

INSPECTION REPORT

TOWNFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Birkenhead

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number:131774

Headteacher: Mrs K Lee

Reporting inspector: Mr F P Ravey
11371

Dates of inspection: 19-22 March 2001

Inspection number: 230500

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Townfield Lane
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Edward Behan

Date of previous inspection: April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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11371	Mr F Ravey	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Religious education	What sort of school is it? The school's results & achievements How well are pupils taught?
19669	Mrs F Kennedy	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values & personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? Partnerships with parents
30075	Mr M Duggan	Team inspector	Art and design Design & technology	How well is the school led & managed?
	Mr B Frost	Team inspector	History Geography Equal opportunities	Assessment
	Mr R Greenall	Team inspector	English Physical education English as an additional language	How good are curricular & other opportunities?
	Mrs A Heakin	Team inspector	Special educational needs The work of the hearing impaired unit Mathematics	
	Mrs L Spooner	Team inspector	The foundation stage Science Music	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is in the town of Birkenhead in the borough of Wirral. It has 343 pupils on roll, from reception to Year 6. Most pupils are taught in classes containing pupils from two age groups, as part of the school's planned provision. The vast majority of pupils are white. A small number of pupils speak English as an additional language with one of these pupils at the early stages of learning English. About 15 percent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs; this is similar to the last inspection and below the national average. Eight pupils have statements of special educational needs. This is higher than the national average but includes five pupils who are hearing-impaired and benefit from the hearing support base at the school. Other special educational needs include moderate learning difficulties and behavioural difficulties. The local area has mostly private housing. About 13 percent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, broadly in line with the national average. Attainment on entry to reception this year is a little below average but in other recent years has been broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. Standards are improving and pupils are provided with a good range of learning opportunities. Particularly good attention is paid to developing pupils' learning in lessons beyond the required curriculum. Teaching is of good quality and has a positive impact upon pupils' learning. Very good leadership ensures a clear and effective focus on continued improvement. Improving standards, good provision for pupils' personal and social development, good teaching and a good range of learning opportunities mean that the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve standards in literacy which are above nationally expected levels at the age of 11.
- School leadership and management are very effective.
- Teaching is good.
- Provision for pupils in the special educational needs hearing support base is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes to school and to learning are very good.
- Relationships throughout the school are very good.
- The quality of information given to parents is excellent.
- Very good opportunities are provided for pupils' spiritual, moral, personal and social development.

What could be improved

- Standards in information and communication technology should be higher at the age of 11.
- Resources and outdoor play facilities for children in the foundation stage are insufficient.
- Standards in speaking should be raised to the same high level as those in literacy by the age of 11.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 1997. Since then, it has made good improvement overall and in some areas improvement has been very good. In recognition of this improvement, the school has recently received a national Achievement Award. Standards in English have improved at a very good rate since the last inspection whilst standards in mathematics and science have improved at a satisfactory rate. The quality of teaching has improved significantly on that reported in the previous inspection. In relation to the key issues identified in the previous inspection report, very good improvements have been made in the use of assessment information and in procedures for monitoring pupils' work; good improvement has been made in provision for high attaining pupils and in curriculum planning; and satisfactory improvement has been made in clarifying arrangements for homework. The school exceeded its target for attainment by 11 year olds in English last year but failed to meet its stated target for mathematics. Work seen during the inspection indicates that pupils are on course to achieve the targets set for them in both subjects this year.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key	
Well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

Pupils aged 11 attained test results in English that were above the national average and well above the average for similar schools nationally. In mathematics and science, test results last year were below the national average and well below the average for similar schools, largely due to the low proportion of pupils attaining high levels in their tests. Improvement in test results in English for 11 year olds has been very good since the last inspection. Improvement in mathematics and science has been satisfactory. In National Curriculum tests for seven year olds, the pupils perform particularly well in writing and improvement since the last inspection across all subjects is satisfactory.

Work seen during the inspection confirms the above average performance in English at age 11 and shows that standards are improving in mathematics and science at this age and are now at the nationally expected levels. Attainment amongst 11 year olds in information for communication technology is below the expected level but pupils are achieving satisfactory levels when what they knew previously is taken into account. The school is working hard to come to terms with increased national expectations in this subject and standards throughout the rest of the school match national expectations. At age seven, standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are at the nationally expected levels as are standards in all other subjects, at both seven and 11. In religious education, standards match the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus.

Pupils largely attain high enough standards. An exception, in the seven to 11 age group, is in speaking, where standards although satisfactory are not as high as those in literacy.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very enthusiastic about school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well, both in lessons and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are willing and able to take responsibility. Relationships throughout the school are very good, with staff showing pupils a very good example in this.
Attendance	Above the national average and good. The vast majority of pupils arrive on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching throughout the school is mostly of good quality and has a positive impact upon pupils' learning. Teaching of English and mathematics is largely good and is effective in helping pupils to learn the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Literacy, in particular, is taught well with a strong and successful emphasis on developing pupils' writing skills. Teaching of speaking for pupils aged seven to 11 is less successful although still satisfactory. Effective teaching is evident throughout the school. It is characterised by sharp questioning, good relationships, good planning and organisation and good use of assessment to check what pupils have learned and to assist teachers in planning the next steps in learning. Teaching meets the learning needs of all groups of pupils in the vast majority of lessons. High attaining pupils are now being sufficiently challenged in mathematics and science. Hence they are now achieving the levels they should. Pupils with special educational needs are given appropriate learning targets and good support. This results in good progress.

During the inspection, all teaching was at least satisfactory; 49 percent of lessons were good; and 22 percent of lessons were very good. The greatest concentration of very good teaching was in the five to seven age group. Very occasionally, lessons in the seven to 11 age group lacked the sparkle seen in most other lessons. On such occasions, pupils did not learn sufficiently well.

Pupils respond well to their teachers. They concentrate hard on their work and work co-operatively when required to do so. They persevere well in their work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Pupils are given a good range of learning opportunities. Provision for developing social and personal skills is particularly effective.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good for those pupils who benefit from the resourced unit. Good for all other pupils with special educational needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very few pupils speak English as an additional language and only one pupil is at an early stage of learning. The school makes good provision for the very small number of pupils concerned.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision is made for spiritual, moral and social development. Good provision is made for pupils' cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares well for its pupils. As a result, this is a happy and effective school community.

The school maintains a very good partnership with parents. The quality of the information parents receive is excellent.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership, strongly focused upon high standards and upon giving pupils a good all-round education. She is very well supported by other staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They are closely involved in the work of the school and have a good understanding of its needs.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school makes very careful and effective analysis of test and other data. This is used very effectively to target areas for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of its resources to help it achieve its correctly chosen targets for improvement.

The school has sufficient staff to teach the full curriculum. Its accommodation is mostly good although the lack of proper outdoor play facilities for reception pupils is a weakness. Resources for learning are generally good with the resources and new accommodation for information and communication technology being very good. The school follows closely the local authority's guidelines on gaining best value from its major spending decisions and achieves this satisfactorily.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The progress made by their children. • The fact that their children are expected to work hard. • Standards of behaviour. • The quality of teaching. • The quality of school leadership. • The approachability of school staff. • The way in which the school helps their children become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework given. • The range of activities provided outside lessons.

The inspection team agrees strongly with the very positive views expressed by the vast majority of parents. In relation to the small number of concerns expressed, inspectors found that the amount of homework given is satisfactory and that a satisfactory range of activities is provided outside lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

Standards at the end of the reception year

- 1 Children's attainment at the start of reception this year was a little below average although in other recent year's attainment has been broadly average. Children make good progress, owing to well-planned teaching, and by the end of the year most are likely to attain the nationally expected levels in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. In personal and social development, attainment is above average due to the school's very successful focus on developing such skills. This good progress indicates that children are attaining high enough standards overall and that they achieve well in developing their personal and social skills.

Standards at age seven

- 2 The most recent National Curriculum test results for seven year olds show that standards in reading and mathematics were average when compared to schools nationally and that standards in writing were above the national average. A similar picture emerges when comparisons are made with pupils in similar schools nationally. The school's success in achieving above average standards in writing is due to a strong and effective focus on developing the skills of writing. Teacher assessments of pupils' attainment in science show that standards are average. Since the last inspection, standards have risen at a satisfactory rate in reading and writing and they have risen well in mathematics.
- 3 Work seen during the inspection shows a similar picture. Pupils in Year 2 are attaining nationally expected levels in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards in speaking and listening match national expectations at age seven. In other subjects, attainment is at the nationally expected levels at age seven in art, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology (ICT), music and physical education. In religious education, standards at age seven match the expectations of the local agreed syllabus. Stimulating teaching and work that is well matched to pupils' attainments means that all groups of pupils achieve high enough standards.

Standards at age 11

- 4 The most recent National Curriculum test results for 11 year olds show that standards in English were above the national average but that those in mathematics and science were below the national average. Compared with similar schools nationally, standards in English were well above average but those in mathematics and science were well below average. The reason for the lower standards in mathematics and science was the low proportion of pupils achieving high levels in these subjects. Standards in speaking at age 11 are not as high as those in other aspects of English. Whilst they match national expectations, they could be higher if better planned opportunities were provided for pupils to develop these skills. Since the previous inspection, standards have risen at a fast rate in English and at a satisfactory rate in mathematics and

science.

- 5 Work seen during the inspection shows that the school is maintaining its above average standards in English and that the picture in mathematics and science is improving. In both these subjects, standards now match national expectations and all groups of pupils are attaining high enough levels. This improvement is due to the school recognising and successfully addressing the issue of too few pupils achieving high levels. The school has also addressed successfully an issue in English relating to girls achieving less well than boys. The school exceeded its target for attainment by 11 year olds in English last year but failed to meet its stated target for mathematics. Work seen during the inspection indicates that pupils are on course to achieve the targets set for them in both subjects this year.
- 6 In other subjects, work seen during the inspection shows that standards match national expectations in art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. In religious education, standards at age 11 match the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus. However, in ICT, standards at age 11 are below national expectations. The school has made good improvements to provision in this subject in order to match increased national expectations and pupils in Year 6 are achieving well enough in relation to their previous learning. All other groups of pupils in the seven to 11 age group are also achieving satisfactory levels.

Standards in literacy

- 7 By the age of seven, Most pupils write in a consistently joined and legible style. They make correct use of full stops and capital letters, and sometimes of speech marks. Most read confidently and accurately from books of an appropriate level of difficulty. High attaining pupils read fluently and with enthusiasm. Pupils are developing an interest in books. By the time they are 11, all but a few pupils write fluently and neatly in a fully joined script, and many use commas and apostrophes independently. Most pupils read expressively and fluently. They find information quickly from reference books. They have developed clear preferences about authors and types of story.

Standards in numeracy

- 8 By the age of seven, pupils calculate confidently using simple addition and subtraction. They use these skills to help them solve 'real life' money problems. They have begun to show their answers in the form of simple graphs and charts. High attainers calculate accurately using three and four figure numbers. By the age of 11, pupils make accurate calculations involving time. They plot co-ordinates and construct accurate line graphs. They start to use mathematical terms appropriately when examining statistical information and recognise shapes such as rhombus and trapezium. In problem solving, all pupils are beginning to increase their own strategies and explain their reasoning.

Pupils with special educational needs

- 9 Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress throughout the school. All pupils at Stage 1 and above on the Code of Practice for special educational needs have individual plans that include their targets. Pupils' literacy and numeracy targets are listed in the front of their exercise books as a motivator to achieve higher standards. Class teachers in conjunction with the special needs co-ordinator devise the individual plans. These strategies combined with very good assessment and careful monitoring means that pupils who have special educational needs make good progress. Arrangements for supporting pupils who have statements of special educational need are effective and ensure they attain standards that are in line with their prior learning.

Pupils learning English as an additional language

- 10 The very few pupils who are learning English as an additional language make good progress. Teachers work closely with the specialist advisory teacher from the local authority to develop their skills and understand their individual needs. As a result, the pupils benefit from consistently appropriate support and are fully integrated in all lessons. This enables them to make confident progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Attitudes to school

- 11 Pupils enjoy school and are enthusiastic about all school activities. Their very positive attitudes to learning are one of the school's major strengths, contributing significantly to the standards which they achieve. In lessons, the vast majority of pupils work with sustained concentration. They take a pride in the presentation of their written work and, in practical lessons such as science and design technology, they handle resources sensibly, willing to share with one another and mindful of their own and other peoples' safety. Pupils work co-operatively with a partner, for example in ICT lessons, or as part of a group, for example in literacy and numeracy lessons. They gladly help their teachers by collecting in books and tidying the classroom at the end of the lesson. Parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated very strongly that their children like school.

