

INSPECTION REPORT

NEWTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

New Mills

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112599

Headteacher: Mrs Liz Walker

Reporting inspector: Mr Chris Warner

20935

Dates of inspection: 11-14 March 2002

Inspection number: 230887

Full 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 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Buxton Road New Mills High Peak Derbyshire
Postcode:	SK22 3JS
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Andrew Kennerley
Date of previous inspection:	February 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20935	Chris Warner	<i>Registered inspector</i>	The Foundation stage; Mathematics; Science; Information and communication technology.	How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements; How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
13762	Norman Shelley	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22990	Chris Furniss	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Geography; History; Music; Physical education; Religious education.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
25349	George Derby	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art; Special educational needs.	
14509	Philip Mann	<i>Team inspector</i>	Design and technology; Equal opportunities.	

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	1
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	6
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	9
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	11
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	13
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	14
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	15
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	18
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	19
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	24
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Newtown Primary School is situated in the town of New Mills in northwest Derbyshire. Most of the 101 children on roll live in the immediate neighbourhood. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is about average for primary schools nationally. The school serves a community with mixed social and economic backgrounds, including a high proportion of families with low incomes. The 30 per cent of pupils on the special needs register is above the national average. There are six pupils with a statement of special educational needs, which is well above the average for schools of a similar size. No pupils speak English as an additional language. A significant number of pupils enter or leave the school other than at the usual times of admission or transfer, which has a negative impact on standards, particularly in Year 6. The overall attainment of children on entry to the school is below that found nationally.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school, which serves its pupils and community well. It has no major weaknesses. The head provides very good leadership and is strongly supported by all the staff. Together, they have successfully addressed the issues raised at the last inspection, and have created a positive climate for learning. Teaching is good across the school. Pupils behave and get on with one another very well. They make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils in Year 6 have made very good progress in English. When account is taken of attainment on entry and the standards pupils achieve when they leave, this is an effective school which gives good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- With the active support of all the staff and governors, the headteacher provides strong leadership, which is focused on the raising of standards.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good, and teachers are supported well by other staff.
- Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.
- Pupils behave very well, and enjoy very good relationships with one another and with the staff.
- The school takes very good care of its pupils.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Raising standards by the end of Year 2 in mathematics and science.
- Using assessment information more effectively.
- Ensuring that governors become further involved in the monitoring of standards throughout the school

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made a good improvement since the previous inspection in February 2000 (a visit by HMI). On that occasion it was judged the school could be taken out of special measures, which were imposed at its first inspection in March 1998. The current inspection found that good progress has been made in addressing the key issues for improvements noted in the HMI report. Standards achieved by pupils have continued to rise. Standards in information and communication technology have improved. The quality of teaching has significantly improved. Governors and co-ordinators have developed sound procedures for checking the work of the school, and are increasingly effective in using the information gained to improve standards. The good start made in developing the target setting process needs to be continued, to provide individual targets, which will help accelerate pupils' learning.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	D	A	A
Mathematics	D	C	C	D
Science	D	D	C	C

Key	
<i>well above average</i>	A
<i>above average</i>	B
<i>average</i>	C
<i>below average</i>	D
<i>well below average</i>	E

When children enter the school, their attainment is below average. When children enter the school their attainment is below average, though there are considerable differences in attainment from year to year. Overall, pupils make good progress, from starting school until the end of Year 6. The inspection found that standards are steadily improving throughout the school.

The school's results in the 2001 national tests in English for pupils at the end of Year 6 were well above the national average and the average for similar schools. The results in mathematics and science were in line with national average. The results in science were in line with the average for similar schools, but were below the average in mathematics. When all three subjects are taken together the trend in the school's results over the past four years is above the national trend of improvement. The progress pupils made in comparison with those schools, which achieved similar results in Year 2 in 1997 was very high in English, and above average in mathematics and science.

The 2001 national test results for pupils at the end of Year 2 were average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics and science. The fluctuating results over the past four years reflect the differences in the prior attainment of pupils from year to year. Nevertheless, the results have steadily improved, though they remain below average when compared with those of similar schools.

The inspection showed that the standards among pupils in the current Year 6 are similar to those attained by pupils in the 2001 national tests in mathematics and science. In English, although standards achieved by pupils currently in Year 6 are above average, they are not quite as high as in the 2001 national tests. Pupils have made good progress in English and

at least satisfactory progress in mathematics and science since Year 2. Throughout the school, but particularly in Years 1 and 2, pupils' enquiry skills and investigative skills are not as well developed as are other aspects of science and mathematics. This shortcoming is reflected in the results of the 2001 national tests.

