1 pupils learn effectively about the significant events in the life of Jesus. They learn about his boyhood and his family and hear about how he got lost in the temple. In a well chosen activity they compile a profile of Jesus's life.

143. Pupils in Key Stage 2 learn about Judaism and different religious observances. They learn effectively about the "Mitzvah," coming of age. Strong links are made with Christianity through Jesus' visits to the temple, the story of Moses and the Ten Commandments, with which pupils are familiar. End of key stage pupils also study the Easter story considering how the sorrow and despair of Good Friday is turned to the joy of Easter Sunday. They learn about the five pillars of Islam, look at different places of worship and consider the form of Islamic patterns.
144. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are familiar with a range of religious ideas and themes and have had opportunities to compare and contrast some of the major features of Christianity, Islam and Judaism. They are familiar with the life of Jesus and other major religious leaders and, through skilfully led discussion, present some of their own developing religious ideas and beliefs. This makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
145. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and was very good in two thirds of lessons seen. Teachers display good subject knowledge and this aids them considerably in answering pupils' questions. In the best lessons, teachers plan their work thoroughly and design activities designed to challenge pupils of all abilities. Most lessons involve discussion and practical activities. This active participation helps the progress of pupils of all attainments, including those with special educational needs. Teachers control their classes well and give very clear explanations. This means that every child knows exactly what they have to do. Teachers ask challenging questions. For instance, a class of Year 6 pupils is asked to explain exactly how they would feel if they were attacked and to define exactly when violence might be justified. The high expectations that teachers share with their pupils enthuses them and gives them confidence. Well trained and enthusiastic classroom assistants give admirable support to teachers and considerably aid pupils' learning.