

# INSPECTION REPORT

## ALEXANDRA PARK JUNIOR SCHOOL

Glodwick, Oldham

LEA area: Oldham

Unique reference number: 105626

Headteacher: Mrs I Barratt

Reporting inspector: Mr S Hill  
21277

Dates of inspection: 26<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> November 2001

Inspection number: 230305

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Brook Lane Oldham Lancashire
Postcode:	OL8 2BE
Telephone number:	0161 911 3151
Fax number:	0161 911 3152
Appropriate authority:	Oldham
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Duke
Date of previous inspection:	April 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21277	Mr S Hill	Registered inspector	ICT, Art and Design, History	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9577	Mrs E Parrish	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
4099	Mr R Braithwaite	Team inspector	Mathematics, Design and Technology, Physical Education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities provided for pupils?
20326	Mr P Clark	Team inspector	Special educational needs, Music, Science, Religious Education	
15023	Mr A Haouas	Team inspector	English, English as an additional language, Geography, Equal opportunities	
16249	Mrs S Barnes	Team inspector		

The inspection contractor was:

Evenlode Associates Ltd  
6 Abbey Close  
Alcester  
Warwickshire  
B49 5QW

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33 Kingsway  
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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>10</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>26</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Alexandra Park is an average-sized junior school in the Glodwick area of Oldham, with 280 pupils aged from 7 to 11. There are three classes in each year group except in Year 3, where there are 2 large classes of 36. Almost all pupils speak a language other than English at home. The majority come from the local Pakistani community, with a home language of Punjabi. There are 11 from the Bangladeshi community and one white child. Overall, the socio-economic circumstances of pupils are well below average, and this is reflected by the large number of pupils (almost half) who are entitled to free school meals. Attainment on entry to the school is well below average, particularly in the English language. There are a very large number of pupils identified as having special educational needs (63%). Most of these have moderate learning difficulties. Currently the school has considerable difficulties in recruiting teachers, and this is having a negative impact on pupils' learning.

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

This is a school with high levels of pastoral care and very good links with parents. These combine with good teaching to enable pupils, who start from very low initial levels of attainment, to make steady progress in most aspects of their work. Weaknesses in assessment and its use, and significant long-term absence when pupils visit the sub-continent mean that the good teaching leads to only satisfactory progress overall. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Teaching is good.
- Pupils behave well, and have very positive attitudes to school.
- There are very good procedures to eliminate oppressive behaviour, so that the school is a racially harmonious community where relationships are consistently good.
- Provision for social, cultural and moral development is a strength.
- The school's links with parents are very effective.
- The school is well led and managed.

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

- Standards could be higher in English, mathematics and science.
- Assessment procedures could be better and used more effectively to promote pupils' learning.
- The monitoring of teaching and of pupils' work could be better.
- More use could be made of information and communications technology (ICT) to support work in other subjects.

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

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

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection in April 1998. Results in national tests have risen faster than the national trend, although overall they were still well below average in 2001. The overall good quality of teaching has been maintained, and the proportion of good and very good lessons has increased. Attendance has improved dramatically, and is now in line with national averages.

Sound progress has been made on the key issues from the last report. School development planning has improved and now concentrates clearly on improving standards. Improvements have been made in assessment arrangements, but they are still weak in many subjects, and insufficient use is made of assessment in planning work for pupils. Management workloads had been distributed more evenly, but current difficulties in recruiting staff have disrupted arrangements. Some staff again have too heavy a workload. Provision for support staff has been improved, including the employment of more staff who speak pupils' home languages. The school now complies with legal requirements for collective worship.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E	E*	E	C
mathematics	E	E	E	D
science	E	E	C	A

**Key**

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

*E\* means the school was in the lowest 5% nationally.*

Results in national tests have generally been much lower than those of schools nationally, but over several years they have improved faster than the national trend. In comparison with schools where similar numbers of pupils are entitled to free school meals, results have also generally been low, although in 2001 results improved, particularly in science, and were higher overall than in similar schools. No figures are available to compare results with those of schools who have similar numbers of pupils for whom English is not their home language.

Inspection evidence broadly reflects the test results, though with some variation. Standards at the end of Year 6 are well below average in English and science, and below average in mathematics. The impact of the national numeracy strategy has been significant in raising standards in mathematics. In science, standards of the current Year 6 are well below average, despite the improved results last year. This is because this cohort has had a lot of disruptions over their school career, and over two thirds of the pupils are on the register of special educational needs. Standards in other subjects are broadly in line with national expectations. Standards in listening and in handwriting are good, although speaking, reading and writing are weak.

As pupils enter the school with attainment well below average, their achievement is satisfactory overall. It is not as good as might be expected given the good quality of teaching. Assessment weaknesses contribute to this. Low initial standards in English have a significant impact on pupils' learning in other subjects. Prolonged visits to the sub-continent also have detrimental effects on the attainment of those pupils involved. Pupils make satisfactory progress in learning English but, given their low starting point, they need to do better than this to catch up with their peers in other schools. Pupils who have special educational needs generally achieve well in the light of their initial attainment.

The school tries to set challenging targets for pupils' achievements, but these have weaknesses because of weaknesses in assessment procedures.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and are enthusiastic in joining in many aspects of school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils behave very well both in class and around the school. They are polite and sensible. However, occasionally pupils show unsatisfactory behaviour in lessons, when teaching is weaker, or they are taught by temporary staff.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils form good relationships with each other and with adults in the school. They have a very good understanding of how their actions can affect others, and show very high levels of respect for other people's feelings and beliefs. They willingly take on responsibilities and fulfil them reliably.

Attendance	Satisfactory. The school has very good procedures to encourage pupils to attend regularly. However, prolonged visits abroad have a negative impact on the learning of a significant number of pupils.
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## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Years 3 – 6</b>
Quality of teaching	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.*

Teaching and learning are good overall, but the quality of teaching is variable from very good to unsatisfactory. During the inspection almost a half of lessons were good and about a further quarter were very good. Only two lessons out of the 65 observed were unsatisfactory. Examples of good teaching were observed in every class.

Strengths in teaching generally include good management of pupils based on positive relationships and clear expectations. This ensures good behaviour and very positive attitudes to work. Lessons have a brisk pace, which helps maintain pupils' interest. Teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn and often share this with pupils. This means that pupils know what they are doing and take pride in what they achieve. Teaching in English and mathematics lessons is good, and is often very good so that the skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well. Teachers have a good understanding of the needs of their pupils, including those with special needs. Some good strategies are used to support the learning of pupils for whom English is an additional language, and bilingual support assistants contribute effectively to this.

A general weakness in teaching is the failure to make full use of ICT to support learning in other subjects. Marking is not used sufficiently to show pupils how they can improve their work. The small number of lessons that are unsatisfactory are characterised by insecure class control, by teachers who are taking the class on a temporary basis. In these lessons, silliness and inattention by pupils prevent them making progress in their learning.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. The curriculum is generally broad and balanced. Good use is made of a range of visits to enhance pupils' learning. Good provision is made for extra-curricular activities. Not enough use is made of ICT to support work in other subjects. Insufficient emphasis is given to investigative work in science.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The provision is well managed and supports pupils' good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory overall. Good use is made of bilingual support staff to support pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for pupils' moral development is particularly strong, and they are given a clear understanding of right and wrong. They are taught to value and respect other people and their beliefs, and this strongly supports the harmonious relationships in the school.
How well the school	Good provision is made for ensuring pupils' welfare. Attendance is



cares for its pupils	promoted very successfully. The school is very effective in eliminating oppressive behaviour. However, arrangements to assess pupils' attainment are unsatisfactory.
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The school works very well in partnership with parents.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher and senior staff give clear leadership to colleagues. Subject co-ordinators work hard and provide clear leadership and support to colleagues, but recent staffing changes and recruitment difficulties mean that this is not equally effective in all subjects. The monitoring of teaching and of standards is not adequate.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has good overall understanding of its own strengths and weaknesses. Flaws in assessment and monitoring mean that this is not sufficiently detailed to support effective action in addressing the weaknesses .
The strategic use of resources	The principles of "best value" are used well. The school is well provided with staff, and resources. Accommodation is very good. Good use is made of the accommodation and learning resources. The use of support staff is variable, and sometimes insufficient use is made of their skills to support pupils' learning.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• The school expects children to do their best.</li> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents feel their children do not get the right amount of homework.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. The provision of homework is good, and is better than average for a junior school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Results in national tests have generally been much lower than those of schools nationally, but over several years they have improved faster than the national trend. In comparison with schools where similar numbers of pupils are entitled to free school meals, results have also generally been low, although in 2001 results improved, particularly in science, and were higher overall than in similar schools. No figures are available to compare results with those of schools who have similar numbers of pupils for whom English is not their home language. Inspection evidence broadly reflects the test results, though with some variation. Standards have generally been maintained since the last inspection in English, mathematics and science. Standards have improved in history, geography, ICT and design and technology.
2. Standards in English are well below expectations by the end of year 6. Results in the 2001 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds were well below the national average. Results improved against the previous year, but had remained low over the previous three years. Weak results are mainly because of the high number of pupils with special educational needs and the fact that almost all pupils have English as an additional language. This is often compounded by the very high rate of pupils going away on holiday to Pakistan in term time. There is variation in pupils' attainment within the subject. Listening skills are good, and are supported by pupils' positive attitudes to learning, and their good behaviour. Speaking skills are poor for the majority, because of their lack of fluency in English. Reading and writing skills are weak for similar reasons. However, handwriting is a strength, because it is taught well and valued by staff and pupils alike.
3. Currently, standards in mathematics are below expectations. The most recent results of national assessments indicated that standards were well below average, and hardly any pupils reached a higher Level 5. However, inspection evidence suggests standards are rising. This is due to the positive impact of the National Numeracy strategy, good teaching overall, and a number of other initiatives by the school to target identified weaknesses in the subject. The underlying difficulty of weaknesses in the level of pupils' understanding of English is, however, still inhibiting learning in areas like problem solving.
4. Standards in science are well below those expected in Year 6. In the national tests in 2001, results were average compared to schools nationally and above average when compared to schools that have a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals. This year group contained relatively few pupils with special educational needs. In the present Year 6 a large number, seventy-five per cent of the cohort, are on the special educational needs register. There are some specific weaknesses in the science curriculum and, although teaching is sound overall, it is not as good as in mathematics or English. Nevertheless, there is evidence from inspection to indicate that standards are improving for most pupils in Year 5, and the current attainment of these classes is in line with expectations.
5. Standards in information and communications technology (ICT) are improving, and the current Year 6 are on line to meet the national expectation by the end of the year. Recent improvements in provision, hard work by staff and very good leadership from the co-ordinator have all contributed to raising standards. Pupils' skills in ICT are sound, but they make far too little use of them to support work in other subjects.
6. Standards in other subjects are broadly in line with national expectations, although pupils' written work does not always reflect their sound knowledge and understanding, because of their weak English skills.