Behaviour

- 12 Behaviour throughout the school is good. The pupils play together happily at break and lunch times and their behaviour in the playground is good. A strong feature of the school is the way in which the pupils conduct themselves sensibly when moving around the school between lessons, for example when going from one building to the other. Their behaviour inside school at break time, when inclement weather prevented them from playing out of doors, was very good. Behaviour in a Year 1 / 2 assembly observed was of a high standard. Pupils responded to the humour in the play performed by Year 1 and Year 2 pupils, with the theme "How our mothers care for us". The assembly was in celebration of Mothering Sunday and pupils were very pleased to have their parents join them on such an enjoyable occasion. Parents agree very strongly that behaviour is good.

Relationships

- 13 Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils are well mannered, friendly and helpful. They have a clear understanding of how unkind words and actions can affect other people. Older pupils show care and consideration for younger children and pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the life of the school. There are very few instances of serious misconduct. The pupils understand and respect the code of conduct, the classroom rules and the system of rewards and sanctions. However, there were two fixed period exclusions last year, imposed for behaviour which the school considered to be totally unacceptable.

Personal development

- 14 The pupils take good care of their school. All areas of the building are clean and tidy and the extensive school grounds are entirely free from litter. When presented with opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility the pupils respond very positively. From a very early age they have jobs to do such as "leading the line" when moving around the school and giving out the milk at break time. Increasingly, as they progress through the school, they assume additional responsibilities, such as returning registers to the office and helping their teachers prepare for lessons. For example, pupils from Year 3 and Year 4 were testing the batteries in preparation for a science lesson. The school council provides good opportunities for pupils from Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 to contribute to the school community. The school council helped to draw up the code of conduct and is currently considering the feasibility of the school providing cushions for the pupils to sit on in assembly. Two of the older pupils represent the school in the "Friends of Townfield" group. They put forward the pupils' ideas for fund raising events and make suggestions as to how the money might be spent. Year 6 pupils demonstrate an ability to lead and to take responsibility by acting as prefects and monitors. They think of themselves as "The eyes and ears of the teachers", assisting with the supervision of pupils at break and lunch time and helping to uphold the code of conduct. All these activities contribute very positively to the pupils' personal development and to the strong sense of community that prevails inside school.

Attendance

- 15 The pupils' enthusiasm for school is reflected in their consistently good record of attendance. Since the last inspection there has been steady improvement in attendance and the rate of attendance for the last reporting year was slightly above the national average. The rate of unauthorised absence for the same period was above the national average but, since September 2000, this has fallen as a result of improvements in the school's arrangements for monitoring attendance. Pupils arrive punctually in the mornings and lessons start promptly. Almost all pupils earn the half-termly certificates which are awarded for punctuality.

Pupils with special educational needs

- 16 Pupils who have special educational needs have positive attitudes to school and are very well integrated into the school community. They relate very well to adults and to other pupils, and as a consequence they gain in confidence and self-esteem. Pupils who have emotional and behavioural needs respond well to the caring ethos, feel valued and build meaningful relationships with adults and their classmates.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 17 Teaching has a strong and positive impact on the good quality of pupils' learning and on the standards they attain. Throughout the inspection, it was notable how well pupils learned in the vast majority of lessons. The progress they make over longer periods of time was evident in the work in their books. The rising standards indicated by improvement in National Curriculum test results are often down to the quality of teaching that pupils receive. Parents agree very strongly that teaching is good. Good improvements have been made to the quality of teaching since the previous inspection, particularly in relation to the amount of very good teaching observed.
- 18 During the inspection, over 70 percent of lessons were judged to be at least good quality; over 20 percent were very good. No teaching was less than satisfactory. In this school, it would be right to say that good teaching is the norm. Lessons where teaching has less impact on learning than it should are very much in a minority. Effective teaching is evident throughout the school, with the greatest concentration of very effective teaching observed in the five to seven age range. This leads to a consistently good level of learning in lessons. Strong teaching of the skills of literacy has contributed greatly to the fast rate of improvement in standards in this subject. Good teaching of investigational skills in science is having a noticeable impact on standards in that subject. Numeracy is generally taught well, with particularly effective teaching in the five to seven age group leading to good progress by pupils of all attainments.

Teaching in the foundation stage of learning

- 19 Teaching for children in the reception year is well planned, taking full account of how best to develop enthusiasm for learning as well as basic skills in these young children. Teachers' confidence in teaching these skills leads to good progress. They know exactly what they want to achieve in lessons and communicate this well to children, who are then aware of what they must do. Skilful questioning helps develop understanding. For example, in a numeracy lesson, the teacher's questioning about solid shapes as part of a guessing game she played with the children, led to one child making the mathematically precise answer, "It's a triangular prism!" Close and accurate assessment of pupils' progress means that teachers are fully aware of just what to do next. Very occasionally, teaching for these children lacks the sharp edge of effectiveness when expectations that children should listen attentively are not sufficiently high. This results in children not learning as well as they should. However, teachers mostly expect a lot from children, and are well rewarded with good work.

Teaching of pupils aged from five to 11

- 20 Similar strengths in teaching are seen for pupils in other classes throughout the school. Teachers often share with pupils information about what they are going to learn in a lesson. This focuses pupils' attention on learning. Good preparation means that teachers are well organised and waste no time. Pupils catch on to this readily as a good example and do not waste time themselves. Such good example extends to relationships in lessons. Pupils know they are valued and respected. In return, they are positive about learning and work well with one another. Very well directed questioning means that pupils have to think hard before answering. Teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to develop the skills of independent and co-operative learning in many lessons. It was very noticeable how pupils in the seven to 11 age group worked easily and effectively together in the computer suite, sharing ideas and discussing possible solutions to problems. Such opportunities result in pupils becoming more aware of the need to learn through exchanging ideas as well as by thinking things out for themselves. In the ICT lessons mentioned, for example, it resulted in pupils improving their skills of using an art and design program.
- 21 Teachers provide work that challenges pupils at the right level in relation to their attainment and previous learning. All classes in the five to 11 age range contain pupils from different age groups and teachers plan carefully to ensure that pupils are given work that matches their learning needs. Pupils of similar needs but from different age groups work together naturally and effectively. An example of this was seen when a high attaining child from the reception year worked happily and successfully alongside Year1 pupils in a literacy lesson. Teachers make good use of resources to stimulate pupils' interest and to provide a focus for their attention. In the same literacy lesson, for example, pupils were given an attractive underwater picture as a focus for their writing. Working hard at the task, they produced interesting phrases such as 'destroyed ships'. Frequent and accurate assessments of pupils' work, including regular and rigorous marking, means that teachers are well aware of the next steps in learning for individual pupils. They set pupils individual targets to attain in literacy and numeracy, focusing pupils' attention effectively on particular skills to be learned.
- 22 The very effective teaching seen, especially in the five to seven age group, contains all these characteristics but adds an extra 'ingredient', perhaps extra subject knowledge or particularly good use of a range of teaching strategies to bring pace, variety and shared pleasure to learning. For example, in a Year 1 / 2 numeracy lesson, a stimulating, quick-fire questioning session on mental calculation was followed by challenging and interesting work in which pupils were expected to work sensibly and independently. The teacher added a sense of urgency through occasional reminders about time left to complete the work. As a result, pupils were energised to work hard and to make good progress.
- 23 Conversely, teaching for pupils in the seven to 11 age group occasionally lacks the edge and sparkle that generally characterises teaching throughout the school. This is sometimes due to unsatisfactory management of time within a lesson, for example not leaving pupils with sufficient time to complete a task. On other occasions, the expectation of high attaining pupils is too low and, whilst these pupils work reasonably hard and produce some work, they are not pushed to achieve as well as they should.

Pupils with special educational needs

- 24 Teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good. It is undertaken effectively by class teachers within the class setting, in small groups taken by the special needs co-ordinator with the five to seven year olds and by additional groups with seven to 11 year olds. The work of the co-ordinator is particularly effective, as she is involved in the class teaching as well as with the additional groups. This means that the work is always planned specifically to meet the individual needs of the pupils as well as supporting the work done in the classroom. Teachers are familiar with the process of identifying pupils who have special educational needs and follow correct procedures. Teachers make good use of the individual educational plans to inform their planning or to match the work to pupils' individual needs. The targets are of good quality, and the very good assessment procedures used by teachers mean that teaching is very focused and has a positive impact on the progress of pupils who have special educational needs. When pupils in the five to seven age group are withdrawn for a group activity such as knowing addition and subtraction facts to 20, the teacher is reassuring, promoting pupils' self-esteem. The work is challenging with a variety of suitable activities that reinforces their very good progress. The pupils glow with pride as their teacher congratulates them for their efforts and are reluctant to stop as she points out their new skills in numeracy. The learning support assistants are well informed about teacher planning and liaise well with class teachers to make sure the work is appropriate but still challenging, as a result pupils in Years 3 and 4 who have access to extra support make good progress. Learning support assistants maintain observational records so that they can help teachers to plan effectively to meet pupils' individual needs.

Pupils speaking English as an additional language

- 25 The few pupils speaking English as an additional language are taught well. Teachers work closely with the specialist advisory teacher from the local authority. Appropriate programmes of work are devised and progress is assessed closely. Pupils are fully included in class work whilst benefiting from extra support. As a result they make good progress.

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

- 26 The range and quality of learning opportunities are good. The school makes satisfactory provision for children in the Foundation Stage. However, as children move through the school, the basic curriculum is enhanced by an increasing variety of other learning opportunities. Provision is good for pupils aged five to seven, and very good for seven to eleven year-olds. It meets statutory requirements.

Improvements since the previous inspection

- 27 The school has made good improvements since the last inspection. It has maintained, and in some cases enhanced, existing strengths, for example in the quality of its support for pupils with impaired hearing or other special educational needs. It has also successfully tackled the weaknesses that were identified in the previous inspection report. The systems for planning and the grouping and monitoring of pupils have been vigorously developed in English, mathematics and science. As a result, teachers now achieve a more rigorous match between

pupils' known attainments and the demands of their learning tasks. High attaining pupils are beginning to realise their potential more consistently, and a new system identifies gifted and talented pupils in a range of subjects and enables them to develop their individual aptitudes.

The curriculum

- 28 The curriculum for the foundation stage of learning is planned appropriately to match national guidelines. Pupils are provided with a good range of practical learning opportunities although provision for physical development is hampered by the lack of proper outdoor play facilities.
- 29 The full statutory curriculum for pupils aged from five to 11 is in place, enhanced by shrewd use of national guidance and updated in the light of recent changes to the National Curriculum. Work in religious education complies with the local Agreed Syllabus. The range and quality of opportunities and the carefully balanced use of time reflect the clear priorities of the school's simple mission statement and of its development plan. Planning carefully addresses the individual needs of all pupils. It also provides good opportunities for them to develop particular interests and talents.

Strategies for literacy and numeracy

- 30 The good quality of the school's response to change is illustrated by the way it has implemented the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Developments in both areas have boosted the confidence, expertise and teamwork of all staff, and improved the accuracy and use of assessment information. As a result, planned activities challenge different levels of attainment and pupils' individual learning targets are beginning to reflect their precise needs and rates of learning. Very well managed developments in literacy have proved particularly effective in raising standards, most notably in writing. The strategy for numeracy is also effective, but not yet equally so, having been implemented more recently. A challenge facing the school is to maintain improvement in these basic skills, whilst developing an equally effective strategy for speaking skills.

Special educational needs

- 31 Provision for special educational needs in mainstream classes is good, with some very good provision being made in the seven to 11 age group. Pupils who have special educational needs are included in all aspects of the curriculum and make good progress. Teachers have copies of individual plans and these are used well to plan suitable work to meet the needs of individuals. The school ensures that the provision outlined in pupils' statements is in place and is reviewed in line with guidance offered in the nationally recognised Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs. The school states its aim 'to bring out the potential of all our pupils' and this ethos is actively promoted ensuring that all pupils have equality of access to the whole curriculum.

English as an additional language

- 32 The few pupils who are learning English as an additional language have the same curricular opportunities as their classmates. Each benefits from a full half-day's support and assessment every week from a visiting specialist. Class teachers make good use of the specialist's guidance and assessment to ensure that these pupils can join in all learning activities and make strong progress.