Standards in information and communication technology are now in line with national expectations for seven and eleven year olds. In all other subjects, pupils are achieving standards broadly in line with those expected of Year 6 pupils nationally. An effective system of assessing and tracking the pupils' progress is helping the school to set appropriate targets and to improve standards. The targets in English and mathematics for pupils in Year 6 in 2001 were sufficiently challenging and were exceeded. The improved quality of education has had a positive impact on pupils' learning, and standards are set to continue to improve.

The inspection found that children in the Foundation Stage make good progress, and this is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils with different prior attainment, including those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory progress from the point at which they start school to their final year. Their progress in Years 3 to 6 in English is very good.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils like coming to school and want to learn. They work hard in lessons and in other activities.
Behaviour in and out of classrooms	Very good in all aspects. Pupils are polite and very friendly. As they get older, pupils are increasingly aware of the impact of their actions on others. There have been no exclusions in the past twelve months.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils develop well in confidence and independence. They respect one another and are proud of being part of their school community. Relationships among pupils are very good.
Attendance	Good. Pupils arrive on time and the little unauthorised absence is confined to very few pupils.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
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.

The good standard of teaching enables pupils to make at least satisfactory progress. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. All of the lessons seen were at least satisfactory, and far more of them were good or better than in the last inspection. There were examples of good teaching in every class. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good. Classroom assistants work well with individuals and groups of children, including those with special educational needs. Lessons are planned and managed well so that the teachers know what to do and how best to support and extend learning. Pupils work hard and want to do well because lessons are interesting and the work is matched well to their abilities. Teachers are skilled at getting pupils involved in the

lesson, and they ask timely questions which get the pupils to think and talk about their work and ideas. A strong feature in nearly all the teaching seen was the positive relationships between the teachers, their assistants, and the pupils. Pupils feel confident enough to have a go in their learning, and to learn from their mistakes.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. Good extra-curricular activities. There is scope to give children in the Reception class more opportunities to make choices and to learn through first-hand activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Individual education plans provide relevant targets and help pupils make good progress. Children supported by special programmes in reading and mathematics make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Lessons, displays, and discussions with the pupils reflect their growing awareness of all aspects of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
How the school cares for its pupils	This is a very caring school and pupils are looked after well. The provision for child protection, and for health and safety, is very good. There are sound procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress, and target setting is beginning to make an impact on raising standards. Procedures need to be more rigorous for assessing how pupils are getting on in subjects other than English, mathematics and science

Parents are positive about the work of the school. The school has good links with parents. Although most parents support their children's learning at home, a significant minority do not.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and receives very good support from the staff, with the result that the pupils are cared for and well supported in their learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors make a sound contribution to the management of the school. The difficulty in attracting new members means that there is a heavy dependency on the contribution of a few governors. All their statutory responsibilities are met. Governors have a growing understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are increasingly involved in monitoring the work of the school and linking this to how well pupils achieve.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. There are clear targets, which focus on the raising of standards. The co-ordinators need to extend their work of monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning in order to ensure further improvements.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of the available resources, including the classroom assistants, funding for special needs and for information and communication technology. The school effectively seeks to get the best value for money in its financial decision-making.

The school has a sufficient number of well-qualified teachers and support staff, and it benefits from the good opportunities for their professional development. The much-improved accommodation makes a satisfactory contribution to children's learning. Resources for pupils' learning are satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>More than nine out of every ten parents who commented felt that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the teaching is good; pupils make good progress; behaviour is good; the school expects children to work hard; the school is well led and managed; the school is helping their child become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The range of extra-curricular activities (about one in five parents); the arrangements for homework (about one in three); opportunities to find out how their children are getting on (about one in eight).