7. By the age of eleven, the majority of pupils who learn English as an additional language achieve appropriately against their prior attainment. They achieve best when the teaching is focussed on the language demands of the subject or topic being studied, and opportunities are exploited to rehearse and model the language needed to advance their knowledge and understanding. A great number of pupils often go for long holidays to their family's country of origin and this clearly inhibits the rate of progress they make.
8. Thirty-nine pupils have high levels of special educational needs. These pupils receive good support to meet their individual needs and most make good progress against their targets in developing their literacy and numeracy skills, which are the main focus of their individual education plans. These plans are generally well written, containing specific, clear targets against which success can be measured. The school identifies a few pupils as gifted or talented and these make satisfactory progress.
9. As pupils enter the school with attainment well below average, their achievement is satisfactory overall. It is not as good as might be expected given the good quality of teaching. Low initial standards in English have a significant impact on pupils' learning in other subjects so that, despite good teaching, their learning over time is generally only satisfactory. Prolonged visits to the sub-continent also have detrimental effects on the attainment of pupils' involved, as do shortcomings in assessment. Pupils make satisfactory progress in learning English but, given their low starting point, they need to do better than this to catch up with their peers in other schools. There are no significant differences between the attainments of boys and girls, or between pupils of different abilities.
10. The school tries to set challenging targets for pupils' achievements, but these have weaknesses because of weaknesses in assessment procedures.

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

11. This continues as a strength from the time of the last inspection.
12. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school. They work hard in class and are keen to succeed. They take school seriously and try their best, contributing thoughtfully to discussions and settling down to work conscientiously. They are highly motivated and value the praise they receive from teachers for good work or effort. They enjoy their work in class and join in enthusiastically with other events. It was noticeable, for example, how much all pupils enjoy joining in music sessions, clapping along with the school steel band during an assembly. Pupils also enjoy taking part in the wide range of clubs they are able to attend. The computer club is particularly popular and, every morning and evening, groups of pupils show high levels of concentration working independently at the computer. Pupils are very conscientious about doing their work, including their homework. They take on responsibility for their own learning when required, although this is not always provided.
13. Pupils' behaviour is good overall. In most lessons, and in the playground, it is usually very good, and most pupils show high levels of self-discipline. This contributes significantly to their learning. When moving around the school or when coming into the hall for assembly, for example, they are sensible and orderly. All this supports the purposeful working atmosphere in the school. The good work the school has done shows in the general absence of bullying, or oppressive or racist behaviour. When there are minor incidents, pupils are confident that staff and their classmates will deal with them effectively, and so they are secure and happy within the harmonious school community. On a few occasions pupils' behaviour in lessons can deteriorate. This is often associated with weaker teaching, or with teachers who are less familiar with the class. A few pupils then are inclined to be inattentive or silly, and this disrupts the progress of learning.

14. Relationships in the school are good. Pupils get on well with staff and with each other. They have a very secure understanding of how what they do can affect other people, and generally show care and concern for other people as a result. Pupils mix well across lines of gender and race, and are proud of their bilingual and multicultural identity. They show a healthy curiosity in cultures different from their own and a high level of motivation to learn. Their respect for others' values and beliefs is very high. Pupils showed this in a very good religious education lesson in Year 5, when they explained how important it was to understand other people and their faiths. They also clearly expressed their delight at the prospect of going to visit a synagogue in the near future.
15. Pupils accept responsibility readily and complete any tasks they are given conscientiously. They take a pride in this, and can be relied on by the adults in the school. They look after the school building and equipment sensibly, so that it is a pleasant, friendly environment. They work very well collaboratively, taking advantage of the many opportunities that they are given. They share ideas and equipment sensibly and amicably, listening to each other carefully and showing great respect for each other's contributions.
16. Attendance is satisfactory and is in line with national averages. This is a major improvement since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy coming to school and almost all pupils arrive on time. Registration is carried out effectively and the vast majority of parents co-operate with the school's drive to maintain regular attendance. However, some parents take their children away on holiday during term time and this has an adverse effect on overall attendance. In the last 12 months, 65 pupils were away for very long periods, up to 3 months, and some for even longer. After 6 weeks' absence, pupils are taken off the school roll. Such long absences from school have a major impact on the standards these pupils achieve, and on the overall standards in the school.

#### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

17. Teaching and learning are good overall, but the quality of teaching is variable from very good to unsatisfactory. Examples of good teaching were observed in every class during the inspection. The quality of teaching has been maintained, and has improved in terms of the amount of good and very good teaching since the last inspection. This is a significant achievement when four members of the permanent staff are relatively inexperienced, and six members of staff during the inspection were on temporary contracts.
18. Strengths in teaching generally include good management of pupils based on positive relationships and clear expectations. In the vast majority of lessons, this is reflected in pupils' good behaviour and very positive attitudes to their work. For example, in a mathematics lesson with Year 5, pupils showed excellent attitudes to their work, behaving and concentrating well and working effectively independently. The very good teaching helped ensure significant gains in their understanding of symmetry. Teachers make good use of time, and lessons have a brisk pace, which helps maintain pupils' interest. Teachers make good use of a range of strategies, and better lessons show a good balance between activities; the teaching of specific information, well-paced question and answer sessions, pupils working independently and in groups, and practical activities are all used effectively. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to work collaboratively, which contributes to their social development as well as their learning.
19. Lessons are generally well planned and organised, although teachers' written planning does not always reflect the quality of their thinking. For example, when supply teachers take a class, planning is sometimes imprecise about what is to happen, or what the teacher hopes to achieve. However, in most lessons, teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn and often share this with pupils at the start. This means that pupils know what they are doing, and take pride in achieving the targets set out for the lesson. For example, in an art lesson in Year 6, pupils made good progress in their use of sketches because the teacher had made this the clear focus of the

lesson. She outlined her high expectations of work and behaviour, and pupils worked hard to fulfil them.

20. Good use is made of resources, such as visual materials in English or practical resources in science, to help pupils understand new ideas and to engage their enthusiasm. The provision of a large number of good quality computers in a suite supports pupils' good progress in their ICT skills, and teachers generally ensure that pupils get hands-on experience with them. However, teachers make relatively little use of ICT in other subjects, although there are examples of good practice in some classes. The use made of human resources, in the shape of the skilled support staff, is variable. They often make substantial contributions to pupils' learning when they are well deployed. For example, when the class teacher and support teacher in each of the Year 3 classes split the class, or have clear roles within the whole class, then learning is often good, and pupils benefit from the attention of two adults. On other occasions, when lessons are less well-organised, and roles are less clear, teachers and other support staff can spend too long simply watching rather than being actively involved with pupils. At such times the large numbers in these classes, where many pupils are still at early stages of learning English, can make it difficult for teachers to provide sufficient individual help to everyone.
21. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good in English and mathematics, and they make good use of the national Literacy and Numeracy strategies. In other subjects it is more variable, and there are weaknesses for some members of staff in, for example, teaching investigative work in science, or using ICT across the curriculum. The specialist music teacher has very good subject knowledge and her enthusiasm ensures that teaching is consistently good in the subject.
22. Teaching in English and mathematics lessons is good overall, and is often very good. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well. In better lessons in English, effective questioning is used to consolidate understanding of the features of writing, and appropriate attention is given to specific vocabulary. One distinctive feature of very good teaching is the conscious and careful modelling of language to make the work more accessible to the majority of pupils who are learning in English as an additional language. Where teaching is judged to be weaker, this is mainly due to the lack of involvement of support staff, or to the use of texts that are too difficult, in the light of pupils' stage in acquiring English.
23. The most effective teaching in mathematics is seen where teachers have good subject knowledge, and maintain a good pace and challenge throughout lessons. Good use is often made of the initial sessions in lessons to develop pupils' numeracy skills, particularly their mental skills. Less successful learning takes place when teachers give insufficient time to the group activities in the middle of numeracy lessons, or focus very heavily on one group, leaving other groups working independently for too long without support.
24. Marking is taken seriously by pupils, who appreciate the positive comments that teachers write on their work. However, marking is not used sufficiently to show pupils how they can improve their work.
25. The small number of lessons that are unsatisfactory are characterised by insecure class control, often by teachers who are taking the class on a temporary basis. In these lessons, inattention by some pupils prevents them making progress in their learning. Some weaker teaching was seen in aspects of physical education lessons, when a few pupils took advantage of not being under the direct eye of their teachers to be silly.
26. The quality of support provided for pupils learning English as an additional language is good. Teachers work collaboratively with bilingual support assistants and, in the best teaching, support is clearly focussed on facilitating understanding and the development of English in the context of mainstream activities. Emphasis is appropriately put on explaining specific subject vocabulary, with effective examples seen in geography and mathematics. In these instances, the modelling and

rehearsal of language helped pupils when they were asked to work collaboratively and where talk became the main vehicle for learning. Learning is also enhanced through the judicious deployment of bilingual support assistants who come from the same linguistic and cultural background as the pupils and who act as good role models for them.

27. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good overall. In English and mathematics the quality of teaching for these pupils is often good, effectively meeting their needs through the provision of appropriate activities and good classroom support. Classroom support assistants play an important part in ensuring pupils with special educational needs benefit from a range of appropriate activities and make good progress in their learning. In some lessons observed during the inspection, for example in science, pupils with special educational needs completed the same work as other pupils, rather than attempting an easier task on the same theme to promote better understanding and learning at an appropriate rate. Work in these lessons is frequently planned without sufficient reference to individual education plans and this inappropriately slows pupils' progress.