Equality of opportunity

- 33 The governors' policy for equality of opportunity is implemented successfully throughout the school. Staff take care to see that all pupils, irrespective of gender, race or religion, have equal access to the whole curriculum. The school makes good provision for pupils at all levels of attainment. Careful planning provides pupils with appropriately challenging work. In lessons, teachers and classroom assistants offer the pupils a good level of support. This is particularly helpful for pupils who speak English as an additional language and for those who have special educational needs. The use of specially adapted microphones by teachers is extremely helpful in supporting the hearing impaired pupils. The curriculum provides many relevant opportunities for the pupils to develop positive attitudes towards other cultures and religions. These frequently occur through constructive texts in literacy and in religious education lessons, and through studies in history, geography, art and music.

Activities outside lessons

- 34 The school provides a satisfactory range of activities outside lessons. It also provides a stimulating and very effective range of opportunities in lesson time to extend pupils' learning experiences beyond the basic curriculum. This contributes well to pupils' personal and social development. Many pupils participate in a range of popular sports activities. For example, a cross-country running club meets at lunchtimes, and clubs for netball, rugby, hockey, soccer, cricket and athletics meet weekly according to season, and participate in various friendly matches or competitions. The school also provides a range of educational visits to theatres and local places of interest to support work in the curriculum. Pupils in Years 2, 4 and 6 benefit from a very good programme of residential visits. The school sets aside each Friday a well designed period of 'activity time' for all pupils in the seven to 11 age group. This enables pupils from different year groups to work together on given options which they choose by personal interest each half-term. Some options extend existing curriculum interests in subjects such as design and technology or art. Others offer such new possibilities as French and European awareness.
- 35 The work involved in providing such visits and activities mirrors the school's whole-hearted commitment to pupils' personal and social development and their growing understanding of citizenship. The commitment is also reflected in a well-planned and very effective programme for personal, social and health education. This includes good provision for education in health, sex and drugs awareness, with contributions from a range of visiting 'experts'. It also includes the good use of class assemblies and timetabled class discussions, during which pupils can share thoughts and feelings on themes and issues which directly touch their lives.

Partnerships

- 36 Good partnerships with other local schools contribute, both directly and indirectly, to pupils' learning opportunities. For example, the local high school offers the use of its large hall for the annual Christmas production which involves every Townfield pupil. The same high school also provides library access and book loans to support learning projects, whilst another offers practical work in its science laboratories. Links with other primary schools result in joint planning to share scarce resources or training initiatives. These benefits are enhanced by the support of the local community. For instance, the working relationship with St. Saviour's parish is strong, and the vicar and curate make an invaluable contribution to assemblies and many other school events.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

- 37 The school has maintained the very good quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development identified at the time of the previous inspection. The school's mission statement is fully reflected in its daily life. Most parents agree that the values and attitudes that are promoted have a positive effect on their children's personal development and this was confirmed during the inspection.

Spiritual development

- 38 The provision made for spiritual development is very good. The school's ethos is firmly based upon respect for others. School and class assemblies give pupils valuable insights into the spiritual aspects of life through personal prayer and reflection. Close links are maintained with the local church and ministers in the community. In the last year, and with the help of parents, the school has created 'Sophie's Garden', a quiet place for reflection in memory of one of the children. During the inspection, pupils were provided with the opportunity to watch chicks hatching and were very concerned about their welfare. As part of their personal and social education, for example, in 'circle time', pupils are provided with good opportunities to think about their own feelings and their place in the world. School policies are often prefaced with a stated commitment to valuing pupils' contributions.

Moral and social development

- 39 Provision for moral and social development is also very good and the pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Adults provide pupils with a very good example in respecting and valuing others. The school's curriculum policy is based on a clear commitment to promoting respect. The Code of Conduct has been devised in consultation with pupils. It is fairly and consistently applied and provides a unity of purpose for all. Class rules are negotiated at the beginning of each school year and displayed in classrooms. Pupils are provided with very good opportunities to make a more formal contribution to school life through the Pupil School Council. Representatives from each class in the five to 11 age group meet with the headteacher on a weekly basis to discuss issues affecting the school or groups of pupils. The school makes good provision for pupils to take part in a range of interesting activities each Friday afternoon. These provide good opportunities for pupils to follow a personal project while working with pupils from other classes and year groups. Prefects and monitors are given good opportunities to develop

responsibility as they go about their duties. House and merit awards are a part of the school's active approach to the development of positive attitudes and behaviour. These are awarded in the school's achievement assemblies. Each year, pupils in Years 2, 4 and 6 are provided with opportunities to take part in residential visits. The school's action plan for development promotes very good relationships between all those who work in the school.

Cultural development

- 40 The provision for cultural development is good. The planned curriculum for religious education ensures that the beliefs and ideas of Christianity and other major world faiths are taught well. Pupils attend a service each term at St Saviour's Church and have visited a synagogue as part of their studies of Judaism. The school has ensured that books in classrooms and libraries represent the pupils' own culture and those of the wider world. A taught European Awareness programme is in place and pupils are provided with interesting opportunities to learn French and Russian. In addition, the school has a successful link with a primary school near St Petersburg and is planning an Internet link with a school in Moscow. Subjects of the curriculum also promote cultural awareness well. For example, in history, pupils in Year 2 have been studying the plight of the villagers of Eyam during the plague and in geography have been looking at issues concerning the effects of new housing on the environment.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

Welfare and child protection

- 41 The school provides a good level of care for its pupils and is successful in ensuring their welfare, health and safety. Child protection procedures are good, adhering to guidelines provided by the local education authority. The school receives good support from a wide range of visiting specialists, including the school nurse, who spends one day a week in the school. She is very helpful in advising the school and the parents on matters concerning the pupils' emotional needs and their general well-being. Equality of opportunity is a good feature of the school and teachers, in their planning, take account of the needs of all the pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.

Assessing pupils' progress

- 42 Since the last inspection the school has made considerable progress in improving its procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment and progress. The new arrangements are very good and are particularly helpful in monitoring the pupils' progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Information gained is analysed carefully and used effectively to improve provision and to identify areas for improvement. Individual targets are now set for the pupils each term in English and mathematics. These are clear and attainable so that pupils are in no doubt as to what they need to do to improve.

- 43 The school has recently updated its marking policy. This is used sensitively and helps the pupils to see their strengths and areas for improvement. In addition, the very good quality of questioning in lessons helps the teachers to evaluate the level of the pupils' understanding. These are strong features of the day-to-day assessment strategies.

Monitoring behaviour

- 44 Procedures for monitoring discipline and good behaviour are very effective. The school's mission statement underpins all of its work and forms the basis for the code of conduct. Hard work, good manners, caring for others and sharing a safe and happy school are emphasised strongly in all aspects of school life. The code of conduct is displayed prominently and imaginatively in many areas of the school, useful reminders for the pupils as to the expected standards of behaviour.
- 45 The school council helped to draw up the code of conduct and all the pupils are involved in establishing a set of rules for their own class. From a very early age the pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for duties in the classroom and, as they move through the school, they are given additional responsibilities which extend to the wider school community. Prefects and monitors in Year 6 are given appropriate opportunities for developing qualities such as leadership and reliability through assisting with the supervision of pupils at break and lunch time and by helping to uphold the code of conduct.

Monitoring and promoting personal and social development

- 46 Personal and social development is given high priority throughout the school, with emphasis on developing positive relationships, a healthy lifestyle and an understanding of what it means to be a good citizen. The pupils' achievements are recognised in class, in assembly and in the many colourful displays of their work in all areas of the school. Rewards for caring, helpful attitudes, effort and perseverance include verbal praise from the teaching and non-teaching staff, written comments on pieces of work, house points and trophies. There are suitable, staged procedures for dealing with misbehaviour in class or around the school. Since the last inspection the school has implemented an anti-bullying policy and, to ensure the parents are fully aware of what to do if they have any concerns, they are given a copy of the policy statement annually. There are very few incidents of serious misconduct. Relationships throughout the school are very good and almost all the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire are of the opinion that their children like school.

Monitoring and improving attendance

- 47 Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. The prospectus and the home-school agreement emphasise the importance of regular attendance and parents are discouraged from taking holidays in term time. Since the last inspection the school has introduced rewards for punctuality and nearly all the pupils achieve the required standard and receive a certificate every half term. The school is considering introducing a reward system for best class attendance to further improve the attendance rate, which is already slightly above the national average. Concerns about individual pupils' attendance are followed up promptly and effectively, through the educational welfare service. Any unexplained absence is followed up without delay, wherever possible on the first day of absence. Improvements in the monitoring arrangements are helping to

reduce the level of unauthorised absence and, since September 2000, almost all absence has been authorised.

Supporting pupils with special educational needs

- 48 The school meets all the requirements for those pupils who have statements of special educational need and all are well supported. There are effective links with other agencies to ensure the provision outlined in statements of special educational needs is implemented. Speech therapists and audiologists support those pupils who have impaired hearing and the local authority's special educational needs support service supports pupils with a significant level of special educational needs. Assessment results are used very well to help teachers to plan effectively for pupils' individual needs. When pupils are ready to leave the school there are links with the receiving high school so relevant information can be passed on and pupils' individual needs can continue to be met. The school works well to integrate pupils including those who have emotional and behavioural difficulties or physical needs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 49 The school has developed a very good partnership with parents and carers. The consultation exercise, prior to the inspection, revealed that parents feel comfortable in approaching the school with problems or questions concerning their children. Almost all parents are in agreement that their children like school. The parents and carers consider the school to be well led and managed and feel their children are expected to work hard and achieve of their best. The inspection findings support all these positive views.
- 50 A minority of parents and carers are of the view that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside the classroom. The inspection findings are that the range of extra curricular activities provided for the pupils is satisfactory and similar to that provided in most other primary schools. While the great majority of the parents and carers are happy with the amount of work their children are expected to do at home, a minority are dissatisfied with this aspect of the school. Inspection evidence indicates that the school makes effective use of homework, particularly in relation to reading and spellings. Since the last inspection the school has implemented a homework policy which is shared effectively with parents and carers.

The quality of information provided for parents

- 51 The quality of the information provided for parents and carers, by the school, is excellent. The aims of the school, the facilities it offers and the role of the governing body are made clear in the prospectus. The prospectus explains clearly that parents are welcome to visit the school, at any time, to view the schemes of work and official curriculum documents and policies. Parents and carers are kept fully informed with regard to school procedures and events through the governors' annual report and weekly newsletters. To ensure that all parents receive their weekly newsletters the school posts a copy to those parents whose children are absent on the day they are given out. The "Townfield Times" is sent to parents and carers every half term, providing parents with detailed information in relation to holiday dates, fund-raising activities and the life of the school generally. Since the last inspection, the school has drawn up a detailed home-school contract that explains what parents and carers may expect of the

school and what the school expects from parents and pupils.

- 52 The school provides a very informative booklet for parents of children entering the reception classes. This gives parents and carers helpful information about the early learning goals for children at the foundation stage of their education. It also suggests lots of ways in which the parents can help their children prepare for school. Most of the parents and carers of the reception children have daily personal contact with staff, either at the beginning or end of the school day. This is a very good feature of the school's provision for children under five.
- 53 Parents are kept very well informed in relation to their children's progress. There are three formal parents' evenings every year, providing parents with suitable opportunities to discuss with class teachers how well their children are achieving and what they need to do to improve. Parents of pupils on the register of special educational needs are invited to meet with the headteacher and the special educational needs co-ordinator every term and the parents of statemented pupils are invited to the more detailed annual review involving external agencies.
- 54 Pupils' annual written reports give parents concise and relevant information about their children's attainment, progress and personal development. An excellent feature of home-school communications is the half-termly report card that is sent to parents five times a year. These provide parents with on-going information about their children's achievement in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science as well as grading the effort they are putting into their work and their general attitude and behaviour. There is space for parents to make a written comment before returning the report cards to the school.

Parents of pupils with special educational needs

- 55 Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are properly involved from the time the teacher has an initial concern. The school has very good links with parents and the special needs co-ordinator is well supported by the head teacher who makes a full day available to jointly talk with parents of pupils who have significant levels of special educational need. Class teachers regularly invite parents to come and discuss any difficulties pupils may experience.

Parents' contribution to the life of the school

- 56 The school values the very good contribution the parents make to its life and work. Parents and carers are invited into school for class assemblies and "Bring a parent to school" sessions when parents can participate in lessons. During the inspection week the parents very much enjoyed an assembly for five to seven year olds that centred round Mothers' Day. Afterwards they voiced their appreciation and said they are always made welcome on such occasions. Many parents give generously of their time to assist with educational visits, school administration, the library and classroom support. Since the last inspection a parents' council has been set up. This provides a useful forum for parents to air their views and make suggestions for school development.