The inspection team agree with the positive comments made by parents. The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is good when compared with that of other schools. There are enough opportunities, overall, for parents to find out how their children are getting on. However, it would be helpful for parents to know how well their children are making progress in comparison with others of a similar age nationally. The school recognises the need to provide a more consistent approach to homework. It has recently reviewed its policy for homework and will shortly pass the details on to parents and pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The inspection found that pupils in Year 2 achieve the standards expected for their age in English, mathematics and science. Those in Year 6 achieve average standards in mathematics and science, and above average in English. Overall, this is a much-improved picture when compared with the findings of the visit by HMI in February 2000. All the evidence points to the fact that standards have improved and are continuing to do so.
2. The results attained by pupils in Year 6 in the 2001 national tests in English were well above the national average and the average for similar schools. The results in science were in line with the national average and the average for similar schools. In mathematics, the results were in line with the national average, although below the average for similar schools. When all three subjects are taken together the trend in the school's results over the past four years is above the national trend of improvement. The progress pupils made in comparison with those schools that attained similar results at the end of Year 2 was very good in English, and above average in mathematics and science.
3. Standards achieved by the current Year 6 pupils are very similar to the school's results in the 2001 national tests in mathematics and science. Although current standards in English are not quite as high as those attained in the 2001 tests, nevertheless, they are above average.
4. The 2001 national test results for pupils at the end of Year 2 were average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics and science. The fluctuating results over the past four years reflect the differences in the prior attainment of pupils from year to year. Nevertheless, overall, the results have steadily improved, although they remain below average when compared with those of similar schools. The inspection found that standards in English achieved by the current Year 2 pupils are similar to those attained by their counterparts in the national tests in 2001. Standards achieved by the current Year 2 pupils in mathematics and science are higher than those attained in the 2001 tests and are close to those expected for their age nationally.
5. The school set and exceeded its targets for Year 6 pupils in the 2001 national tests in English and mathematics. The targets for 2002 are sufficiently challenging, and the inspection agrees with the forecast that results will be higher than those achieved in 2001. The school has recently received a national award in recognition of the very good progress made by Year 6 pupils in the 2001 national tests compared with their results in Year 2 in 1997.
6. Although the attainment on entry of the children currently in the Reception Class is slightly below average, the picture varies considerably from year to year. For example, the prior attainment of pupils in the current Year 5 was well below average. A high proportion of pupils have entered some year groups other than at the usual starting time. Of the one in three pupils who joined the 2001 Year 6 group, nearly all were on the school's register for special educational needs. When these features are taken into account, overall the attainment on entry is judged to be below average.
7. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress because the quality of teaching is consistently at least good. By the time they leave the Reception class most of the children are likely to reach the expected levels in all six areas of learning. However, because a third of the

children entered school at an early stage of development in their language, literacy and communication skills, it is unlikely that they will reach the expected levels by Year 1. Standards have significantly improved in the Foundation Stage compared with those noted at the time of the previous inspection.

8. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make good progress and achieve well in relation to the targets set in their individual education plans (IEPs). This represents a better rate of progress than was indicated in the findings of the last inspection. Planning is good and pupils are supported well by their teachers and other staff. These pupils have full access to lessons as a result of the well-targeted support and the fact that support staff are involved in planning the lessons. Furthermore, the school is doing a lot to identify and support pupils who are more able. Not only has it increased the percentage of pupils gaining the expected levels, Levels 2 and 4, but has also raised the percentage attaining the higher Levels 3 and 5, at the end of Years 2 and 6 respectively.

9. From an often, low starting point, pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress in all aspects of English. In Years 3 to 6, the targeted teaching of pupils, and the support some of them receive from special programmes, contributes to their good progress. Pupils' listening skills develop well throughout the school and they are increasingly able to take account of what others have to say. From starting school with an often-limited vocabulary, pupils develop their speaking skills well. By Year 6 most of them join in discussions and express themselves with growing confidence. The well-structured approach to the teaching of reading helps pupils to learn and use their early reading skills with good effect. The additional attention given to improving pupils' writing skills has been worthwhile. Pupils' skills in spelling, handwriting and punctuation are developed well. Standards in writing in Years 3 to 6 are good, and many pupils write independently with accuracy and a good choice of vocabulary. The work on developing the link between reading and writing needs to continue, especially in Years 1 and 2,

10. Much of the improvement in standards in mathematics can be attributed to the good effect of the National Numeracy Strategy. This is evident in the accuracy and speed of pupils' mental calculations. Since the visit by HMI, the school has deliberately increased the opportunities for pupils to use and apply number. Although this move has paid off, still more needs to be done to help pupils achieve the highest standards.