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

28. The quality and range of learning opportunities for the pupils are good. All subjects are allocated adequate time in the school curriculum, even though the system of 'blocking' the teaching of some subjects means that not all subjects are taught every term. Although teaching and learning in information and communication technology is satisfactory overall, insufficient use is made of the subject to support learning in most subjects. Additionally, there are weaknesses in teaching and learning in the aspect of scientific enquiry in science.
29. Whilst the National Literacy strategy has been satisfactorily introduced, it has not yet substantially improved the writing and speaking of pupils, although there has been recognisable improvement in listening and reading skills. However, implementation of the National Numeracy strategy has resulted in improvement in standards throughout the school, especially in numeracy and mental arithmetic. The school has recognised its under-achievement in securing higher levels of attainment for some pupils in mathematics and is giving additional direction and support to improving the attainment of both lower and higher attaining pupils. The school has developed adequate policies and schemes of work, which are reviewed according to the priorities of the School Development Plan, which is now a clear and well-focused document. Appropriate attention is paid to sex education and the dangers of misuse of drugs.
30. Overall planning of the curriculum in the long and medium term is satisfactory, but daily planning gives insufficient detail on the individual needs of pupils, due to the weakness in the use of assessment information in planning.
31. The school presents itself to pupils, staff and visitors alike in a very positive way through its many attractive educational displays, which link subjects across the curriculum, and have a strong influence on pupils' social development and learning generally. Pupils' own work is particularly well displayed through their visit to Castleshaw, their work on the Tudors and Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, and their writing about Ramadan.
32. Provision of extra-curricular activities is good. Sporting activities include netball, football, hockey and especially cricket, where the school has excelled in recent years in the inter-school competition. An annual residential stay (voluntary), of a cross-curricular nature is provided for Year 6 pupils, which they still recall excitedly. Clubs provided include Book, Dance, 2 Steel Bands (1 of which played delightfully in a school assembly during the inspection), Tabla, Choir and Urdu. There is a computer club, which meets before and after school, and a Gifted and Talented club, both of which are very well attended. The school makes good use of visitors to the school to

enhance and enrich the curriculum, including representatives of local sporting organisations, and the Governors hold a ‘speaking competition’ at the end of the year. The school also ensures pupils have regular opportunities to visit places of educational interest such as Shibden Hall, the Millennium Dome and places of worship for different religions. Strong links across all areas of the curriculum are made through the provision of a good personal, social and health education policy, ‘This is a Healthy School’ with many examples of pupils’ work on related themes promoted throughout the school. This makes a significant contribution to pupil’s awareness of good health.

33. The school is socially inclusive, ensuring quality of access and opportunity for all its pupils in its planning. Pupils with special educational needs are successfully integrated into groups within the classroom and are appropriately included in any additional activities provided by the school.
34. The majority of pupils have appropriate access to the full curriculum, including activities organised outside the school day. Boys and girls participate on an equal footing in most of the extra-curricular activities on offer. Suitable opportunities are used to draw on pupils' linguistic and cultural background notably through the use of pupils' first language, to gain access to the curriculum, and an Urdu club. However, in some instances pupils are withdrawn from dance or science when they go to attend sessions for “Springboard” mathematics and the school has no system for ensuring that pupils are able to catch up or that these withdrawals are rotated to minimise their impact on the same subjects.
35. There are good links with the local community and the school makes good use of local places of interest to support pupils’ work in the classroom. There are well-established links with the local police who help pupils understand the work of the emergency services in their “Crucial Crew” project. A nurse and a policeman from the same ethnic background as most of the pupils talk to them about their careers. There are good links with a local mosque and with the parish church. The school has worked with “Education Business Links” for 3 years with pupils visiting their centre to work on specific projects. A local women’s association has set up Urdu classes for pupils at the request of parents and there are tabla classes provided by a local musician. A few local volunteers act as reading partners for pupils (5 over the past 3 years). Pupils also benefit from football coaching from a local football team.
36. There are good and developing links with the local feeder Infants school. Staff from each school have started to share termly meetings to discuss the curriculum and infant pupils spend time in the school before they integrate. Although all year 6 pupils have the opportunity to visit the secondary school of their choice, links with staff in local secondary schools are relatively under-developed.
37. Provision for pupils’ spiritual education is good. The major contribution to this area is made through religious education lessons, assemblies and personal, social and health education, and through the daily life of the school. Pupils’ own beliefs and way of life are respected and valued by staff, and they show high levels of understanding of their own and other’s values. In the curriculum subjects as a whole, however, little evidence was seen of planned opportunities for spiritual development.
38. Very good provision is made for pupils’ moral development and they are given a very good understanding of right and wrong. This is a constant theme of many activities in the school, and pupils are consistently and successfully encouraged to empathise with others, and to think about the consequences of what they do for other people. Even when they misbehave, pupils know not only what they have done wrong, but also why it was wrong. This is as a direct result of the patient and positive way in which teachers and other staff address any transgressions by getting pupils to talk about and think through the results of their actions, and how other people involved might feel. Good use is made of work in religious education lessons to support this theme.
39. Good provision is made for social development. Pupils are given clear guidelines for good behaviour, and rewards and sanctions are understood and used effectively. Pupils value “golden



time” and “blue cards” as rewards for positive achievements. Pupils have good opportunities to take responsibilities for jobs in class and around the school, and staff make it clear that the importance of these is valued. A pride in pupils’ achievements is successfully promoted, and it was noticeable how many individual pupils were concerned that inspectors should come to the whole school assembly, and were proud of their own contributions to this event. Staff provide good role models for pupils, treating them with kindness and respect, while making their high expectations of behaviour clear.

40. Provision for cultural development is good. Good contributions are made in dance, art, and music, for example, to an understanding of a range of cultural traditions. The pupils’ own cultural heritage is celebrated and valued, as is local culture through such things as the visit to Castleshaw. Care is taken in a range of subjects to draw on cultural influences from a range of times and places, such as studying Tudor portraits in history, or the reasons for fasting in Ramadan, in religious education. Pupils, as a result, celebrate their own cultural influences, but are outgoing and receptive to others. This is demonstrated, for instance, by their positive responses to the Caribees steel band, or to the annual Christmas Card competition.

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

41. The school provides a secure and supportive environment in which all pupils are valued. Pupils’ confidence in the security and support that the school provides helps them to concentrate on their learning. The good standards in pupils’ welfare, support and guidance noted in the last inspection report have been maintained.
42. The steps taken to ensure pupils’ welfare, health and safety, including the school’s arrangements for child protection, are good and there are clear policies in place. The headteacher and caretaker, who is also a governor of the school, give a high priority to health and safety and there are regular inspections of the school site and also of equipment used in the school. Shortcomings in the health and safety policy, mentioned in the last inspection report, have been overcome and there are no outstanding health and safety concerns. There are regular fire drills and good arrangements are made for pupils who are unwell. The school is justly proud of its healthy eating policy and for its gold award from the Dental Health Promotion Unit for its work on promoting the importance of dental hygiene. All adults make a positive contribution to the school’s caring ethos. The school works hard to ensure that welfare and safety are reflected in the quality of care they give to pupils.
43. The school makes good provision for pupils with statements of special needs and there is good liaison with outside support agencies. There are clear procedures to identify pupils early who need extra help and the school follows all the recommendations of the national Code of Practice. Year 6 pupils are well prepared for their transfer to secondary school.
44. There are good procedures to promote good behaviour, which enable the school to function as a calm and well-ordered community. Pupils are very well supervised as they move around the school. The behaviour policy is very comprehensive and includes guidance on bullying and racism. The school has introduced pupil support groups to deal with any such incidents. These groups work well and give pupils the opportunity to reconcile their own differences and seek solutions. Ninety six per cent of parents who replied to the questionnaire felt that behaviour was good. There was no evidence of bullying or harassment during the inspection, and pupils are clear that any incidents of oppressive behaviour must be reported to an adult.
45. There are good procedures to promote regular attendance and clear evidence of the school’s strong commitment to improve. Pupils are helped to take responsibility for their attendance with a very good system of class and individual rewards. There are rigorous procedures in place to

monitor daily attendance which are closely monitored by the headteacher. The school is sensitive to the fact that some families may not recognise the importance of regular attendance and makes excellent use of a home school liaison officer to reinforce the message. The liaison officer will phone parents on the first day of absence when no message has been received, making home visits whenever necessary. These are supplemented with frequent letters and articles in newsletters, many in families' home language. The school makes strong efforts to explain to parents the disruptive effect that extended holidays have on pupils' learning. LEA guidelines are followed when pupils do not return after 6 weeks by taking pupils off the school roll. In spite of the school's best endeavours, extended leave during term time is having an adverse affect on the progress pupils make. The school does not yet have a formal mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the impact such long periods of leave has on the progress made by pupils.