- 57 The "Friends of Townfield" group, which was praised in the last inspection report, continues to work hard in support of the school. In addition to organising numerous social events for the pupils and their families the association raises considerable funds for the school. Money raised by the 'Friends of Townfield' helped to furnish the new computer suite that is of great benefit to the pupils. The pupil body is now represented at meetings by two of the older pupils and their suggestions are valued as to how the money that is raised might be used to extend opportunities for teaching and learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

The headteacher and key staff

- 58 The headteacher, supported well by all other staff, provides very good leadership for the school. Since her appointment she has quickly gained the confidence of governors, staff, pupils and parents. She is committed, purposeful, gives clear direction and focuses the attention of staff and governors on the implementation of procedures to improve the school's educational provision and to raise standards further. As a result, the school has recently been awarded a Certificate of Achievement by the Department for Education and Employment for the rate of improvement in National Curriculum test results. Through an effective process of review and monitoring, senior staff and governors become aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This has provided the framework for writing the school development plan, the priorities of which provide a good basis for educational development during the next four years. The plan reflects clearly the aims of the school's mission statement and is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Consequently a calm, positive atmosphere is generated, where a close working partnership is the norm. This ensures effective contribution to teaching and learning and above all to pupils' achievements.
- 59 All staff have been delegated some degree of responsibility for different aspects of the school's work. The senior management team carries out its duties conscientiously and very effectively. Together, its members have developed a shared culture of success to which all other staff and governors are fully committed. Subject co-ordinators monitor teachers' plans and evaluate pupils' work effectively. This is an improvement since the last inspection when subject co-ordination was not so secure. Key stage co-ordinators monitor teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy, offering verbal and written report-back to teachers. This aspect of monitoring is still being developed to include more subjects.

The management of special educational needs

- 60 Management of Special Educational Needs is good. The special needs co-ordinator is recently appointed to the role and is in the process of reviewing provision and procedures and consolidating her knowledge and skills in this area. The agenda for development includes rewriting the policy document as soon as impending new legislation is published. The co-ordinator is a very effective teacher of pupils who have learning difficulties and is enthusiastic in promoting inclusion and meeting pupils' individual educational needs. The governor with responsibility for special needs is very supportive and knowledgeable with a practical approach to supporting the school in meeting special educational needs and promoting the principles of inclusion.

The governing body

- 61 Governors are clear about their own responsibilities and those related to the headteacher. They are keenly involved in discussion about targets for the school development plan and know the importance of analysing data and results to evaluate the school's performance, especially in relation to pupils' achievements. They are committed fully to school improvement and consider themselves an integral part of school life. Some governors meet frequently with key staff such as those with responsibility for literacy or special educational needs. For example, the literacy governor has observed teaching and learning in many classes. Parent governors assist regularly in lessons and report back observations to the full governing body. Governor-teacher communication is further strengthened by the liaison system between all governors and link-teachers. The chair of governors is in almost daily communication with the headteacher. He takes part in all residential visits and attends all school functions. This is a confident governing body, with all relevant committees in place, which provides good strategic leadership. It fulfils its statutory duties.

Staffing

- 62 All staff possess negotiated job descriptions which are based on functions, role and tasks and are linked to raising standards. An effective performance management system helps staff in achieving the school's aspirations as expressed in its statement of aims. Individual professional development is discussed and sufficient opportunities are provided for appropriate in-service training to support any emerging needs.
- 63 Good procedures are in place to introduce new staff to school procedures, through meetings with the headteacher and other senior staff. A useful staff handbook is provided. A senior teacher has responsibility for mentoring newly qualified teachers, who receive a high level of support during their first year of teaching. This process is successful in establishing new staff as effective members of the team from an early stage.
- 64 The school has sufficient teachers to teach the National Curriculum and religious education. Apart from the support staff designated for pupils who have statements of special educational needs, the school employs a limited number of classroom assistants. All the support staff work well to give pupils in their care good support and guidance. They work to increase their expertise by taking relevant training courses. In line with school priorities teachers attend appropriate training to further extend their skills. The school caretaker, the cleaning staff, the cook, lunch-time supervisors, voluntary parent helpers and ex-teachers make a valuable and valued contribution to the smooth running of the school and pupils' welfare.

Accommodation

- 65 The accommodation is well organised, allowing for the curriculum to be taught effectively. Teachers make good displays of pupils' work, and this enhances the appearance of the buildings. The school library is spacious but although books are well organised the rooms are not yet furnished to promote informal browsing. Very good improvements to the accommodation have been made to incorporate a computer suite. There are two good size halls that double up as dining rooms and four playgrounds. This means that pupils can have lunch and playtimes at

the same time and so the management of the timetable becomes more straightforward. The school benefits from extensive grassed areas with benches for pupils and nesting boxes fixed to the trees. Recently 'Sophie's Garden' was created. This is a sheltered memorial garden complete with chimes and windsocks in memory of a pupil who died recently. This development which entailed fund raising and hard manual work is enjoyed by the pupils and is a good reflection of the caring ethos of the school. The school is kept clean and in a good state of repair.

Resources for learning

- 66 Resources for most subjects including library books are good, with art and design technology being satisfactory. Subject co-ordinators make new purchases in line with the priorities of the school development plan and maintain a budget-monitoring book as part of their accountability. Good use is made of loan systems as the school borrows artefacts and books from the local authority and from the neighbouring high school. The 'Friends of Townfield' association has supported the school well by providing individual whiteboards so pupils can easily record work during oral and mental activities in their lessons. However, the provision of outdoor play resources for pupils in the reception year is unsatisfactory, restricting opportunities for them to develop their physical skills.

Finance and efficiency

- 67 Day to day financial control and management of the school are good as a result of the overview of the headteacher and a very efficient administrator and secretary. The governing body is involved appropriately in the school's financial affairs through reports, relevant discussions at each of its meetings and through the work of its very focused finance committee. Financial planning is good. For example, despite the considerable outlay on past long-term teacher absence, the school through good financial control and prudent budget management, should still achieve a modest surplus by the end of this financial year. Special funding is allocated appropriately for the needs of pupils and to support in-service training for staff. Funding for pupils with special educational needs is used to provide good support. The school makes good use of computerised systems to monitor financial and other data. Effective systems are in place for the handling, recording and auditing of all incoming and outgoing monies. The latest local education authority audit report's minor recommendations have already been implemented. The school employs best value principles based on the local education authority's process but recognises that this process is at the early stages of implementation and should be applied further in order to ensure best value from major spending decisions.

Value for money

- 68 Given the average level of spending per pupil, their attainment on entry, the good progress made and sound standards reached, the good quality of teaching together with pupils' good attitudes and behaviour, the school gives good value for money. This is an improvement since the previous inspection which reported value for money as satisfactory.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

69 In order to build upon its recent successes and to improve further, the school should

Improve standards in information and communication technology to nationally expected levels at age 11 by:

- providing further regular opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in the subject;
- providing further in-service training for teachers;
- further developing and using its recently introduced procedures for assessing pupils' progress;
- developing a more consistent approach to the use of ICT in other subjects;
- monitoring and reviewing its success in these tasks.

*(The main references to this issue can be found in paragraphs 148-50) **

Improve outdoor accommodation for children in the foundation stage of learning and improve resources for these children by:

- providing a secure outdoor play area;
- providing a suitable range of outdoor toys and equipment.

*(The main references to this issue can be found in paragraphs 89 and 66) **

Improve standards in speaking in the seven to 11 age group by:

- providing more planned opportunities for pupils to develop and improve their speaking skills, both in literacy lessons and through work in other subjects.

(The main references to this issue can be found in paragraph 103)

* already planned by the school as a priority

In addition, the governing body should consider the following points for inclusion in its action plan.

- To develop a more systematic approach to ensuring best value in spending decisions.

(paragraph 68)

- To develop the use of the school libraries for recreational reading.

(paragraph 101)

PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN THE HEARING SUPPORT BASE

70 The hearing support base caters for up to 7 pupils who have statements of special educational needs for hearing impairment. At the time of inspection 5 pupils attended the unit. Judgements about progress and reference to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements, annual reviews and supplementary documents supplied by the school. The resource provision is very good and the school is committed to the policy of inclusion.

Standards

71 Standards of attainment are low but no lower than would be expected in the circumstances. Before pupils who are hearing impaired can begin to make progress they must have appropriate amplification and then specialist support is required to help them compensate for their delayed grasp of language. This is being addressed well and pupils are making very good progress in acquiring linguistic skills to enable them to understand and access the curriculum. This work for pupils occurs alongside their normal learning and they make very good progress. Attainment is low but as pupils progress through the school the variance in attainment decreases as they develop their understanding and linguistic skills. Analysis of work shows that pupils follow the same topics as their peers and are well supported when necessary. Progress for these pupils is good with a wide range of work undertaken.

Pupils' attitudes

72 Pupils have very positive attitudes and a willingness to learn in their lessons. They are caring and supportive of each other and treat the school environment and resources with respect. They are included in all aspects of the curriculum and the relationships between pupils and adults who work with them are very good. This results in pupils feeling secure, their confidence is boosted and they feel ready to learn. This is evident in the resource base and also in the mainstream classrooms where pupils spend most of their time and are well supported by the specialist teacher and support staff. This very good quality support and the positive inclusive ethos of the whole school, means that the unit pupils are well integrated into their own year groups. This is a strength of the provision as pupils gain in self-esteem and confidence as well as developing social relationships which are so important for pupils who have a hearing impairment.

Teaching

73 The quality of teaching within the hearing support base is consistently very good and this continues into the mainstream classrooms where class teachers are well supported by the staff from the base. The teacher in charge of the base receives copies of mainstream planning the week before the lessons are taught. Staff from the base carefully analyse the lesson plans and identify the aspects that will present particular difficulty for their pupils. They decide where there might be a gap in pupils' understanding and so extra explanation may be necessary, where pupils might need some one-to-one attention and where pupils can be expected to work independently. Any work done in the base is carefully planned to reinforce any class work that presented difficult concepts for pupils who are hearing impaired. For example when three pupils in the seven to 11 age group were faced with the challenge of writing an piece illustrating a historical trail, they

were well supported by the calm and patient approach of their teacher. He reinforced a sense of time past and developed pupils' vocabulary so they could tackle the work with confidence. In mainstream lessons, pupils who are hearing impaired are expected to participate fully and are always included in question and answer sessions. This is very important as it gives pupils further confidence and supports the work of the speech therapist. Teachers' marking is encouraging and supports the verbal feedback pupils receive from the unit teacher. Class teachers are firm and expect the same standards of good behaviour from hearing impaired pupils as from the rest of the school. This was well demonstrated at the end of a Key Stage 1 music lesson when all pupils, including one from the hearing support base were equally expected to lie calmly on the floor before being dismissed.

Learning opportunities

- 74 The curriculum provision is good. The base supports very well the broad, balanced and relevant school curriculum that gives the pupils their full entitlement to the National Curriculum and Religious Education. Pupils are provided with equality of access and opportunity afforded to pupils of the same age in the mainstream classes. Pupils receive their full entitlement to the literacy and numeracy strategies and the high standard of teaching in the school means that they make good progress in the range of subjects taught. The school has carefully considered the amount of time pupils should spend in the support base and the amount of time they should spend in mainstream lessons. Predominantly time is spent in the mainstream classes with minimal but well focused withdrawal to ensure that the hearing impaired pupils are gaining maximum benefit from the school curriculum. The support base teacher and other staff give good direct support both in terms of enabling pupils to be successfully included in the lesson and in sharing their expertise with mainstream teachers. The school meets its obligation to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs are included in the daily act of collective worship and cultural development is good. Their social and moral development reflects that of all pupils in the school and is very good. The pupils from the support base have very good opportunities to mix with pupils of their own age and this policy adds significantly to the life of the school.

Assessment

- 75 Assessment procedures are very good. There are clear links between the detailed targets in pupils' individual educational plans and the planned curriculum. Class teachers are fully aware of pupils' targets; all pupils including those who are hearing impaired have additional literacy and numeracy targets and these are formulated as a result of very good teacher assessments. Pupils who are hearing impaired also have additional targets relating to their receptive and expressive language skills and social interactions; the base staff carefully monitor these.