11. Standards in science have improved as compared with those noted in the previous inspection. The school's efforts to give more attention to experimental and investigative aspects of the subject are beginning to make a difference, although the work needs to be continued, especially in Years 1 and 2. In particular, this is to do with getting pupils to think about and communicate their ideas in a scientific way.

12. Standards in information and communications technology (ICT) are average in both Year 2 and Year 6. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, because the expectations nationally are higher. The subject is used with increasingly good effect to support work in English, mathematics and science.

13. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 achieve the national expectations in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory progress throughout the school. Overall, this represents a significant improvement since the visit by HMI and amounts to a substantial achievement on the part of the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils' attitudes, values, personal development and attendance are good and their behaviour is very good. Standards have significantly improved since the visit by HMI. Parents are pleased with standards of behaviour in school and pupils' personal development. The inspectors agree that pupils' improved attitudes and behaviour has contributed to the quality of learning and the improving standards they achieve.

Pupils are right to enjoy their experiences in school. Older pupils describe the school as friendly and teachers as really helpful. They like almost all of their lessons and the various clubs and activities that many of them take part in. Pupils' positive attitudes towards school are also reflected in their good attendance and punctuality. Although they enjoy school and are keen to learn, many pupils lack ambition and self-belief in what they can achieve.

15. Pupils' very good standard of behaviour contributes well to the quality of learning and the progress they make. Behaviour in lessons is almost always good or very good. Only a few pupils in a few lessons fail to sustain attention, and talk rather than work. Pupils respond well to their teachers' requests and directions, act responsibly, and work together supportively and amicably. Outside lessons, behaviour is almost always good. Conduct is orderly, boys and girls play football together equably, and pupils do not abuse the trust given to them, for example when working without close supervision. During lunchtime pupils undertake homework quietly and conscientiously. There were no exclusions in the past two years.

16. Pupils make good progress towards becoming mature and responsible. They learn to work in pairs and groups, present their findings after research and analysis, debate issues, and make decisions after weighing the evidence. They also perform in public and compete in good spirit. Nevertheless, some have limited confidence in their own academic ability and could aspire higher. Pupils accept responsibility well. For example, they carry out monitor duties with pride; look after pets, and respect property and the environment, and some act as representatives on the school council. They learn about the plight of others when raising money for charities, and about their own local heritage when visiting places of interest. They develop awareness and understanding of the beliefs and lifestyles of others and of moral and social issues in today's society. Pupils use initiative well, once pointed in the right direction. When told about the proposed environmental development in the school grounds and asked to submit suggestions, they produced an imaginative range of alternative designs. Following a briefing about pedestrianisation in the town, pupils surveyed shopkeepers' views in a most responsible manner, and their good conduct was duly commended.

17. Attendance last year was in line with the average for primary schools, and unauthorised absence was higher than the average. This was mostly due to the transfer to the school of a pupil with a record of attendance. At the half way stage this year, attendance is above the average for primary schools and unauthorised absence is below average. Pupils arrive punctually for the start of school, and lessons start and end on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good. This represents a significant improvement since the visit by HMI in February 2000. During the current inspection, all of the teaching seen was at least satisfactory, and nine out of ten lessons were good or better.

19. There are three main reasons for the improved quality of teaching:

- the successful appointment and deployment of teaching staff;
- the effective work of the headteacher and the local education advisory service to improve the quality of teaching;
- the good opportunities for teachers and support staff to develop their skills.

20. The staff are very committed to their work and have developed a strong sense of team spirit in their efforts to improve. The good quality of teaching and learning has been achieved even despite several staff changes, including temporary cover for a permanent teacher. Another strong feature is the contribution made by teaching assistants, in working well with the teachers and in supporting pupils.

21. Although teaching is good throughout the school, it is strongest in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6. Here, not only was nearly all the teaching at least good, but there were also examples of high quality teaching. Lessons in literacy and ICT in Reception, in mathematics in Years 3 and 4, and in science in Years 5 and 6 were managed particularly well and were full of purpose. Pupils were clear about what they had to do and what they were trying to achieve. The aims of the lessons were deliberately shared with the pupils at the start of the lesson, and referred to again at the conclusion. The teachers and their assistants had high but realistic expectations of the pupils, and work was matched well to meet their needs. The Year 5 and 6 science lesson was enlivened by the enthusiasm of the teacher, making learning fun but challenging. She encouraged the children to ask questions and join in discussions, and all became interested and involved. Even the lower attaining pupils engaged in conversations and, with the adult's encouragement, had a go at explaining their work and giving a point of view. Children involved in a sorting activity in Reception were helped along in their understanding by the teacher's skilful questioning. They were given the chance to develop their own ideas as to why certain objects were grouped together. Questioning pupils and getting them to talk is a skill some teachers display more than others.