46. Teachers know their pupils well, recognise their needs and respond quickly to them. They build up a good picture of pupils' strengths and weaknesses in their work, behaviour and personal development, and these are effectively recorded in pupils' records. The school readily acknowledges pupils' achievements, particularly when they have made efforts and tried hard. There is a good system of rewards when pupils have worked hard which is greatly prized and which encourages pupils to achieve more.
47. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and all the requirements of the national Code of Practice are met. The individual education plans are written jointly by the class teacher and the member of staff responsible for co-ordination of special educational needs within the school. The school is highly effective at collecting and adding information gathered from many sources. At regular intervals a few pupils with special educational needs are actively involved in reviewing their own progress, which is good practice.
48. The monitoring of standards achieved and the progress made in pupils' learning are unsatisfactory. The use of assessment to guide curricular planning was raised as a key issue following the previous inspection report. Satisfactory progress has been made in the introduction of systematic assessment in English, mathematics, science and ICT. The evidence available so far shows this to be more successful in English and mathematics. The senior management team has started to develop systems that monitor outcomes of national tests and some target setting has been introduced for individual pupils. With the many changes in teachers, staff have less involvement in this part of the process and the targets set are not always carried through into the planning of lessons, sharing and joint evaluation of targets for individual pupils or in marking pupils' work to show clearly how it can be improved.
49. Most teachers take care in recognising pupils' hard work with encouraging remarks, but many of these lack consistency and can give a false indication of the actual quality of work and the progress being made. For example, the comment 'brilliant' alongside science work in Year 6, which was clearly unsatisfactory in quality and content, gives a false indication of the standards being achieved. Assessments made in other subjects such as religious education, history and geography are often based on completion of work rather than on how well pupils have learnt from their experiences and the progress they are making. Where teaching is most consistently good, teachers use their professional judgement and their knowledge of the pupils in their class effectively. With the many changes in staffing the quality of written records is inconsistent. As a result, in some lessons the work set does not always meet the needs of all pupils in the groups, especially those with special educational needs, English as an additional language and the higher attaining pupils.
50. Annual reports to parents contain meaningful information regarding work covered. They comment clearly on an individual's effort and contain targets for improvement. Insufficient reference is made to pupils' progress in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

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

51. The school shows very good commitment to working in close partnership with parents. The good picture found in the last inspection report has been commendably improved. In the questionnaires and at the pre-inspection meeting, parents registered their strong support for the school. Ninety seven per cent of parents believe the school works closely with them.
52. The quality of information given to parents is very good and the school actively supports parents who do not speak English by providing help with translations. The school shares a home school liaison officer with the feeder Infants school and excellent use is made of this post to help parents understand the way the school works and to help them communicate any concerns with staff. The liaison officer also plays a very useful role in helping parents understand the importance of regular attendance. The school's prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are well written and very informative. There are frequent letters and newsletters to parents on a wide variety of helpful topics. Annual reports give comprehensive information about children's educational progress and their personal development. The school actively seeks parents' views on what happens in school; for example, parents asked for more time with teachers during consultation evenings. The school responded positively by organising further consultations during the day, allowing parents longer time with the class teacher. In the inspection questionnaires 92% of parents said they felt well informed about their children's progress.
53. The school is welcoming to parents and relationships with staff are relaxed and friendly. In the questionnaires 95% of parents said they felt comfortable approaching school. The vast majority of parents attend consultation evenings. If parents are unable to attend, the school makes every effort to make another appointment or to visit the parents at home. Parents of children with special educational needs are invited to attend regular reviews of their individual education plans and almost all attend. Parents are invited to help in the classroom and four parents make a regular weekly commitment. Many parents demonstrate their interest in the school by supporting school productions and by making weekly contributions to the school fund. The impact that parents make on their children's learning is limited, however, as many parents find it difficult to listen to them read or help with homework.
54. The school is very sensitive to the difficulties many parents have in speaking English and actively participates in a family literacy group, which operates in four local schools. The group meets one day each week and, during this time, parents are helped to improve their literacy skills, as well as learning more about how their children are taught. In addition to this, there is a newly formed Parents Support Group, which was set up by the headteacher to discuss practical educational issues. Parents are well supported by the school through adult English classes and the deployment of a parent liaison worker who shares the same linguistic and cultural background as most pupils. This ensures that parental involvement is maximised and links are reinforced.
55. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are shared with parents at regular, planned intervals. Where needed, a translator is present at these meetings to help parents who might have difficulties in speaking English. However, parents do not receive a copy of the plan identifying action requiring their support, because of difficulties in providing written translations. Parents are promptly informed if their child is identified as having special educational needs. All parents attend the annual reviews to discuss their child's progress.
56. At the parents' meeting, and in the questionnaires, some parents felt that their children did not get the right amount of homework. Inspectors consider that the provision of homework in school is good and is above average for a junior school. Inspectors cannot, therefore, support parents' concerns in this respect.

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

57. The school continues to be well led and managed. Standards and teaching have been maintained overall since the last inspection, and results have risen faster than the national trend. In some subjects standards have improved. Sound progress has been made on the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. All this has been accomplished despite many staffing changes and considerable recruitment difficulties. The school last year employed four newly qualified teachers. These members of staff were provided with good professional support and are now providing good teaching to their classes. However, recruitment difficulties continue and, during this inspection, six teachers working in the school were on temporary contracts. While these teachers worked hard to provide high quality teaching, overall their contribution was more variable than that of their colleagues, because they were less familiar with both the school's systems and the pupils. Despite this, and staff illness which also required the employment of supply staff during the week, the overall standard of teaching observed was good.
58. The headteacher and senior management team provide clear leadership to their colleagues and ensure that the school's aims are well reflected in its work. They have a good grasp of the issues within the school and take effective action to maintain and improve performance. They successfully lead a team who work together effectively to promote a harmonious community where all pupils and their achievements are valued and celebrated. The pastoral elements of the schools' aims, particularly links with parents, an atmosphere of care and respect, racial harmony and self-discipline, are promoted particularly well.
59. The delegation of responsibilities to members of staff had weaknesses at the last inspection. This had been addressed successfully, but recent staff changes mean that there are still difficulties. For example, the English and art co-ordinators have left and, despite extensive efforts, the school has been unable to recruit suitable replacements. At the moment, because suitable systems had been put in place by the previous co-ordinators, these two subjects are being taught appropriately. However, there is an urgent need to appoint a permanent co-ordinator for English, because of the work that still needs to be done to improve pupils' English skills. The school also currently employs a lot of temporary staff, so that some senior staff now have too heavy a workload, while other relatively inexperienced teachers have taken on considerable responsibilities.
60. At the time of this inspection, many subject co-ordinators were relatively new to their roles. In most subjects, they generally provide good leadership, but many have not yet had time to become fully involved in monitoring their subjects. In the past, co-ordinators have monitored planning, pupils' work and, to some extent, teaching. Although planning is still monitored, co-ordinators have had too few opportunities to monitor teaching and pupils' work over the last term. This has meant that some anomalies in the work produced, for example in science, have not been picked up.
61. Some good work on the monitoring and development of teaching has gone on in the past, and the headteacher has been heavily involved in this. When monitoring did take place, it was suitably rigorous, providing clear points for development for staff, while valuing their strengths. Good records of such monitoring are kept. This work has contributed significantly to the good quality of teaching in the school. This term, partly because of staffing difficulties, less monitoring has taken place and there is an urgent need to revive the system and to more fully involve subject co-ordinators in the work. This is needed both to enable the senior staff to evaluate and support less experienced or temporary colleagues, and to enable subject co-ordinators to have a clearer view of strengths and weaknesses in their subjects.
62. The governors are enthusiastic and keen to support the school. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. Although many governors are relatively new, they show a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, based on good systems. They have studied results of national tests from year to year, for example, and receive regular and useful information from the headteacher and other staff. Although they are satisfactorily involved in the production of both, they are not very clear about the links between the school development plan and the budget. The

governing body plays a satisfactory role in shaping the direction of the school, although the overall strategic direction of the school's development is very much provided by the headteacher and her senior colleagues.

63. The school has made good arrangements to introduce appropriate systems of performance management. This has been based upon a systematic appraisal policy used by the school for several years, identifying areas for development to benefit school priorities and the individual needs of staff. In recent years the school has had many staff changes and as a result now has a very good policy and practice in the induction of staff new to the school. The school is especially adept at developing newly qualified teachers (4 in the last school year) and high quality additional support and guidance is also provided for other new staff to the school. The school is also involved, although not always annually, in the training of new young teachers from a local university. The school's good work on training is acknowledged by its retention of "Investors in People" status.
64. The school's aims acknowledge the importance of equal opportunity for all pupils and the majority of staff have an appropriate level of awareness of pupils' backgrounds. The resources provided by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) are appropriately deployed. A number of teachers are employed to support pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL). The school is experiencing recruitment difficulties in relation to the specialist provision for EAL pupils, with two posts being filled currently by temporary staff who do not have EAL as a specialist area. There is a good range of resources reflecting diverse cultures and pupils' first language in classes and on display. This creates a positive learning environment where pupils feel proud of their multicultural identities.
65. The school has an appropriate policy for pupils with special educational needs and all documentation and pupils' personal files are up to date. Co-ordination is good and ensures statutory requirements are met. Suitable arrangements for managing, supporting, assessing and reviewing pupils' progress are fully in place.
66. The school's accommodation is very good and provides a stimulating learning environment. It is light, bright, very well maintained and extremely clean. There is plenty of space to enable all subjects of the curriculum to be taught effectively. There is plenty of space outside classrooms for staff to take small groups and listen to readers. There is a spacious hall, a good library, which is comfortably furnished to encourage browsing, and a well-equipped ICT suite. There is an attractive playground area and plenty of space for football and other games. The whole site is very well managed by an energetic school keeper who works hard and effectively to support the school and takes great pride in his duties.
67. The school is well resourced with sufficient books, materials and equipment to teach all subjects. Some areas of the curriculum, such as music and RE, are particularly well stocked. Good use is generally made of the resources, but insufficient use is made of those computers that are not in the ICT suite. Many of these are newly in place, and many staff have not yet got to grips with how they could best be used to support work across the curriculum.
68. The school is good at evaluating its own performance, and the current priorities are well chosen to take the school forward and improve standards. All those involved with the school are committed to its success and work hard to ensure this. The school takes appropriate action to try to build upon its current work, and does so satisfactorily despite many difficulties. The current staffing difficulties mean that the school's capacity to improve, which would otherwise be good, is only satisfactory.
69. The school is well managed financially. Good use is made of support from the Local Authority, and governors are suitably involved. Financial planning supports the school's priorities well. Various specific grants are used well for their appropriate purposes, and work is focused on

raising standards. Some of the large carry-forward last year is being spent this year on improvements to the grounds and buildings, and on improving the provision of non-teaching staff. The school has retained a smaller, prudent amount in its planning this year as “contingency”. The school takes full account of the principles of “best value” and has a good written policy to this end. It is particularly strong in consulting various interested parties about its performance, including parents and pupils.