- 76 Staff endeavour to keep parents fully involved and informed about their child's progress. Parents are invited to review meetings and the teacher in charge of the support base is easily available to parents and can talk to them regularly about any anxieties, as there is a phone in the base. The support base teacher meets with assistants regularly and they discuss the strategies for the week and share thoughts about the progress of the pupils who are hearing impaired; this means that there is a shared direction for this very good specialist provision.

Resources

- 77 Pupils from the support base benefit from having appropriate resources to assist their learning. Teachers use appropriate amplification, classrooms and corridors are carpeted and some of the classrooms have extra sound systems that benefit all the pupils as well as those who are hearing impaired. The specialist resources and staff are well utilised throughout the school to enable pupils to have very good access to the main school curriculum. External staff such as speech therapists and audiologist are an integral part of the provision which allows these pupils to make good progress in increasing their social competency and gaining full access to the curriculum. At the time of the previous inspection it was stated that all staff were committed to the successful integration of the hearing impaired pupils into the school. This philosophy, which is actively supported by the governor with responsibility for special educational needs, has been strongly maintained and is a strength of the school provision, contributing significantly to the very good provision for pupils who are hearing impaired.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	72
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	42

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	22	49	29	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	343
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	44
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	75
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	24
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	25	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	22	23
	Girls	22	24	22
	Total	45	46	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (91)	94 (95)	92 (98)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	21	21
	Girls	22	21	23
	Total	44	42	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (93)	86 (95)	90 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	24	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	15	20
	Girls	21	17	19
	Total	40	32	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (92)	71 (70)	87 (76)
	National	73 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	15	18
	Girls	15	13	17
	Total	28	28	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	64 (51)	64 (63)	78 (76)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	2
White	0
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.4
Average class size	23.2

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	132

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	2	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.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	555,494
Total expenditure	543952
Expenditure per pupil	1,568
Balance brought forward from previous year	6,037
Balance carried forward to next year	17,579

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	343
Number of questionnaires returned	102

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	48	1	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	37	59	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	55	1	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	50	14	1	1
The teaching is good.	45	52	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	47	8	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	38	0	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	42	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	41	54	4	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	53	45	1	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	55	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	48	12	5	4

Other issues raised by parents

None

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

78 At the time of the inspection there were forty-one children attending full-time in the two reception classes. Good links are established between home and school, and children settle quickly into the routines of the school. This helps them to feel secure and promotes confidence. Attainment on entry to the reception classes for this year is just below that expected of children of this age although in other recent years, attainment has been average. Children make good progress during their time in the reception classes in all areas of learning. By the end of the reception year, the large majority of children will have exceeded the nationally expected standards in personal, social and emotional development and will have reached the expected standards in all other areas. This indicates that the school has maintained standards since the previous inspection.

Personal, social and emotional development

79 By the end of the year, most children will have exceeded the expected standards. They make good progress. Arrangements for children prior to starting school are well organised. They include opportunities for visits by parents and children and a good quality information booklet for parents. This induction programme contributes positively to the ease with which most children settle and they come into school happily. They know the routines of the classroom well. Most listen attentively and respond well to what adults say. However, in one of the classes, during discussion sessions on the carpet, clear rules for listening are not set and consistently applied. This results in some children not paying full attention to what they are being told.

80 Good opportunities are provided for the children to develop independent learning through the provision of an interesting range of activities that are matched well to the children's learning needs. This also promotes a good attitude to learning and children come to school eager to learn. A good example of this was when a group of low attaining children were able to work in the sand tray without direct teacher supervision where they enjoyed having to find hidden three-dimensional shapes and match them to picture cards. Children are given very good opportunities to listen to others and talk about things that are important to them. This has a very positive on their understanding of feelings and promotes good relationships and behaviour.

Communication, language and literacy

81 The children make good progress and most attain the expected standards by the end of reception year. This is due to strengths in teaching and in the good quality of learning opportunities provided. Reading diaries indicate that parents provide good support for their children in the development of their reading.

- 82 In both classes, the teachers place successful emphasis on the development of speaking skills. They provide good opportunities for children to take part in discussions and ensure that key words for learning are introduced in lessons. For example, the terms 'author' and 'illustrator' in literacy and 'three-dimensional' in mathematics. This results in the children developing an understanding and use of more technical language. Teachers' questioning skills are good and because of this children are able to discuss ideas and are developing questioning skills.
- 83 Effective emphasis is placed on the development of reading skills. This results in good progress for most children and means that standards by the end of the reception year match those expected for the age group. Appropriate elements of the National Literacy Strategy have been successfully introduced. This promotes a good understanding of how books are organised and an ability to describe the characters in the story, for example, "The bear is angry because his eyebrows are up". They enjoy finding rhymes in the text when sharing a 'Big Book' and recognise those associated with initial and final letters. Children who are just starting reading recognise familiar words such as the names of the characters and when talking about the illustrations can describe simply what is happening. Higher attaining children have already exceeded the standards expected at this age. They read familiar text accurately and describe what has happened in the story and some of the reasons why.
- 84 Teachers demonstrate good skills in teaching writing. As a result, most children can write their first names or make reasonable, independent attempts. In their story and news writing, the large majority of children write independently, using recognisable words or strings of letters to represent meaning. High attaining children use their knowledge of letters to help them write independently. They write simple sentences and make good attempts at spelling more difficult words such as 'dino' for 'dinosaur'. The majority recognise many letters of the alphabet and are developing a good understanding of the first and final sounds in words. Most hold a pencil correctly and this results in a satisfactory standard of handwriting.

Mathematical development

- 85 The majority of children are on target to attain the expected standards by the end of reception year, with some children likely to exceed them. This is as a result of the strong and successful emphasis placed on sorting and counting both in mathematics lessons and in other planned activities.
- 86 Children are interested in mathematics and make good progress. Teachers have high expectations of the amount of work to be covered during a lesson. Most already count reliably to 10 and add numbers to 5. High attaining children can count to beyond 20, add to 10 and identify 'more' and 'less' than a given number. Children develop a satisfactory understanding of simple, three-dimensional shapes with a few high attainers recognising and naming more complex shapes such as triangular prisms.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 87 Children make good progress and attain the expected standards by the end of reception year. Children are interested in the world around them and this is promoted well through the range of interesting opportunities provided. For example, when investigating how to make an umbrella for a teddy, they began to understand the waterproof properties of different materials and as a result made knowledgeable choices of which were the most suitable. They learn to use appropriate descriptive vocabulary, for example, "The material is waterproof because it's rubbery". Activities are well resourced and well planned to build upon previous learning. Children are encouraged to work independently, with appropriate intervention by adults. They develop satisfactory computer skills. Most show good skills when controlling events on the screen and, with adult support, they can cancel previous instructions and reprogram a device to move forwards across the floor. Work on display includes sentences to accompany photographs of the children as babies. These indicate an understanding of how they have changed over time.

Physical development

- 88 Standards match the expected levels by the end of reception year. Good progress is made in physical development through opportunities for the children to use the school hall for physical education lessons and other activities in class. Currently, the outdoor play area and lack of large outdoor toys limit planned opportunities for challenging outdoor play. As a result, progress is also limited. Teachers link areas of learning effectively. A good example of this is when the children went on a 'bear hunt' around the school's environmental area. They were encouraged to think about their work on bears and the book they had read together earlier in the day. When hunting for bears they crept on their toes or lifted their knees high as they followed the 'trail'. At all times, children are taught to move and play safely with consideration for others. Teachers and adults in class show children how to hold pencils and scissors correctly and safely. This is effective in helping them develop their writing and cutting skills.

Creative development

- 89 Most children are likely to achieve the expected standards by the end of the reception year. They make good progress. Teachers provide a good range of resources and activities that are often linked closely to the topic for learning. This was evident in the display of children's art and design work around the classrooms. These included bright paintings of their teddies with accompanying sentences such as, "My teddy is called Care a lot", as well as colourful bear hunt maps and teddy bear lunch boxes.
- 90 Children enjoy singing. In the lesson observed, they were quick to learn the song "I Went to the Woods". They know the names of a range of percussion instruments and identify some of the sounds they make, contributing their own descriptive words such as 'ting' for the sound of the Indian bells. Towards the end of this lesson a good level of challenge was provided when the children were introduced to simple musical notation.

Teaching

- 91 In the lessons observed, 70 percent of teaching was good; the rest was satisfactory. This indicates an improvement since the previous inspection when teaching was judged as satisfactory overall. Teachers have a good understanding of how young children learn and a secure knowledge of the curriculum. Basic skills in all areas of learning are taught well and this results in good progress. Lesson planning includes clear learning objectives and well-matched and interesting activities. Behaviour is generally managed effectively, but occasionally expectations that children should listen and be attentive at all times are not high enough. Attainment and progress are closely monitored and evaluated and used effectively to help teachers in their future planning.
- 92 There is no policy to provide a framework for teaching and learning in the foundation stage. However, this is to be addressed as part of the school's action plan for the summer term. The curriculum is well planned. Assessment procedures are use effectively to develop planning, teaching and learning further. Parents are provided with very good information. Very good relationships are maintained with parents although few currently help in school. The accommodation is very spacious and well organised into classroom bases and areas of learning. Resources to support most classroom activities are adequate.

ENGLISH

- 93 Standards of work seen during the inspection in literacy (reading and writing) at age seven are at the nationally expected level; at age 11, they are above the nationally expected level. These standards are similar to the results of the National Curriculum tests in 2000. The tests also show that standards were in line with those of similar schools nationally at age seven, but well above similar schools at age eleven. Girls and boys do equally well, although this was not the case two years before, when girls' results were well below the national average. The school identified this problem and has addressed it successfully. Standards in speaking are at the nationally expected levels at ages seven and 11 but are not as well developed throughout the seven to 11 age group as standards in literacy and could be higher. In recent years, increasing numbers of seven and eleven year olds have achieved levels higher than those expected for their age. This increase reflects improving provision for these pupils. Careful monitoring and planning, together with effective teaching, enable pupils with special educational needs to make good progress and, in many cases, to achieve the expected level by the ages of seven and 11. Standards in reading and writing are high enough for all groups of pupils.
- 94 The school has made very good improvements in English in recent years. This is due to very good management, driven by the school's own aspirations and closely supported by the local advisory service. The key development has been in training staff in the effective uses of assessment. Teachers use formal and informal assessment processes to guide their planning and teaching. This is reflected in the high quality of their marking. As a result, pupils are aware of and can begin to control their own learning whilst faced with constantly rising but achievable demands. The school has fully incorporated the National Literacy Strategy within its well-managed developmental process, and this has brought a consistent structure both to the literacy lesson and to the literacy curriculum. At the same time, the school has maintained its strenuous attention to writing through the development of good whole-school programmes for handwriting,

spelling and extended writing. As a result, overall performance in writing is better than that found in most schools. All these developments are secure and form a strong basis for continued improvement.

95 In writing, pupils throughout the school achieve well. The school has developed effective systems to monitor and promote progress in all aspects of writing. For example, having identified some weakness in spelling, the school has investigated the problem, adopted a relevant strategy and successfully improved its work in this area. Similarly rigorous responses to weaknesses identified in the last report have resulted in consistently good progress in handwriting and punctuation. Most seven-year-olds write in a consistently joined and legible style. They make correct use of full stops and capital letters, and sometimes of speech marks. By the time they are 11, all but a few pupils write fluently and neatly in a fully joined script, and many use commas and apostrophes without needing to be prompted. Spelling, however, is relatively weak and only high attainers show a secure grasp of common letter strings and patterns.

96 However, the most significant progress in writing comes from the school's very good provision for promoting pupils' understanding of how to vary their writing to suit different situations. As they share and discuss together what they read, teachers lead pupils to see the features and structures of different kinds of writing, and to understand how they work. Teachers then help pupils to use these features and structures creatively as the basis for their own imaginative and factual writing. In this way, pupils learn to transfer skills between reading and writing, and to understand and control different kinds of writing. For example, pupils in Year 3 had written Autumn poems using a poem called "Come October" as a model. Their varied uses of its irregular verse form show good understanding and control of how it works. One pupil wrote:

Come October
Hedgehogs
Chestnut spiky
Crawl through the lifeless grass.

97 Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to guide these processes clearly, to use questions well and to improve pupils' work constructively. These strengths, together with well-planned programmes of work that are matched to different attainments, mean that pupils make good progress even when teaching is, occasionally, relatively lacklustre. On these few occasions, in the seven to 11 year old age group, pupils are not challenged sufficiently by the work given to them in the lesson and do not make as much progress as they should.