22. Teaching for pupils with SEN is good. Work is planned on a careful assessment of pupils' achievements and is well matched to their IEPs and the demands of the curriculum. Teachers give clear instructions and make good use of praise. They are not afraid of correcting wrong answers where this is helpful, or in rephrasing or repeating a question if this gives a pupil a better chance to think about it and respond. Well-qualified and suitably experienced support staff provide the right level and kind of assistance to meet the needs of individuals or of pupils in small groups.

23. Teachers' knowledge and understanding are good, although stronger in some subjects than in others. In ICT, teachers have been able to develop their skills through a well-planned programme of training, and this is an important reason for the improving standards. In a very good science lesson in Year 3 and 4, pupils were expected to fully explain the differences in the distance travelled by a toy car down a slope. They felt encouraged to develop their spoken responses and this helped them to a greater

understanding of forces and friction. The inspection judged that the decision for teachers with specialist skills to take classes other than their own in some subjects is a good one. For example, in music lesson in Year 2, the teacher knew exactly how to extend pupils' learning, because of her good grasp of the subject.

24. Teachers use the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to develop teaching and learning in these sessions. Pupils benefit from opportunities throughout the school day for speaking, listening and writing, and not only in English lessons. Sessions are well planned, with clear objectives. Interesting activities are provided for the pupils, and good use is made of the review time at the end of lessons. A feature in the most effective lessons is the way teachers get pupils to think and talk about their work. For example, in a good homework club session for some of the Year 6 pupils, the teacher encouraged them to explain their different ways of tackling a mathematical problem. In some lessons in Years 1 and 2 there could be more opportunities to extend pupils' literacy skills. Staff use the numeracy session well to develop basic skills in number, including an emphasis on mental calculations. This helps pupils in their counting, developing mental strategies, and recall of number facts. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are challenged particularly well to think and to use their recall of number with rapid responses. Pupils enjoy these sessions and respond well.

25. Teachers plan lessons carefully and think hard about getting the level of work to match pupils' needs. They are clear about what they want the pupils to gain from the lesson but do not always share the learning goals with them at the start of a lesson. Where the teacher told the pupils what it was they were going to learn, the lesson proceeded with more pace and purpose, and pupils were in a better position to evaluate their work against the objectives for the lesson. Inspection evidence confirms parents' views that staff know pupils and their needs well, and that teachers plan for them accordingly.

26. Pupils are managed well during lessons, particularly in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6. This reflects the very good relationships between staff and their pupils. Pupils respond well to the praise and encouragement they receive in lessons and when their work is marked. The boost to their confidence and self-esteem contributes to their very good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. They concentrate on what they are doing and remain motivated throughout the lesson. However, there is scope to increase the opportunities for pupils to work independently, especially in the Foundation Stage, where children could be allowed to make more decisions in their learning.

27. The school has invested a lot in support staff, and the inspectors regard this as a good decision. The support staff have been encouraged to acquire additional qualifications to improve their contribution. The efforts have been worthwhile, and the support staff make a very significant contribution to pupils' learning.

28. Time is used well in almost all lessons. An example was to be seen in a Year 2 literacy lesson, which proceeded at a brisk and lively pace. The pupils were kept alert and motivated, and given enough time to think through their responses. Another example was a particularly good Year 3 and 4 mathematics lesson, where the running dialogue between teacher and pupils kept everyone on their toes. Resources are carefully prepared and used well, to enable lessons to run smoothly and to bring enthusiasm and interest to learning.

29. The quality of marking is good; comments inform pupils how well they have done and what they need to do to improve. When set, homework consolidates learning and encourages pupils to work independently. The quality of marking is good, and teachers' comments inform pupils how well they have done and what they need to do to improve. Where homework is set, there is an expectation that it will be completed. The homework consolidates learning and encourages pupils to work independently, though some older pupils said they did not find it useful. Pupils regularly take home reading books, and parents of children in Reception speak enthusiastically about the story sacks.