70. Although the school receives higher sums of money per pupil than the national average, this is not particularly high for a school where almost all pupils have a home language other than English. In view of pupils’ sound progress, their good behaviour and positive attitudes, and the good teaching overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to continue to raise standards in English, mathematics and science, the school should:-

1. Improve assessment and its use by
  - a. More clearly identifying the needs of individual pupils.
  - b. More accurately assessing their attainment in different subjects.
  - c. Making more use of the information to plan work for them.  
(Paragraph Nos. 48. 84. 90. 126)
  
2. Improve the monitoring of teaching and of pupils' work by:-
  - a. Establishing more systematic and regular procedures to check on the quality of pupils' work in different subjects in each year group.
  - b. Providing regular and systematic opportunities for the observation of the quality of teaching in each class in different subjects.
  - c. Making more use of subject leaders in a and b above.  
(Paragraph Nos. 60. 61. 91. 94. 104. 108. 115)
  
3. Make more use of ICT in other subjects by:-
  - a. Identifying more precisely how ICT can be used in each subject.
  - b. Making more systematic use of the good skills of the co-ordinator in planning the use of ICT in each year group.
  - c. Upgrading the current hardware systems, as outlined in existing plans.
  - d. Providing more training for staff, in line with current plans.  
(Paragraph Nos. 20. 77. 90. 94. 107. 112. 113. 114. 120)

### Minor issues

In addition the governors may wish to consider the following issues for inclusion in the action plan.

- A. Consider how the adverse effects of the current large classes in Year 3 may be minimised.  
(Paragraph No. 20)
  
- B. Improve the attention given to investigative work in science.  
(Paragraph Nos. 87. 88)
  
- C. Continue, extend and make more systematic the development of literacy skills in other subjects.  
(Paragraph Nos. 74. 77)
  
- D. Continue to work to minimise the effects of pupils taking extended holidays in the Indian sub-continent.  
(Paragraph Nos. 7. 16. 45)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

65

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

34

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number		15	31	17	2		
Percentage		23	48	26	3		

*The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.]*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

Y3 – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	280
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	126

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

Y3 – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	178

#### **English as an additional language**

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	279
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#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	27
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	33

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	5.9
National comparative data	5.6

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.2
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 2 (Year 6)**

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	27	36	63

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	14	23
	Girls	28	23	31
	Total	41	37	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66 (45)	60 (41)	87 (74)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	14	15
	Girls	28	24	30
	Total	41	38	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66 (26)	61 (35)	73 (55)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	268
Bangladeshi	11
Chinese	0
White	1
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

**Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

### *Teachers and classes*

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.6
Average class size	25.4

#### **Education support staff: Y3 – Y6**

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### *Financial information*

Financial year	2000 - 1
	£
Total income	668133
Total expenditure	678058
Expenditure per pupil	2346
Balance brought forward from previous year	67904
Balance carried forward to next year	58006

### *Recruitment of teachers*

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	4.3
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	4.3
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

*Results of the survey of parents and carers*

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	280
Number of questionnaires returned	125

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	22	1	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	51	40	3	1	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	66	30	3	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	54	26	14	2	4
The teaching is good.	80	18	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	66	27	6	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	26	2	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	86	13	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	74	24	2	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	72	26	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	20	3	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	64	26	3	2	5

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

### **ENGLISH**

71. Results in the 2001 National Curriculum tests showed that standards attained by eleven year olds were well below the national average and average when compared with similar schools. Results have improved against the previous year but have remained low over the previous three years. This is mainly because of the high number of pupils with special educational needs and the fact that almost all pupils have English as an additional language. This is often compounded by the very high rate of pupils going away on holiday to Pakistan in term time. These results broadly match the findings of the inspection. However, although they start from a very low point, the great majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve appropriately against their prior attainment by the time they leave school. There have been some improvements in standards since the last inspection, as shown by test results, but more remains to be done.
72. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is well below the national average for eleven year olds. Listening skills are much better than speaking skills. A small minority of pupils speak confidently in response to teachers' questions and at the end of lessons when presenting and sharing work. The majority of pupils, including those of lower ability or with special educational needs, listen well and are sometimes able to contribute their ideas. This is particularly the case when they have been given the opportunity to rehearse the language and where careful questioning is focussed on developing speaking. This was well exemplified in a geography lesson where pupils had to take on a particular role in a discussion about land use and where they had to argue for or against the building of a supermarket in a rural area. In this lesson, pupils listened intently to each other and were able to contribute their ideas because the teacher made sure that all pupils were involved. The emphasis was on sharing ideas and listening to each other. Although there are some opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening, these are not systematically planned and supported with a scheme of work to enable teachers to assess pupils' progress and set them specific targets for improvement.
73. Attainment in reading by the age of eleven is well below the national average for the majority of pupils. Above average pupils enjoy reading and are able to talk about the plot and compare their current reading with material read previously. They express their preferences confidently, justify choices and demonstrate basic retrieval skills. Average pupils talk about the content of what they read with many being able to identify parts they like. Some make good use of phonic clues but many, especially lower attainers, read hesitantly and are much less forthcoming when invited to comment on the plot, characters or their preferences. Few pupils have developed sufficient skills to infer and deduct beyond the literal meaning or refer to texts to support their views. In some instances pupils are given books that do not match their current attainment. However, despite a low starting point, pupils make satisfactory progress. This is mainly linked to the effective management of reading with increasingly improving provision for guided and shared reading. Pupils keep records of their reading showing parental involvement in supporting them at home. Pupils' information retrieval skills are limited, with many still confusing fiction and non-fiction. Library facilities are good and pupils have regular opportunities to use them, but not sufficiently to enable them to develop their research skills in a systematic way.
74. Attainment in writing, by the age of eleven, is well below the national average. In year 6, higher attaining pupils develop their ideas in sequence and use capital letters with most words correctly spelt. However, whilst many pupils manage to communicate meaning, a high proportion of pupils lack the confidence and understanding to produce work that uses vocabulary that is rich or is arranged in a way that captures and holds the reader's attention. Spelling for a high proportion of pupils is poorly developed, but many develop good joined writing quickly because handwriting is being taught actively and effectively. The school has identified writing as an area of weakness and is now implementing a strategy for extending the range of writing. This has not yet been reflected

in the work seen during inspection, with hardly any examples of extended writing, even for the more able. The marking of written work is unsatisfactory because it is not focussed on guiding pupils to improve their work with criteria spelt out to help them.

75. Pupils' overall achievement is enhanced because they have positive attitudes to learning. They are keen, highly motivated and engage well with activities. They are attentive listeners and many work well collaboratively when given the opportunity.
76. The quality of teaching is good overall, and it was also good in the majority of lesson seen. Where teaching is good or very good, teachers explain clearly to pupils what they are intended to learn (their "learning objectives"). These learning objectives help to focus their attention and are revisited at the end of the lesson to check pupils' understanding. Effective questioning is used to consolidate understanding of the features of writing, such as when pupils are required to identify features in a range of poems. Appropriate attention is given to specific vocabulary, for instance when dealing with the story of a Midsummer Night's Dream and the changes in language use. One distinctive feature of very good teaching is the conscious and careful modelling of language to make the ensuing independent work more accessible to the majority of pupils who are learning in English as an additional language. In one of these lessons, in Year 6, the teacher enabled the pupils to apply their previous knowledge of using adjectives and adverbs by going over this work and used skilful questioning to ensure that they carefully selected the most appropriate vocabulary. To do this, she used the board effectively to list vocabulary items and the text of the poem, demonstrating clearly where adjectives and adverbs could be added to enliven the poem. This enabled all pupils to actively participate in the lesson and apply the skills learnt in drafting their own version of the poem. Where teaching is less effective, this is mainly due to the lack of involvement of teaching assistants or the occasional inaccessibility of the texts used, given pupils' starting points in acquiring English.
77. The school uses the National Literacy Strategy framework appropriately and strategies for continuous development and improvement have led to more emphasis on extending the range of writing in different genres. The school carries out a range of assessment tasks and collates assessment information in order to track pupils' progress and set targets. At present, there is no co-ordinator for the subject, but the subject has been well "looked after" by the deputy headteacher. Clear priorities for development are identified in the school development plan and these are being implemented effectively and are beginning to show a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Whilst the literacy framework is thoroughly followed, there is no scheme of work for listening and speaking to ensure clear progression in learning and define expectations within each year group. There are some good examples of the use of literacy skills in other subjects, but opportunities are not being identified systematically or used widely in short term planning and individual lessons. Some useful work is done using ICT to support work in English, but opportunities are sometimes missed in lessons to practise pupils' word-processing skills.

## **MATHEMATICS**

78. The findings of the last inspection were that pupils attained standards well below national expectations when they left the school at the age of 11. This inspection indicates an improvement. Currently, the standards are below the national average. The most recent results of national assessments indicated that standards were well below average, and hardly any pupils reached a higher Level 5. However, this year group had a large number of pupils with special educational needs. Inspection evidence indicates that this year there will be an increase in the number of pupils achieving the higher level and so the improvement made in the last 3 years will be maintained. This is due to the positive impact of the National Numeracy strategy, good teaching overall, provision of 'booster' groups targeting pupils needing additional support, and a much closer analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject in the school. The underlying difficulty of the lower level of pupils' understanding of English is, however, still inhibiting learning in areas like

problem solving. ICT, also, is under-used in mathematics and greater input would have the potential to help learning. The trend of improvements is greater than that achieved nationally, although the school's results in 2001 were still below those of similar schools, as measured by the number of pupils taking free school meals. Pupils generally make good progress in their learning; this includes pupils with special educational needs, who are well provided for. All pupils are fully included in all aspects of mathematics.