98 The writing of most seven-year-olds shows good achievement for their age. Their good awareness of form and purpose enables them to write lively poems about junk, instructions for changing for games and amusing wanted notices about 'Goldilocks'. High attainers write very effective descriptions of a setting, bringing a chosen photograph to life by using adjectives to evoke a range of sense impressions. Many 11 year olds write skilfully in a wide variety of styles. They write information texts about water, arguments about school uniform, and instructions for making such complex objects as a parachute. High attainers produce long and very well-controlled narratives. Their work shows a good understanding of how to vary sentence structure and word choice for different effects and of how to engage the audience by the use of dialogue and point of view.

- 99 Good planning, teaching methods, resources and uses of assessment lead to similar achievements in reading. Consistently systematic work on basic skills within the literacy framework leads to steady development of confidence and competence in an increasing range of strategies for reading new material. Staff work well to promote pupils' interest in books and reading. Good homework routines encourage parents to play a full part in their development, and their support contributes significantly to the progress pupils make. By the age of seven, most pupils express and explain their preferences. Some revealed good knowledge as they explored a new information book on 'Frogs' and explained why "You don't have to read it all if you just want to know about tadpoles" because the book "has a contents page and an index". Low attaining pupils read hesitantly in flat voices. They can sound out words like 'pretended' but do not always recognise their own mistakes. High attainers read fluently, accurately and with zest, performing their interpretation of the story and bringing its characters to life.
- 100 As pupils move from Years 3 to 6, they progress well in their understanding of how different texts work and in their ability to infer meanings and retrieve information. Their reading experiences, tastes, purposes and habits develop well. Pupils in Year 6 are active users of both public and school libraries, and able to explain how the Dewey library classification system works and to discuss the merits of popular authors. They identify a number of features that distinguish information books from fiction. In response to the opening of a story, some pointed out how certain word choices affected the reader's view of the character and developed a sense of anxiety. Their attainment is above average. The library has been developed thoughtfully and has good potential, but it is not adequately equipped or used for pupils to learn and practise independent research skills.
- 101 The school's successful approach to literacy development is beginning to influence work and support learning in other subjects. Factual texts used in literacy lessons often relate usefully to pupils' work in other subjects. Pupils write in science, history and religious education with a growing awareness of the uses of language and the ways of organising information that typify writing in those subjects. In Year 3, for example, pupils' writing about 'Jacob's Dream' captures the distinctive flavour of a Bible story. Some use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to 'publish' good work for display. Such uses are inconsistent, however, and overall ICT is very underused as a means to develop editing skills and the communicative practice of literacy. The uses and development of literacy skills through other subjects are not yet consistent enough throughout the school.
- 102 Standards in speaking and listening are uneven across the school and are lower overall than those achieved in literacy. There are, however, some strong features. Pupils have good and frequent opportunities to collaborate in pairs or groups on a range of tasks, and they develop good skills in solving problems, sharing resources and negotiating different roles without dispute. Skills in listening and answering questions relevantly also develop well. A strong feature of teaching throughout the school, but particularly in the five to seven year old age group, is the quality of questioning. Teachers use questions well to draw pupils into thoughtful discussion of characters, events, structures, meanings and the effects of language in stories, poems and other texts. These discussions invariably capture pupils' interest, and they listen keenly, appreciating and building on each other's ideas with clear and thoughtful contributions and without fear of being wrong. On the other hand, opportunities for pupils to speak at greater

length for a variety of formal and informal purposes are not so consistently planned and used. For example, opportunities are often missed at the end of literacy lessons for pupils to present their work and explain their new learning to the rest of the class. However, this weakness is largely confined to the seven to 11 age group; younger pupils benefit significantly from better opportunities. A good standard practice amongst these pupils is, for example, for a pupil, in role as a character from the story, to sit in the 'hot seat' and defend that character in response to questions from other pupils. Work of this kind requires pupils to sharpen their speaking skills in phrasing questions and expressing their developing interpretations of character and situation. It was noted during the inspection that pupils in Year 2 read aloud much more expressively and with a better awareness of audience than pupils in Year 6.

- 103 The vast majority of pupils show an eager commitment to learning, respond enthusiastically to literature and settle to their tasks with interest and sustained concentration. This is particularly noticeable in the five to seven age group. Pupils are keenly attentive in discussion, and most contribute well with constructive answers. They work in an orderly and responsible manner, collaborate happily and successfully in shared activities, and thrive on the very good working relationships that exist. Most pupils take great pride in their work. They present it carefully, keep their workplaces tidy and welcome teachers' challenging suggestions for how they could improve.
- 104 Pupils with special educational needs have detailed individual education plans that are followed carefully. Clear and achievable targets, informed by accurate assessments of need, enable teachers to plan work at the right level. This means that even when additional support is not available, as often happens in the seven to 11 age group, these pupils tackle achievable and well-managed tasks with confidence and make good progress. Frequently in literacy lessons, pupils from the Hearing Impairment unit are happily integrated and supported very well. The very few pupils who are learning English as an additional language also make good progress. Teachers work closely with the specialist advisory teacher from the local authority to develop their skills and understand the assessed individual needs of these pupils. As a result, the pupils benefit from consistently appropriate support and are fully integrated in all lessons.

MATHEMATICS

- 105 Standards of work seen during the inspection at ages seven and 11 match national expectations. These standards are similar to those recorded at the time of the last inspection. The school has identified that pupils find particular difficulty in problem solving activities and is developing good strategies to enable pupils to be more successful in this area of their work. Inspection evidence supports the view that this is an appropriate focus for further development. A key issue from the last inspection was for the school to identify levels of pupils' attainment in teachers' planning and the school has made good progress in addressing this.
- 106 Results of National Curriculum tests for 2000 show that the performance of seven year olds was average. Standards are close to national averages when compared with similar schools. These results show an improving trend over the last four years. Results of National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds show that attainment was below average. This was due to the low number of pupils attaining higher levels in their test. In comparison with similar school's performance was well below the national average. This showed a dip in

standards when compared with previous years. Evidence gathered during inspection indicates that the strategies being used to improve standards are beginning to take effect within both key stages. As a result, all groups of pupils achieve high enough standards in relation to their previous learning.

- 107 By the age of seven, pupils have made good progress in learning and consolidating mathematical skills and mathematical vocabulary. They weigh small items and accurately record their findings and investigate place value to make three digits into the biggest number. They understand odd and even numbers and improve their ability to add together numbers to make totals up to 20. Pupils solve 'real life' money problems, calculating change from five pounds if items cost three pounds fifty or four pounds. They show their findings as a graph and tally chart, and increase their competency in using three and four digit numbers.
- 108 By the age of 11, pupils have developed a good knowledge of the twenty four-hour clock and make accurate calculations involving time. They extend their knowledge of graphical representation as they present simple charts and graphs indicating the size of words in a piece of text. This knowledge is further extended as pupils learn to plot co-ordinates and construct accurate line graphs Pupils progress to work on problems involving chance and probability showing the results of their investigations clearly in graphical form. They start to use mathematical terms such as 'mean' 'median' and 'mode' appropriately when examining statistical information. Pupils recognise quadrilaterals such as rhombus and trapezium and how to find the perimeters of rectangles, with high attainers working on compound shapes. Pupils are familiar with mathematical vocabulary such as factor and multiple and most know the relationship between multiplication and division. In problem solving, all pupils are beginning to increase their own strategies and explain their reasoning.
- 109 Pupils throughout the school have good attitudes towards their work. Most work with enthusiasm and can sustain their concentration over long periods. Where learning is fun pupils take pride in their achievements: one young pupil had a broad smile on his face as he told the inspector 'I'm doing harder ones now!' There are good opportunities for pupils to work independently or with a partner. Pupils in the seven to 11 age group respond well to this challenge when they investigate decimal fractions in a dice game as do those in the five to seven age group when they enjoy checking each other's work on addition and subtraction of two digit numbers. Behaviour in lessons is consistently good throughout the school and pupils show interest and positive attitudes to learning when they join in oral activities with enthusiasm and work with partners to solve mathematical problems.

- 110 Teaching and learning is consistently effective for the five to seven year olds and is largely effective for seven to 11 year olds. Where teaching is good the mental mathematics sessions are lively, have a sense of urgency and all pupils participate fully. This was evident when at the beginning of a lesson pupils in Year 2 answered quick-fire questions on addition and subtraction, and when pupils in Years 3 and 4 used their individual whiteboards to record and display their conversions of pounds to pence. Older pupils in the seven to 11 age group made good progress in improving their ability to calculate using decimals. This included developing awareness of negative values when pupils had to physically place themselves in rank order according to numbers given to them by their teacher. This was difficult as 28 pupils moved around the room attempting to find their appropriate positions, but their teacher used this exercise very well in pointing out how essential it is to have a strategy for successful problem solving. Teachers give very clear instructions and pupils know exactly what is expected of them and waste little time in starting their mathematical tasks. Suitable resources are always available and pupils make appropriate use of items such as number squares and calculators to support or confirm their calculations. Teachers use resources well, for example in a Year 3 / 4 class, the teacher made good use of cubes when explaining the relationship between a whole and tenths. This meant that pupils had a clear understanding of decimal notation and were able to start their individual tasks quickly. A strength of teaching in many lessons is teachers' very good use of questioning techniques so they can assess pupils' understanding of new concepts or identify any basic skills that need to be reinforced. Teachers are vigilant and spend extra time with pupils who they have assessed as having a particular difficulty. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and have implemented the National Numeracy Strategy effectively. All pupils have individual targets for mathematics. This is having a positive impact on pupils' achievements especially in the five to seven age group. In the seven to 11 age group, in the very few instances where teaching lacks pace or pupils are not fully involved in the activities, pupils do not work to their full capacity, and this has a negative impact on their levels of achievement.
- 111 A strength of the teaching is the very detailed planning which teachers of particular age groups produce together. This system provides consistency between the classes and gives teachers good opportunities to share their expertise and concerns. Within their lesson planning teachers consider the needs of individual pupils and provide very good alternatives and options so that the learning needs of all pupils are well met. Very occasionally in the seven to 11 age group, planning was not translated into such effective practice to ensure sure that high attaining pupils worked at full stretch within the individual or group activities. The quality of marking is good, providing useful advice to pupils and acknowledging their achievements. Teachers have an expectation that pupils will present their work neatly and this results in pupils taking pride in their work. The teaching of mathematics is reinforced well by the attractive and pertinent displays of pupils' work. A further strength of the teaching of mathematics is the enthusiasm of teachers, which results in pupils enjoying their lessons and making good progress in the subject.
- 112 A recently formed co-ordination team has responsibility for managing mathematics. The team is effectively committed to raising standards of numeracy throughout the school. This is reflected in the specific and rigorous action plan prepared by the team. Detailed analysis has been made of previous National Curriculum test results and appropriate school targets have been set. The school is working hard to achieve the targets of raising the percentage of

pupils achieving the higher levels at the end of the key stages and inspection findings confirm that it is making good progress in this. Analysis of test results by the co-ordinators has identified the areas of problem solving and data handling as weaknesses in mathematics and the school has made a noticeable effort to remedy this not only in mathematics lessons but where possible in other subjects such as science. The curriculum leaders have good plans to develop their role in monitoring teaching of the subject and to evaluate the effectiveness of their initiatives such as the extra sessions timetabled for mental arithmetic strategies.

SCIENCE

- 113 Good improvements have been made in science since the previous inspection. The school now places a high level of focus on investigational work. The quality of teaching, which was judged as satisfactory, is now good. Planning, previously identified as a weakness, is now good and provides an effective framework for all pupils to make good progress and to achieve high enough standards, including pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.
- 114 The Year 2000 National Curriculum teacher assessment results for seven-year-olds show that attainment was average when compared to all schools, but was below the average for similar schools. The percentage attaining high levels was below average when compared both to schools nationally and to similar schools. In the Year 2000 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds, pupils' performance was below the national average and well below the average for similar schools. This was mainly because not enough pupils attained high levels. Standards in work seen during the inspection match national expectations at ages seven and 11. This represents improvement at age 11, due to the school's recognition of the need to improve its planning and focus upon investigational work and its success in doing this.
- 115 Through its analysis of the test results and in its response to the judgements made at the time of the previous inspection, the school has taken very positive action to address the areas for development. A clear subject action plan is in place and includes targets both to improve investigational work and increase the proportion of pupils attaining higher levels in their tests. Work seen during the inspection shows that there has been a systematic focus on the development of investigative work within a balanced science programme of study. This has helped to raise attainment throughout the school. Pupils in Year 1 learn to answer questions through the use of scientific method. The approach to investigation becomes more complex from year to year so that by Year 6 pupils are developing a rigorous approach to predicting, testing and evaluating their results. However, high attaining pupils in Year 6 have not yet developed the skill of linking scientific evidence and creative thinking to help them understand why things happen. This is mainly because they are not provided with sufficiently challenging questions to extend their thinking.