79. In Year 3, where pupils are not set according to attainment, middle and higher attaining pupils can double and halve numbers up to 30, and can group fractions into thirds, halves and quarters through shading parts of shapes. A small number of them, about one quarter, are starting to recognise and name fractions like three-tenths and four-fifths. Their understanding sometimes is limited by their command of English, although the school nearly always provides additional adult support for this. Year 4 pupils can devise different shapes in order to measure perimeters which most of them can do accurately, although not all have an understanding of converting centimetres to millimetres and vice versa. Most pupils can divide 2 digit numbers by 10, but a small number do not understand what is 'ten times' more, or name in words the number 150. Year 4 pupils work in their classes in the first two terms of the year and are set in the final term.
80. Pupils in Year 5 are set into ability groups, although there is still a wide range of abilities within the sets. Higher attainers have a good understanding of reflective symmetry in 2D shapes, clearly identifying that when reflecting simple shapes in a "mirror" line, triangles need a change of orientation, whereas squares and circles do not. Their mathematical language development is improving, and they understand terms like 'multiple'. Lower attainers in year 5 are familiar with some of the properties of 2D shapes such as edges, vertices and faces, although some are confused by the names of shapes and their definition, such as a hexagon. They are familiar with the idea of estimation and a majority know factors of 20 and can multiply accurately 2 and 3 digit numbers by a 1-digit number.
81. Pupils in Year 6 provide evidence of much work with number, using the 4 rules and sometimes working in decimals up to three points. They are also set into ability groups and each pupil has an individual target in his or her numeracy book e.g. 'To apply knowledge to solve problems'. There was evidence in their books that pupils are often working accurately, but too often work on exercises that they have already proved they can get correct. Most pupils during the inspection had opportunities to develop their learning of 'probability'. They can define the language satisfactorily from 'impossible' through to 'certain'. However, some found difficulty in analysing their evidence and using it on a decimal scale e.g. 'What are the chances of throwing a six on a dice?' or 'If there is a chance of 1 to 8, how many times roughly will it come out in 50 tries?'
82. The teaching is good overall and on several occasions during the inspection was very good. The most effective teaching is seen where teachers have good subject knowledge, and maintain a good pace and challenge. Relationships with pupils are very good in mathematics lessons, and this is reflected in pupils' very positive attitudes to the subject. Less successful learning takes place when teachers give insufficient time to the group activities or focus very heavily on one group, leaving other groups working independently for too long without support. Teachers' use of the competent support staff is usually good, but on occasion they are underused in introductory phases of lessons.
83. Pupils' attitudes to learning in maths are always good and frequently very good or excellent. They enjoy the subject, take a pride in their work, concentrate well and have a fierce determination to succeed. They co-operate well together and, although frequently excitable and noisy in their conversations during their group work, their minds are always on the job in hand. Their work in books and on worksheets is generally well presented. Teachers mark it conscientiously and mostly accurately, offering much praise and encouragement. They do not provide advice on how to improve in enough detail, or with sufficient frequency.

84. The co-ordinator has worked hard with the senior management team, and with some success, to improve the previously very low standards of maths in the school. She has initiated much teacher training, and is developing systems for analysing the results of the regular tests taken by pupils. Monitoring of teaching and learning, with a specific focus such as addition, takes place on a regular basis. The school is well placed to continue its improvement, and take standards even closer to national expectation. The school has amassed a large amount of statistical information with which to assess pupils' progress. It now needs to develop this into a coherent form, to accurately inform planning, to identify individual pupils' needs and to track progress across the whole key stage. Evidence suggests that too much of the current information on record is inaccurate.

## **SCIENCE**

85. Standards in science are well below those expected in Year 6. In the national tests in 2001, results were average compared to schools nationally. The number of pupils achieving the higher level, Level 5, was broadly average. Results were above average when compared to schools that have a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals. The previous Year 6 results reflected good teaching by knowledgeable teachers, enthusiastically well planned work that built successfully and systematically on previous learning, and a year group that contained relatively fewer pupils with special educational needs support. Pupils in the present Year 6 have had turbulent periods of teaching by different teachers, and seventy-five per cent of the cohort are on the special educational needs register, twenty per cent being identified as having specific learning problems.
86. Standards in Year 6 at present reflect a similar picture to that found at the previous inspection when standards were well below national averages. At present there is a lack of sufficient rigour in the monitoring of teaching and learning to confirm that all pupils are receiving satisfactory provision. Pupils' work in some classes indicates that too many teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of their pupils. They do not plan effectively enough for different groups of pupils, especially higher attaining ones. This has a detrimental effect on pupils' progress, with learning in some classes at an unsatisfactory level. Nevertheless, there is evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and displays to indicate that standards are improving for most pupils in Year 5. If this improvement continues to build successfully on previous learning, it is clear that standards will reach the average for schools nationally by the time this group leave the school.
87. The school has a satisfactory scheme of work based on recent government guidelines. As a result, most pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their scientific knowledge. However, much prediction work is carried out as a whole group activity and shows that most pupils' understanding is not based on sound factual knowledge. Most teachers are confident in their knowledge and understanding of science, but not all are as confident in developing pupils' practical skills to enable them to carry out experiments independently. This has resulted in some teachers being over-reliant on the use of worksheets to teach science. For example, many pupils complete word searches, crossword puzzles and colouring activities connected to a topic. This develops pupils' scientific vocabulary, but there are insufficient opportunities for them to find out about scientific principles through well-organised, appropriate experiments. Higher attaining pupils cover the same work as other groups and too few examples of extended thinking are displayed.
88. Pupils enter school with levels of attainment well below average. In Year 3 pupils learn appropriately about healthy food and what living things need to survive. Year 4 pupils monitor the cooling of hot water, which requires them to work co-operatively in groups, using thermometers and recording results in a table and developing satisfactory skills in recording temperature by reading a scale accurately. In some topics there is too little depth in what pupils study. The potential to develop investigations from earlier findings is not followed through sufficiently so that progress is barely satisfactory. In Year 5 and Year 6 pupils look at the nature of materials, their physical state and how they can be separated using techniques such as filtration. Again, there are times when topics are not explained in full as a means of developing and employing scientific skills

such as measuring, recording, planning and evaluating the results. Pupils' science books in some classes have significant periods when nothing has been recorded in them and the way the same topic is covered is better in some classes than in others, for example in Year 6. This suggests that teachers need to plan and then evaluate their work more closely on occasions.

89. Teaching observed during the inspection ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. Overall teaching is satisfactory. Where teachers are confident, science lessons are interesting and stimulating, and pupils undertake a range of experiments. Following a recent visit to the local park, Year 5 pupils enthusiastically placed seeds into groups according to their method of dispersal. Pupils systematically recorded their results on a worksheet independently. The very good teaching maintained the brisk introductory pace throughout the lesson and the effective use of well-selected resources enhanced learning for all pupils at an appropriate rate. The teacher's carefully selected questions helped them to see the relationship between the different seeds and methods of dispersal away from the parent plant. In better lessons, pupils have very positive attitudes to science and concentrate well, behaving in a responsible manner and trying hard to succeed. Pupils respond willingly when given opportunities to discuss open-ended questions. However, unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour were observed from a small group of pupils in Years 3, 4 and 6 during science lessons. This had a negative impact on learning for most pupils. Weaknesses remain in some lessons that were judged to be satisfactory overall. Teachers do not have sufficiently high expectation of what pupils can do. Some pupils' recorded work is unmarked and poorly presented. When work is corrected, it is usually ticked and very occasionally commented upon. There are too few suggestions on how work might be developed to extend pupils' thinking or stimulate other experimental observations.
90. Specific subject vocabulary is evident in some teachers' planning and clearly reflected in classroom displays. However, strategies for helping pupils who find the understanding of words associated with science difficult, for example 'habitat', are not always apparent. Teachers' planning does not yet use assessment data sufficiently to meet the needs of individual pupils and groups of pupils. The school is aware of the need to develop still further its system for monitoring pupils' progress over time as a matter of urgency. As a result, some higher attaining pupils often complete the same task as the remainder of the class before moving on to tasks that challenge them. In much of the work, for example in Year 4 relating to the recording of temperatures, pupils of all levels of achievement are expected to read from the same worksheet, therefore restricting progress for special educational needs pupils. Across the school pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs do not have equality of opportunities for learning because some pupils are withdrawn to undertake additional numeracy support. They then miss parts of science lessons that contain the practical, hands-on activities, returning for the final ten minutes of the lesson. For pupils experiencing higher levels of difficulty, progress is often good when receiving appropriate, well-focused adult support. Insufficient opportunities are provided in all lessons for pupils to develop their information and communication technology skills in experimenting, observing and recording work.
91. The subject co-ordinator is aware of the need to improve standards, as they are not high enough throughout the school. She is receiving a high level of support from the headteacher. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the subject and has analysed recent national tests to indicate strengths and areas for further development. The present system of monitoring, lesson observations, scrutiny of teachers' planning to ensure continuity and reviewing pupils' workbooks lack rigour and focus to compare standards between corresponding classes and between year groups. More guidance and support in emphasising the promotion of practical skills is needed throughout the school. Resources are good, often supporting an informative range of science displays to be found in some classrooms. Pupils have very good access to school gardens and surrounding parkland and a well-planned residential to open countryside in Year 6 suitably enrich the good range of learning opportunities offered to all pupils.



## ART AND DESIGN

92. Standards by Year 6 meet national expectations. This maintains the standards seen at the last inspection. Pupils undertake a good range of activities as they progress through the school. Their work in a range of media is usually of a sound quality, and some work is good. An example of high quality work is the textile covers made by pupils in Year 6 for their books about their visit to Castleshaw. Another good example is the line drawings of Tudor buildings done by pupils in Year 4. These showed an unusually good sense of form, and were done very carefully and effectively, in ink over pencil. The drawings are a good example of the school making good use of a local artist to inspire and instruct pupils. In this case the artist was the school caretaker, who worked with each class in Year 4 to give them the benefit of his skills and expertise.
93. Teaching is good, and this enables pupils to make sound progress in their skills, knowledge and understanding of art, despite their weak English skills. Most of the teaching in the lessons observed during the inspection was good, and all were at least satisfactory. Lessons are generally planned carefully and pupils are well managed. A feature of teaching, which supports some of the better work seen, is the development of a theme across a range of media over time. A good example was seen in a lesson in Year 5, where relief textile pictures of fruit drew on previous work on sketching fruit from life. Pupils had also studied pictures of fruit by different artists. During this lesson, good subject knowledge, clear explanations of new techniques, and good monitoring of pupils' progress led to significant gains in their skills and understanding. In another good lesson with pupils in Year 3, pupils made good progress in their understanding of how to draw faces. Significant strengths of this lesson were very clear explanations and challenging questioning to get pupils to focus on specific features of someone's face. A major contribution to the good learning was the way the teacher probed and developed the vocabulary of these pupils, many of whom are at early stages of learning English. New technical vocabulary was learned effectively, and the teacher also established and taught specific gaps in the pupils' everyday vocabulary, such as the word "frown". A weakness in teaching is that not all teachers are equally secure in using sketch-books to develop pupils' skills over time. Looking at these books shows that more attention is being given to this in some classes than others, and in some years little use has been made of them at all.
94. The curriculum studied is broad and balanced, and includes the study of work of artists from a range of times and places. Some good use is made of ICT in the subject, notably in Year 4 where there are interesting portraits of Tudors drawn on the computer. Over the school as a whole, however, this is under-used. At the moment there is no co-ordinator for the subject. The previous co-ordinator had established sound systems and put in place a broad and balanced framework for the curriculum, which teachers use effectively. There is no monitoring of the subject at present, and there is a need to establish this in order to ensure more consistent practice between classes, for example in the use of sketchbooks.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