- 116 Pupils in the five to seven age group make satisfactory progress. By the age of seven, pupils can place in order sources of light by brightness. They can identify different materials within a range of objects. They understand some of the different ways that food can affect health. Teachers provide many valuable opportunities for them to develop scientific enquiry skills. As a result of this, pupils are developing a good understanding of the importance of collecting scientific evidence through investigation. They are learning how to classify information and record the results of their experiments in a scientific way. In the lessons seen, pupils throughout the key stage were learning about sound. High attaining pupils are developing a simple understanding of a fair test, explaining it as, "It's when you try to keep things the same". They know there are different types of sounds and that they change according to their distance from the listener.
- 117 From age seven to 11, the progress made earlier is maintained and most pupils are well on their way to reaching the expected standard in the national tests at the age of 11, with about 20 percent set to achieve higher levels. By the age of 11, the way in which pupils write out their experiments indicates that the large majority has a good understanding of scientific method. They know the reasons why liquids evaporate and condense. They understand that different metals have different properties. Their experiments show a secure understanding of the effects of gravity. This knowledge and understanding is at the expected level of pupils this age.
- 118 Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to work independently. This results in pupils tackling experimental work with good levels of confidence. One of the priorities this year has been to ensure that pupils develop good skills in recording scientific data. This has been very successful and is reflected in the good quality of graphs and charts produced by pupils in all year groups. In the lesson observed in a Year 3/4 class, the teacher built successfully on the pupils' previous knowledge of electrical circuits through clear explanations and challenging questions. Pupils responded very positively and by the end of the lesson had clearly developed their understanding of broken circuits and the link with the concept of switches. Some very effective teaching in a Year 5 lesson ensured that pupils made very good gains in their knowledge and understanding of the use of electrical circuit sensors when studying the factors that might affect the results of an experiment. High attaining pupils in Year 6 demonstrated good skills in collecting data and recording it on line graphs. They were less secure about how to interpret their results accurately. This was because the teacher's questioning did not provide enough challenge to extend the pupils' thinking processes.
- 119 Pupils work together well. They listen carefully and in most lessons are willing to contribute their own ideas to class discussions. Where this is less well developed this is because the teacher does not use questioning effectively to challenge thinking. Throughout the school, pupils work hard and obviously enjoy the opportunities to be engaged in practical and meaningful activities. Over the year, pupils have produced a good amount of work. This is as a result of teachers' high expectations of effort.

- 120 The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. In the most effective lessons, teaching is lively and challenging and this results in high levels of pupil participation and motivation. Lesson planning is detailed and contains clear learning targets and activities that are well designed to promote learning. Teachers build effectively on what pupils have learned in earlier lessons. The teaching of scientific method and investigational work is strong throughout the school. The quality of assessment through questioning and in the marking of pupils' work is good. This, combined with regular lesson evaluations to help future planning, provides both teachers and pupils with a good understanding of the progress being made.
- 121 The curriculum is well planned, taking account of recent national guidelines. Assessment and recording procedures provide a good basis for monitoring pupils' progress. Teachers assess units of study throughout the year. Assessment information is used well to inform future planning and provide information for reports to parents. Good links are made with literacy and numeracy through opportunities to write for a range of technical purposes and to use their mathematical skills to record scientific data.
- 122 The subject is well managed. The three co-ordinators are committed to improving standards and have a good knowledge of the current development of the subject. The subject improvement plan clearly outlines targets for development and the school is working methodically and successfully towards their achievement.

ART AND DESIGN

- 123 Standards at ages seven and 11 match national expectations. Judgements based on displays and observation in lessons suggest that pupils' learning, including those with special educational needs, is good in Year 5/ 6 and satisfactory throughout the rest of the school. This judgement is similar to that reported in the previous inspection.
- 124 Art forms a valued part of the broad curriculum which pupils are offered. It is integrated well with other areas of the curriculum, both supporting them and drawing on them for stimuli. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 drew inspiration from their findings in history to depict in three-dimensional form vivid scenes from the Great Fire of London. In Years 5 and 6 pupils' work on perspective shows well-developed observational skills. Throughout the school pupils make steady gains in mastering techniques in two and three dimensions.
- 125 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 produce well-controlled representational drawings of people and animals. They make self-portraits in charcoal, showing good attention to detail. They experiment confidently with different types of paint and materials, weaving patterns in wool and felt, and creating sea scenes from different types of tissue paper. Using pastels they draw pictures of their pets, for example guinea pigs, while other illustrations include black on white silhouette profiles. Displays of their imaginative drawings and paintings show individuality which engages the observer's eye.

- 126 Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have used paints and pastels to draw clown and animal masks, and in relation to their English lessons have executed in tin-foil the stark emergence of Ted Hughes' 'Iron Man' from the sea. Work completed by pupils in Years 5 and 6 includes sunflower paintings after the style of Van Gogh where tone, texture, light and shade are emphasised. Other cultural influences are evident in an attractive mosaic frieze depicting Islamic patterns, created by Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6. Three-dimensional work produced by other Key Stage 2 pupils included a particularly striking model of a large dragon made from chicken-wire and papier-mâché.
- 127 In the lessons observed, teaching was good. Subject knowledge was secure and was supported with specific information and demonstrations from the enthusiastic teachers. For example, in one Year 5/6 class, the teacher used the overhead projector well to illustrate how individual sketches could be linked to form a more detailed and interesting composition. In another Year 5/6 lesson the teacher used a print of Constable's 'Flatford Mill' to emphasise successfully the importance of light and shade in creating three-dimensional effects in sketching. Lessons are planned well, and resources and equipment are thoroughly prepared in advance. Teachers explain clearly what they want pupils to do and why. Efficient working practices are well established and classes are managed effectively. Through skilful questioning and discreet intervention assessment is on-going and the ensuing advice helps to move pupils' learning on. Pupils with special educational needs are supported sensitively by their teachers and meet with success.
- 128 Pupils enjoy art and have a positive attitude to the subject. They work with concentration and explain various techniques in good detail. For example, in a lesson using sketching skills in response to a prior observational study one Year 6 pupil could explain how dots, cross-hatching and smudges are used to effect light and shadow and folds in clothing. Pupils are well behaved and enjoy their work. They are often inspired by examining the work of great artists such as Monet, Seurat, Klee and Hockney. Sketch books are used effectively to help develop the ideas of pupils as they are encouraged to look carefully at their work and try to improve it.
- 129 The co-ordinator is an enthusiastic advocate of the subject and is keen to develop it further. Specialist art resources are being built up continually. The scheme of work ensures that pupils are taught a variety of skills and learn about different artists and cultures. Linking art with other subjects is a good feature of the planning. Pupils' work is promoted through tasteful displays around the school. The outside environment, including Sophie's Garden, is used well to stimulate observation and creativity. These experiences enhance pupils' learning and enjoyment of art.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 130 Standards at ages seven and eleven match national expectations. Skills in designing and making develop steadily as pupils move through the school. Overall, pupils' learning, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language, is satisfactory. These judgements are similar to those reported during the previous inspection.

- 131 By the age of seven, pupils are aware of the link between the designing and making elements of technology. Year 1 pupils display appropriate levels of manipulative skills while designing and making model recreation park furniture from a varied selection of materials. Acquiring these skills and thought processes often involves applying mathematical and literacy knowledge. For example, they know that they need a square or rectangle for the base. They also use large construction materials well when building models of houses and bridges. Year 2 pupils successfully select relevant materials and tools to design and make model swings and slides. They are also able to evaluate their work and make suggestions for improvement.
- 132 In the seven to 11 age group, pupils use evaluation sheets to record their design, to state materials needed, to mention changes that were made and then to determine the value of the final product. By Year 5 pupils have sufficiently well-developed skills to design models of 'Olympian thrones' using card, fabric, wood and wire. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have designed and made photograph frames using soft and flexible sheet materials and triangular pieces on corners to strengthen them. Food technology assignments for Year 6 have required them to contrive a plan, put the design steps in order and produce a biscuit worthy of supermarket display. Pupils are beginning to use technical language correctly, and are aware of safety. Work is precise and most pupils take care to finish the item well. However, some tasks are still insufficiently demanding for the more talented pupils.
- 133 In the lessons observed, most teaching was satisfactory with one third being good. Effective intervention and questioning skills help pupils to develop skills and understanding in the making process. Good subject knowledge, use of technical vocabulary and direct teaching of skills moves pupils' learning on. Such an example was observed in a Year 3/4 class considering the design and information necessary to produce an attractive cereal package from net diagrams. Words such as 'template', 'prototype', 'produce' and 'consumer' were used freely in discussion. However, pupils are also encouraged to show initiative, as for example in a Year 5/6 class designing models of shelters. Lessons are always planned well, classes are managed effectively and in general a purposeful atmosphere prevails. Design and technology is often linked successfully to other subjects. A prime example was observed in a Year 5/6 music lesson where pupils were required to make musical instruments capable of emitting at least four notes.
- 134 Attitudes are good and pupils work sensibly together. They are interested in their work, sustain concentration and the majority endeavour to improve their performance, none more so than pupils in a Year 2 class intent on applying the correct materials and techniques to strengthen the standing structure of a model swing. They make sensible decisions about the types of materials and tools needed. In some instances they share equipment, consult with each other and make critical judgements about their own and others' work. Pupils are well behaved, polite and courteous, as was observed in a Year 5 / 6 lesson putting in order the construction stages of model bus shelters.

- 135 The co-ordinator ensures that an adequate range and quality of resources are maintained. Planning is sound, linked to the National Curriculum programmes of study and local education authority guidelines. Although work is assessed informally at the end of units, the assessment system requires further development. A detailed policy is in place and the co-ordinator has circulated a data help-sheet to all staff following a whole school in-service training programme. Tools and materials are stored well and are readily accessible.

GEOGRAPHY

- 136 During the inspection, the school's time tabling arrangements meant that it was not possible to observe any geography lessons. However, discussions with pupils, scrutiny of previous work and teachers' planning, indicate that standards are broadly in line with those expected nationally by the age of 11. Pupils at all levels of ability make satisfactory progress during their time in the school. This represents a similar situation to that found at the time of the last inspection.
- 137 The youngest pupils demonstrate increasing knowledge, skills and understanding in studies of their local area. By Year 2, they can draw clearly labelled diagrams and know how to draw basic maps, using correctly symbols and keys. They are beginning to look at issues related to environmental change. For example, in discussion they were able to comment quite knowledgeably on the environmental changes caused by the new housing estate being built adjacent to the school.
- 138 By Year 6, the pupils demonstrate an increasing understanding of geographical patterns in their studies of a variety of places and environments at more than one scale and in different parts of the world. They understand how people can both improve and damage the environment. In one class, the pupils designed a survey related to how people use their leisure time. They were able to frame perceptive geographical questions and to communicate their findings using appropriate geographical vocabulary. In work on physical processes, the oldest pupils showed much interest in some recent work on coastal erosion. They spoke quite knowledgeably about weathering and could explain accurately how eaves and stacks are formed.
- 139 Visits and fieldwork make an important contribution to the quality and range of work undertaken. A programme of residential visits is arranged each year for pupils at both key stages. This enables the pupils to consolidate and develop their mapping skills.
- 140 The newly appointed co-ordinator for geography is in the process of reviewing the scheme of work to take account of the requirements of curriculum 2000. At present, geography is taught alternately with history. The school recognises the limited time allocated to the subject and the co-ordinator is monitoring the effectiveness of these arrangements to evaluate how standards can be improved further.