95. By the age of eleven, pupils attain standards that meet the expectations for their age. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when standards were below national expectations. It was only possible, because of curriculum timetabling, to observe two lessons, so judgements are based mainly on an analysis of work samples, examination of teacher's planning and extensive discussions with the curriculum co-ordinator and pupils.
96. In Year 3, pupils design and make wooden name plaques for the cloakrooms, which they take with them through the school. Pupils in Year 6 show them proudly and recall with great detail how they made them 3 years ago. The designs are very varied with pupils choosing such motifs as their house, a duck, a skeleton or a footballer to represent themselves. After they have made 3 or 4 plans, they choose their favoured design and transfer it to a small wooden block. They then

carefully saw out the shape, with the help of “G” clamps and an “abraframe”, evaluate the cuts to decide where smoothing and sanding is needed, and finally paint their finished plaque. At all times they are well aware of safety, for example knowing what a dust mask is, and wearing it during their practical work.

97. In Years 4 and 5, the subject is linked closely with other areas of the curriculum, such as history and music. This results in pupils designing, making and analysing their work, when they model Greek clay pots, or make musical instruments such as shakers and violins out of their own chosen materials. They also use tools again to design and make individual jigsaws such as a footballer and a Roman soldier. In Year 6, design and technology is linked well to literacy and mathematics. When pupils make bread, for example, they are encouraged to choose appropriate words to describe taste, texture and shape, They also use data analysis, through graphs of favourite and least favourite breads, for the purposes of evaluation. During and after their annual visit to Castleshaw, Year 6 pupils choose again to make clay models such as animals and a cricket ball, and make a small book out of chosen hessian materials in which to put a record of their visit. In their last term in school, pupils design and make a working wooden clock; a particularly colourful and well-made example was a moon design with a matching pendulum. Whilst many satisfactory examples of pupils’ work in the subject were seen, there are areas for improvement, such as increasing the progression of choice and use of tools – there is a good resource bank, but some tools and materials have yet to be used. Pupils also need more encouragement in choosing their own materials, and a wider variety of experiences, as the curriculum delivered is rather narrow in scope.
98. Teaching is satisfactory overall, and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Teachers manage their classes well, and are careful to ensure that pupils develop a good knowledge of the need for safety in handling tools. Teachers plan well and make good use of ample resources. Pupils involve themselves with gusto in all their design and technology activities, although they occasionally become over excited, causing some of their work to be careless when they rush to complete their designs.
99. The hardworking co-ordinator is experienced in managing the subject, and is well aware of the shortcomings that remain to be tackled. This will not be an easy task for her as she already has a considerable load of other major responsibilities in the school.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

100. Attainment for the majority of pupils in geography is in line with national expectations by the age of eleven. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when standards were below national expectations.
101. Pupils in Year 3 studying different towns identify a range of features and show good understanding of the differences between them, using clues from pictures drawn by the teacher. They describe each town in turn and select from different headings and match them to the pictures. In Year 6, in their study of different environments, pupils show sound understanding of how people can cause change in places and of some of the possible consequences that change can lead to. They imagine a scenario where a company decides to build a supermarket and a meeting where different parties come to debate the issue and vote on it. They show good skills in arguing for a particular point of view to defend or object to the project. This is made possible by the careful rehearsal of the issue with the teacher guiding pupils and establishing clearly the ground rules for the debate, including a panel, a chairperson and different parties representing different interests.
102. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve appropriately against their prior attainment. This is often due to the quality of teaching, and particularly the use

of effective methods to convey understanding and key vocabulary, with emphasis being put on using talk and collaborative learning approaches to enhance learning. Pupils' positive attitudes and their willingness to respond to questioning contribute well to the progress they make.

103. The overall quality of teaching seen during the inspection and over time is good, indicating clear improvement since the last inspection when teaching was broadly satisfactory. Pupils are briefed effectively about what they are expected to learn. This is often reinforced through skilful questioning, enabling pupils to grasp key vocabulary. Resources, including good visual aids like pictures and video programmes, are used effectively to bring the subject alive. This was illustrated well in Year 6, when pupils made notes from viewing a video as a preparation for writing an Inuit's diary. This lesson promoted literacy skills effectively, enabling them to combine the skill of writing from somebody else's point of view, based on a good understanding of their lifestyle, with understanding how this particular environment affects the Inuit community. The teacher's method of modelling note-taking by scribing on the board was particularly effective in developing pupils' skills in drafting the diary and in encouraging them to draw out ideas from their viewing of the video.
104. The geography curriculum offers valuable opportunities to develop pupils' cultural awareness with one of the contrasting localities studied last year being based on the Caribbean and this year on Pakistan. Good use is made of the residential journey to Castleshaw where mapping skills are consolidated along with pupils' literacy skills. The co-ordinator has reviewed the curriculum and has begun to introduce elements of education for citizenship. Study units from national guidelines have been adapted to make them more accessible to pupils. Information and communication technology is not being used sufficiently to enhance enquiry skills. Monitoring by the subject leader is limited to reviewing planning, and the use of assessment is underdeveloped.

## **HISTORY**

105. Pupils attain standards in line with national expectations by the end of the key stage, although their writing skills are not adequate to fully reflect this in their written work. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards in history were unsatisfactory. History and geography are taught in alternate terms and during the inspection history was only taught in Year 4. However, discussion with pupils in Year 6 revealed that they have an appropriate understanding of history for their age. They have a very clear recollection of what they learned about the Romans, for example. They can explain a number of details of Roman life, know some of the reasons why the Romans invaded Britain, and know that these events took place about 2000 years ago. They show a sound understanding of chronology, and are able to place in order the stone ages, ancient Egypt, Roman Britain, Saxons and Victorians. They know that history is about the past, and not just the distant past, and understand the role of archaeologists in gaining historical knowledge. They can suggest which artefacts would or would not survive in the ground over time.
106. The work done by pupils in Year 4 also shows a sound standard in their written work, covering a good range. Their writing shows an appropriate understanding of different aspects of Tudor life, such as medicine, towns and dining customs. In lessons they confirmed this basic understanding, showing satisfactory knowledge of the Tudor monarchs, for example. They are starting to be able to deduce facts about the past from different evidence sources, for example pictures of Tudor dress.
107. The teaching is good, and all teaching observed during the inspection was at least good. This has enabled standards to rise since the last inspection, and enables pupils to learn well despite their difficulties in language. In the lessons seen, pupils were managed well and high expectations and good relationships supported secure discipline and good concentration by pupils. Interesting topics were explained with enthusiasm, engaging pupils' interest. Questioning was carefully targeted to assess pupils' understanding of both facts and vocabulary, so that explanations were well matched

to pupils' needs. Pupils' independence and collaborative skills were developed effectively by a task requiring them to work together on a research task. This also gave pupils good opportunities to practise their literacy skills. ICT was also used successfully to research information. Lessons are planned jointly by the three teachers in the year group, ensuring equality of provision, and the sharing of expertise. For example, the input of the ICT co-ordinator to the planning is helping to integrate the use of ICT into work in this year group.

108. Although in a state of transition, the subject is well managed. The new co-ordinator has a good grasp of the issues, although she has not been able to devote much time to the development of the subject at school level so far. There is a well-established system for monitoring planning and pupils' work, and it will be important to continue this to maintain progress. The school uses a suitable scheme of work, which takes account of national guidelines. A strength of the curriculum is the good use of practical activities, particularly visits out, and each class undertakes a corresponding visit to go with each topic studied. It was apparent how much the current Year 6, for example, had enjoyed their visit to Chester last year when studying the Romans. This not only brought the subject to life for them, but means that they still remember a lot of detail about what they learned.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

109. Standards are rising and are now on line to meet the national expectation by the end of Year 6. This is a major improvement since the last inspection, when standards were unsatisfactory. Very good leadership, hard work by all teachers, and major upgrades to resources have all contributed to this. The school now has a well-equipped computer suite, which is used very well by all classes. This is enabling all pupils to have regular hands-on experience with the computers, and is developing their skills very well.
110. Even in Year 6, where pupils have not had the benefit of this provision for most of their career in the school, standards are progressing well, and most pupils should reach the expected levels by the end of the year. They already handle computers with confidence. All are able to log on and get onto the internet with a minimum of fuss. They understand the need to be accurate in entering data, and are starting to understand some of the limitations of the system. They can quickly access a spreadsheet, enter data and produce, label and print out a pie chart or a block graph from the data. They are not yet secure in using the more sophisticated features of the spreadsheet, but this, along with other gaps in their knowledge like control, are featured in the planning for later in the year.
111. Younger pupils have a better head start, and should reach the expected levels comfortably by the time they are in the oldest classes, if they continue to progress at the current rate. In Year 3, for example, pupils can save and retrieve their work, can add simple text to graphics and are able to print out the results. By Year 4, pupils are developing sound word-processing skills, and can change the type, colour and size of the font, and most can use the cut-and-paste facility.
112. Teaching is satisfactory overall. During the inspection, teaching was mostly satisfactory, but varied from good to unsatisfactory. In general, teachers make good use of the suite to develop pupils' skills in a systematic manner. Teachers' subject knowledge is variable and, although all teachers tackle work in the suite appropriately, there is a wide variation in the way teachers use the other computers, particularly to support work in other subjects. Teachers have a substantial training course on ICT due soon, and this should help overcome some of these problems. Some teachers, particularly the co-ordinator, are confident in using ICT and they make more extensive use of equipment, including the laptop computers. In lessons, pupils are generally managed well and they are enthused and excited by the chance to use computers. Their behaviour and concentration are generally good and they share resources amicably, and take care of the equipment. Work is generally planned at an appropriate level to take learning forward well.