HISTORY

- 141 Standards at ages seven and 11 are broadly in line with those expected nationally. Most of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress during their time in the school.
- 142 The youngest pupils are beginning to understand chronology and to use appropriate historical language associated with the passing of time. For example, in one class they were able to place accurately photographs and objects on a time line. By Year 2, the pupils make gains in their knowledge and understanding of aspects of the past beyond living memory. For example, very well planned teaching helped the pupils to understand how the Great Plague spread to the Derbyshire village of Eyam. Through the use of the Internet and role-play, the pupils were helped to recognise the problems faced by people in the past who lived in the village.
- 143 By the age of 11, many of the pupils gain increasing skills in selecting and combining information from different sources. They are beginning to produce well-structured work when describing characteristic features of past societies and periods. For example, in a class of the youngest Key Stage 2 pupils, they were helped to use a range of appropriate source material to build up a picture of Elizabeth I. The organisation of groups meant that the pupils became actively involved in learning together, gathering and structuring their work appropriately and presenting it in a logical way. By Year 6, the oldest pupils extend their use of source material and understand how they can build up a picture of the past using relevant artefacts, information gained as a result of excavations and from reading records such as the Anglo Saxon Chronicles. This occurred in their study of Vikings, where they moved on to consider how Viking place names indicated settlement in the farming communities near to the school.
- 144 Increasing use is made of information and communication technology to assist the pupils in developing their knowledge and understanding of the past. For example, some of the Year 3 and 4 pupils used the Internet to produce detailed pen pictures of the six wives of Henry VIII. In doing so they were able to grasp the reasons for the wives' fate and to understand issues such as the succession.
- 145 The quality of teaching is usually good and reflects the teachers' knowledge, understanding and interest in the subject. As a result, the pupils are eager to learn and enjoy their work. A good feature of the teaching is the opportunities available for the pupils to respond, particularly through group work, to probing questions and to frame their own relevant questions during discussions.
- 146 In reflecting the aims of the school, the subject makes an important contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, the time allocated to teaching history is limited because of alternating the teaching of history and geography in different terms. The co-ordinator is monitoring the effectiveness of these arrangements in order to see how standards might be improved further, although since the last inspection the school has been successful in maintaining satisfactory standards in the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 147 Standards of work seen during the inspection match national expectations at age seven but are below national expectations at age 11. However, pupils in the Year 5/6 classes are achieving high enough standards in relation to their previous learning. The school's recent investment in a new computer suite and new computers is paying off. Pupils from age five to age 11 receive regular weekly class lessons in which they are taught particular skills and have good opportunities to practise them. This is helping to raise standards. The previous inspection found that standards at age 11 matched national expectations but there is now a much greater expectation as to what pupils should achieve by this age. Bearing this in mind, the school has made satisfactory improvement overall since the previous inspection, with very good improvements made in accommodation and resources.
- 148 By the age of seven, pupils are comfortable in using the basic functions that enable them to print and modify text on a computer screen. Nearly all can 'log on' successfully. Many can change the font and can use the backspace and enter keys. Low attaining pupils need support to achieve this level of skill. Average and high attainers know how to break text up into lines. Pupils write instructions into their workbooks to help them control a moving device, sending it in different directions. Progress throughout the five to seven age range is satisfactory for all groups of pupils. Effective teaching of basic skills is the main factor in promoting this. Useful whole class introductions give pupils a clear idea of what they are to do and how to go about it. However, the effectiveness of teaching is lessened when some computers do not respond as they should. This slows pupils' progress in the lesson. Despite this, pupils are very keen to work on computers. They work very well in pairs, being willing to wait to take turns.
- 149 By the age of 11, pupils use the word processor confidently, producing well-presented work for display around the school. This work includes attractive and appropriate pictures imported from other programs. In lessons seen, pupils in Years 5 and 6 made good progress in developing their ability to use a computer graphics package to design Islamic carpet patterns. Pupils worked confidently with a good range of graphic tools to create attractive patterns. Good teaching helped them to do this. Teachers gave good practical demonstrations of how to go about the work and provided good examples for pupils to use as a basis for their own ideas. Work of this difficulty is usually associated with pupils a year or so younger but as these pupils had not developed such skills previously, the work matched their learning needs. Younger pupils, in Years 3 and 4, worked successfully to move a 'screen turtle' to create shapes, many showing good control in so doing. This work was at the expected level for pupils this age. Pupils throughout the seven to 11 age group are very enthusiastic about learning computer skills. They work hard and behave well during lessons, sharing ideas when working in pairs.
- 150 Information and communication technology is used throughout the school to help pupils develop skills in other subjects but not yet consistently. Word processing helps develop skills of writing but there is scope for greater use of ICT in this subject. Graphic design packages help pupils to develop their artistic skills. In mathematics, pupils in Years 5 and 6 use a computer program in order to help them present and analyse data. A new system of assessment has just begun to be used. Strong leadership, starting with the headteacher and governing body and extending to the subject's co-ordinators, means that the school's thorough

plan for improvement is being implemented successfully. National funding is being used efficiently to support this and there is a well designed plan in place for improving teachers' skills. A superb computer room provides an excellent environment for learning and helps to ensure that the school is well placed to carry on the successful development of the subject.

MUSIC

- 151 Standards in the one lesson observed in the five to seven age group were above national expectations for seven year olds. However, it was not possible to observe a sufficient number of other lessons to form an overall judgement of attainment at age seven. Standards by the age of 11 are broadly in line with national expectations. This indicates that overall, standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Planning for the subject addresses all aspects of the programme of study. During the inspection it was possible to observe only a very limited amount of singing. This was principally in assemblies and included an occasion when the children played instruments to accompany other pupils' singing. There is insufficient evidence, therefore, to make a judgement on the quality of singing throughout the school.
- 152 The pupils in the Year 1 / 2 lesson observed have already developed a good ear for hearing different pitched sounds and can identify low, middle and high voices. During the lesson they enjoyed singing the 'Tapping Teddy Rap'. This was well chosen by the teacher as it provided a good basis for the pupils to reinforce their skills in keeping a steady rhythm. They can identify a range of percussion instruments such as tambours and jingle bells and were keen to demonstrate which instruments were the best ones to represent the three different pitches they had learned about during the lesson. Later in the lesson the teacher introduced non-standard notation in the form of teddy bear faces. This was effective in capturing the pupils' interest and helping them to develop an early understanding of music theory.
- 153 By the age of 11, pupils show that they have a secure understanding of the sections of the orchestra and the instruments to be found in each section. A visit to hear the Liverpool Royal Philharmonic Orchestra earlier in the term has provided pupils with a shared experience and a good knowledge base. Pupils know how instruments are played and know that different shapes and materials affect the sounds instruments make. For example, they talk about the difference between bowed and plucked sounds and know that the shape of a trumpet amplifies the noise it makes. Pupils in Year 3/4 demonstrated a good understanding of musical scales and by the end of the lesson were able to perform short pieces of well-composed music.
- 154 The quality of the teaching seen was mostly good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. This indicates an improvement since the previous inspection when teaching was identified as satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and some are skilled musicians in their own right using their skills effectively to demonstrate teaching points. Lessons are generally well organised although the size of some classes in the seven to 11 age group limits opportunities for group work. Teachers ensure that resources are ready for use before lessons start.

- 155 Detailed planning ensures that pupils develop their skills at a sufficient pace throughout both key stages. Instrumental lessons for strings, woodwind and brass are made available to pupils in Key Stage 2 through paid tuition by members of the authority's music service. In addition, a member of staff provides extra-curricular guitar tuition. Resources for the subject are adequate. Those for use by pupils in the seven to 11 age group are stored in the music room and are easily accessed as most music lessons take place in this teaching area. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 156 Standards at ages seven and eleven in gymnastics and dance match national expectations. All pupils, including those who have special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in most physical skills and achieve high enough standards. The last inspection reported the same standards in the subject. In swimming, most pupils attain the expected standard at the age of 11. Last year, 39 out of 45 pupils attained this standard.
- 157 Progress in gymnastics is satisfactory. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 respond well to good warm-up routines and demonstrations, and most are very aware of space and safety. They follow challenging instructions carefully to create and perform increasingly difficult movement sequences requiring controlled changes of speed and direction, although many have difficulty in maintaining balance. In Years 3 and 4, pupils showed a clear awareness of the importance of start and finish positions as they skilfully perform more complex sequences in more flowing and expressive ways to fit the words of a poem.
- 158 In dance, too, progress is satisfactory and mirrors the quality of teaching. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 work purposefully in small groups to a specific theme and strict criteria. They collaborate productively to combine spontaneous individual ideas into synchronised group performances which suit the character of the music. However, few groups use self-evaluation to improve their performances to the standard of which they are capable, and teachers do not do enough to redress this.
- 159 Pupils are enthusiastic about physical activity, and they change efficiently and dress appropriately for lessons. They work responsibly in pairs or larger groups and, except when the challenge or pace of lessons slackens, they maintain interest, concentration and strenuous effort. This effort, however, is more physical than mental; pupils seldom think hard enough about how to improve their work. Behaviour is generally good, and pupils understand and observe safety procedures. Although it was not possible to see lessons in all branches of the subject, planning shows good breadth and balance, and older pupils speak very positively about the range and quality of the opportunities they have had. Girls and boys of all abilities take part in all activities and appreciate the school's good provisions for equality of opportunity.
- 160 The quality of teaching and learning is consistently satisfactory in the seven to 11 age group. No overall judgement can be made on the teaching in the five to seven age group as only one lesson was observed, though this was of very good quality. The very good local authority scheme of work enables all teachers to plan well-structured lessons in which varied activity is unified around specific themes and intentions. Teachers organise and manage activities efficiently and

make effective use of demonstrations and resources. In the satisfactory lessons, however, some shortcomings restrict the quality of pupils' learning. Pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to evaluate (and hence improve) their performance and a rather lack-lustre approach fails to motivate pupils sufficiently to improve. In the very good lesson, on the other hand, the teaching had an inspirational quality which maintained a high level of interest and constantly faced pupils with achievable new challenges. Instruction, description, demonstration, questioning, feedback and evaluation were all used well to leave pupils in no doubt about the standard expected, and also to help them to achieve it. The resulting enjoyment and quality of learning, in new skills, creative effort, pace of work and sense of achievement, were visible throughout the lesson.

- 161 The school has good accommodation for both indoor and outdoor lessons and activities, and uses it well. The extensive grounds contain four good hard-surfaced areas and provide ample scope for running, orienteering and problem-solving activities, as well as a full range of sports and games. The taught curriculum has good breadth and balance, and is enhanced by a variety of lunchtime and after-school clubs, 'friendly' matches and competitive meetings. Whilst improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory, some shortcomings remain, particularly in the use of evaluation by pupils of their own performance in lessons.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 162 Standards at ages seven and 11 match the expectations of the Wirral Agreed Syllabus. All groups of pupils throughout the school make satisfactory progress in improving their religious knowledge and understanding. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection.
- 163 As religious education lessons for pupils aged five to seven are on Fridays, it was only possible to gain limited evidence of attainment for these pupils. However, the most recent work by pupils in Year 2 shows that they have a satisfactory knowledge of what it means to make a new beginning. Pupils have composed their own New Year resolutions to illustrate this. These have a clear focus on renewal and they sometimes demonstrate pupils' understanding that this process should involve a change or improvement in attitudes to others. For example, one girl wrote for her resolution, 'Be good for your mum.' Work from earlier in the year shows that pupils have a basic understanding of the main events surrounding Christmas. They also have begun to understand that other world religions also have major festivals, understanding the importance of light in some of these, such as Diwali.
- 164 By the age of 11, pupils have increased their awareness of world religions. Pupils in Year 3 / 4 show a developing understanding of the main features of Buddhism. Many know the names of the 'Three Jewels' of Buddhism but are not yet sure of the significance of these. Pupils in Year 5/6 know the names of the main characters attending the Last Supper. In one lesson, pupils made good guesses who might be which person when they were given the chance to look at some paintings of the scene, including one by Leonardo da Vinci. Some high attaining pupils recognised the link between the Last Supper and the Jewish feast of Passover. Earlier work in pupils books shows that, by the age of 11, pupils are aware of the holy books of Sikhism and Judaism as well as having some knowledge of the main books of the Bible. Very carefully designed work by high attaining pupils showed how well they understood some of these facts.

- 165 Teaching in the seven to 11 age group is generally effective in helping pupils develop an interest in the subject as well as improving their knowledge and understanding. It is most effective in Year 5/6 when the teacher's own lively approach, good preparation and very good relationships with pupils combine with confident subject knowledge to enthuse pupils and hold their attention. Teaching is less effective when insufficient time is allowed for pupils to finish a task or when high attaining pupils are given tasks that they complete too easily.
- 166 Work is planned to match closely the requirements of the Wirral Agreed Syllabus. This ensures that pupils receive a sufficiently broad range of learning opportunities. Satisfactory assessment opportunities are identified in planning. Teachers mark work conscientiously, making comments that are both appreciative and useful in helping pupils to understand what they have achieved. In the long-term absence of the co-ordinator, the headteacher is holding a satisfactory watching brief for the subject.