113. Joint planning by teachers in year-groups enables some sharing of expertise and similar provision for each class. This is particularly effective in Year 4, where the ICT co-ordinator is one of the class teachers. Pupils across the school are making good progress in their skills because of their positive attitudes and the good provision of equipment, even when gaps in teachers' subject knowledge slows down the pace. In the one lesson that was unsatisfactory, the teacher had not sufficiently established ground-rules for what pupils should do when they were "stuck". As a consequence, many spent too long waiting for help, and lost concentration.
114. The subject is well resourced in terms of numbers of computers. As well as the computers in the suite, there are several lap-tops and a number of computers in shared areas. Far too little use is made of these other computers, and hardly any instances were recorded during the inspection. There are technical difficulties at the moment in transferring work from the suite to the other computers, but the school has plans to remedy this in the near future. Similarly, there are problems with the school's internet provider, which often causes difficulties in accessing the web. The school, along with the local authority, are currently planning to change this. The presence of a technician for some lessons greatly speeds up progress when there are difficulties, as she can use her expert knowledge to overcome them very quickly.
115. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership to colleagues and is managing provision effectively. She has good subject knowledge and has provided good advice to colleagues, both formally and informally. A suitable scheme of work has been established, and the co-ordinator contributes to medium-term planning in each year group. Her work on short-term planning in her own year group has resulted in more extensive use of ICT outside the suite for these classes. She has a sound understanding of some of the strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision, and is taking appropriate action to make improvements. Formal monitoring of planning and of examples of work have contributed to this, but there is a need to make this more systematic, and to include some monitoring of colleagues' teaching, so that her expertise can be targeted more effectively. The school's computer club, running each morning and evening, is very well attended and contributes well to the good progress which pupils are making in their skills and understanding.

## MUSIC

116. Overall standards in music are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 6. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Throughout the school the subject is taught by a music specialist. Some very good work was observed during small group instrumental sessions that involved the highly acclaimed 'Steel Band'. Music receives a high profile throughout the school and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they move through the school.
117. All pupils confidently select from a very good range of percussion instruments. They can name many of them, showing good awareness of the different sounds they make and the different ways they can be played. Most pupils listen very well and can distinguish accurately between short and long notes, and repeat musical patterns using a range of simple rhythms. Listening to different types of music played in assembly, during lunchtime and in the main school entrance area, positively promotes pupils' appreciation; they respond well to the different moods the music creates. Year 4 pupils sing tunefully, with good understanding of how to present a performance containing melody. Pupils recorded their performance on a tape recorder and used the playback session to evaluate it successfully in order to improve. Year 6 pupils sing well-known songs expressively, creating a range of interesting rhythms to match syllables found in given words. The use of simple musical notation successfully supported the repeating of patterns. They clearly matched sounds and recitation with good levels of confidence.

118. Most pupils sing with enthusiasm. The choir and steel band are open to all pupils who successfully complete an audition. These groups make a very good contribution to the quality of singing in assemblies and special occasions. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work. Behaviour is very good with some excellent behaviour observed during a Year 5 music lesson taken by the specialist teacher. All pupils handle musical instruments with care, collecting and returning them in a very responsible manner.
119. Overall teaching is good, with some very good examples of teaching observed. Lessons are well planned, proceeding at an energetic pace with good learning taking place. All pupils are offered the same opportunities and pupils of differing abilities make similar progress to their peers, with the teacher using a rapid range of questions to check understanding and encourage original ideas. Good quality class management, relationships and rates of productivity mean that time is used effectively. In the very good lesson observed in Year 5, the quality of pace and challenge promoted learning of a high quality. Music makes a good contribution to pupils' personal and social development through well-planned group music-making activities.
120. Management of the subject by an enthusiastic, well-qualified co-ordinator is good, and she presents her lessons with considerable skill to ensure that pupils make good progress. With the aid of recent grants, resources are now very good. The school possesses a wide range of suitable tuned and un-tuned percussion instruments in very good condition. Assessments of pupils' progress are undertaken at regular intervals. However, the co-ordinator is aware of the need to develop uniform systems of recording skills achieved. Some missed opportunities exist for the subject co-ordinator to work alongside colleagues, thus enhancing their professional development and subject expertise. Music is used well as a cross-curricular activity, for example in dance in Year 4. Insufficient use is made, however, of ICT to support and develop pupils' skills in musical composition. Visits from musicians suitably enrich the curriculum. Pupils take part in regular concerts and school productions, which contribute to the school's links with the local community in a very positive manner.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

121. When they leave school at the age of 11, pupils have reached standards in line with national expectations, and are making satisfactory progress in their learning. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and also make satisfactory progress. These findings are similar to those of the previous inspection.
122. In Year 3, pupils can explain the purposes of a warm up and are able to follow their teacher in aerobic preparation to music before their main activities. They can practise and improve simple cartwheels on mats and over benches, sideways rolls on mats, forward rolls on the box and star jumps off it, although one boy's interpretation – a violent dive – was fortunately rescued by the crash mat! The quality of their actions varies very much in line with their confidence in using large apparatus. Year 5 pupils follow the beat of music carefully during their warm up, although many of them have low spatial awareness. Their interpretation of 'journey into space' and 'walking on the moon', through slow and fast directional movements and using different heights, was often of a good quality. 2 or 3 boys perfected a particularly good 'robot' sequence. Year 5 pupils are also showing good and developing skills in hockey. Year 6 pupils are developing skills in football, netball/basketball and hockey, learning about tactics and offensive/defensive moves. Their standards, however, are rather variable. Although a good number can catch, move with and throw a netball accurately, there are also a number who cannot. Likewise, although many pupils can control and dribble a hockey ball or football, a significant minority cannot, often because they do not take their skills development seriously enough. Pupils throughout the school are given opportunities to go swimming, although because of other curricular demands, this cannot be every term. Although records indicate that about two thirds of the pupils can complete 25 metres in the pool by the time they leave the school, this is below national expectation. Many pupils indicate that they have few opportunities to swim other than when in school. The school has recently increased the total time given to swimming, in response to identified concerns.
123. The teaching varies from satisfactory to very good, although there are isolated occasions of unsatisfactory practice when pupils learn little and misbehave. The good and very good lessons, such as dance and the teaching of hockey skills with outside assistance, are characterised by very good teacher knowledge and the ability to demonstrate skills of high quality. Most teachers plan and manage lessons well, have good relationships with their pupils and are clear about what they want pupils to learn. Very occasionally, learning becomes slower when teachers give overlong instructions, become very involved with single groups of pupils, leaving other groups unattended for lengthy periods, or use inappropriate areas for activity. Teachers also do not involve pupils sufficiently in the evaluation of their own and other pupils' movements.
124. Almost all pupils are hugely enthusiastic for any form of physical activity. Although their behaviour is nearly always very respectful and highly motivated by their teachers, they occasionally become over excited, fidgety or boisterous. This occurs even with the older pupils, a few of whom do not work well independently.
125. The school's extra-curricular activities and links are very good. Pupils have won the local school's cricket competition, and play netball and soccer matches regularly against other schools. The school also has visitors from and close links with a local cricket club and the town's professional football club. The accommodation, including an excellent hall, spacious playground areas and a good sized (albeit muddy) field, is particularly good. Resources also are of good quality and plentiful.
126. The recently appointed co-ordinator is currently conducting an audit of the subject within the school, and is already aware that there is a need for more clearly defined assessment and record keeping of pupil progress, so that it may be applied systematically to help improve standards further. In addition, due to some complex curricular arrangements, some pupils, particularly in Year 5, are having limited opportunities to develop their skills in dance.





## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

127. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the agreed syllabus by the end of Year 6. This is broadly similar to the position at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils study the full range of the subject as set down by the agreed syllabus. They acquire a good knowledge of the beliefs, celebrations, artefacts and worship of the main religions of the world.
128. By Year 6, most pupils can begin to define issues or facts they personally believe in. However, scrutiny of pupils' written work and discussions with pupils indicate that there are differences between classes in the extent to which the local agreed syllabus has been implemented.
129. The quality of teaching observed in religious education ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. Overall teaching is satisfactory. In a very good lesson observed in Year 5, pupils demonstrated a good knowledge of the Jewish faith. In preparation for a visit to a synagogue, pupils closely examined a variety of religious artefacts, asking a wide range of questions that enhanced their learning at a good rate. The well-planned work, to which they responded with enthusiasm, was challenging, requiring close study of the artefacts in relation to each part having a religious significance. The opportunity to work collaboratively enhanced very good links with literacy during the speaking and listening sessions. The discussion was facilitated effectively by the teacher's probing questions and her high expectations of the pupils' responding in a sensible, mature and courteous manner. The teacher made good use of pupils' own religious experience to inform others and to make the topic interesting to them. Although pupils generally have a good factual knowledge, there is a weakness in attainment when writing about the things studied. Religious education is not yet used sufficiently to extend and improve the skill of writing for different purposes in a variety of styles. Much recorded work is in the form of worksheets or copied. This reduces the understanding of religions as the worksheet approach focuses learning on the acquisition of facts in too narrow a way. Too little use is made of ICT in the subject, especially in conjunction with improving the quality of pupils' written work. Religious education makes a strong contribution to the good quality of relationships in school and to the very good levels of racial harmony that are apparent in all classes.
130. The very well informed co-ordinator for religious education monitors planning and is sufficiently aware of pupils' progress across the school. Leadership of the subject is good. Nevertheless, there are no effective procedures for ensuring that the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject are developed progressively. Resources for the teaching of religious education are good. The range of reference materials available to pupils, either in books or other forms, is good and the many opportunities available to visit places of worship outside school are fully pursued, having a positive effect on pupils' understanding and enjoyment of learning from each other.