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

30. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good throughout the school. They are enriched by good links with the community, and relationships with other schools and colleges. All elements of the statutory curriculum, including religious education and a daily act of collective worship, are in place. The curriculum is supported well by a good range of extra-curricular activities, and pupils' personal, social and health education is provided for well. There are schemes of work for all subjects and the headteacher has a good overview of the whole curriculum. In their visit in February 2000, HMI remarked that there had been improvements in the curriculum, and these have been sustained and continued.

31. The National Literacy Strategy is well established and is having a positive effect on raising standards. The National Numeracy Strategy has not been in place for as long, but it has been introduced well and is beginning to improve standards. Literacy skills are increasingly used across the whole curriculum, and the school actively seeks to extend this feature in its efforts to push up standards. The school has recently organised its ICT facilities in a library area, supplementing the computers in classrooms. This is having a positive impact on standards in ICT and on those in other subjects. The attention being given to developing pupils' enquiry skills in all subjects is beginning to make an impact on pupils' learning. This work needs to be developed further, particularly in mathematics and science, because pupils' reasoning, enquiry and thinking skills are less secure than other aspects of the subjects.

32. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage has been significantly improved to provide a secure framework for learning. Although there is no suitable outdoor area for the children in the Reception class, one is planned for the near future. The teaching programme for the year is planned in line with the requirements of the nationally recommended curriculum guidance and provides a suitable bridge to the National Curriculum starting in Year 1. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been adapted to provide a sound foundation for children to develop their early basic skills. The curriculum is in a secure enough position to cover some of the elements of the literacy and numeracy in a different way and possibly across the day rather than in the session. At present they are taught in discrete sessions, and in the numeracy session, for example, pupils who are not working on adult-directed activity sometimes engage in activities of their own choice, not necessarily mathematical. The school should consider ways of teaching some of the elements of literacy and numeracy in other areas of the curriculum rather than simply in the separate session.

33. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and there is a suitable emphasis upon full inclusion for all. The school makes an effective contribution to the Derbyshire Inclusion Initiative. The needs of pupils are met well, including those with special educational needs, but the school has not yet implemented its procedures for identifying and supporting gifted and talented pupils. Pupils with SEN have access to a full curriculum, with good support from teachers and their assistants, and work is planned well to suit their levels of attainment. All teaching assistants have been trained for their roles, and some have been trained specifically to support the needs of the pupils with statements. This goes a long way to explain the continued improved provision for pupils with special educational since the visit by HMI.

34. There is good provision for personal, social and health education throughout the school. Provision in these areas in the school is covered well through assemblies, and in a planned

programme. Health issues are taught through science lessons and include an effective programme for drugs and sex education.

35. A broad range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors enriches the curriculum. A choir and a recorder group meet weekly, and both groups regularly accompany assemblies. Pupils from the school take part in a number of musical activities; the involvement in the Buxton Opera House production of 'The Green Children' in July this year is just one example, and it included workshops in mime, dance and singing. Sporting activities include, among others, soccer, netball, cricket, lacrosse, cross-country and athletics. These are supported by good links with the community and with other educational establishments, as well as by the commitment of the staff, and they are helping pupils to develop physically and socially. Students who come to the school for work experience or on placements are well deployed and are helped to support the pupils. The school's considerable involvement in the Children's University Project has benefited many of the older pupils in the past two years. The display of poetry and one-act plays produced a few weeks before the inspection shows that the pupils' level of literacy may have benefited, as well as their social and cultural development.

36. The school's good links with a secondary school provide further opportunities for the pupils. For example, pupils have access to a kiln allows pupils to make and fire pottery. Parents speak positively of the family literacy project and their involvement in the better reading scheme. Good use is made of the local heritage to enrich the curriculum. Nearby rivers and bridges were recently studied as part of the pupils' work in geography. It is clear from conversations with pupils in Years 5 and 6 that they value the opportunity to go on the residential week, and that the experience contributes a great deal to their personal and social development.

37. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual development. Assemblies are well planned, and focus on an act of worship. They include joyful hymns, sometimes accompanied by pupils on recorders, and sincere prayers, to which most pupils respond with, 'Amen.' In a variety of lessons pupils are encouraged to explore feelings and emotions, for example in history when they were thinking about the plight of World War II evacuees, and in a Year 5 and 6 religious education lesson when pupils were thinking about special places.

38. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. The physical and emotional well being of others is an important part of school life. Adults promote values of honesty, fairness and truthfulness in their caring relationships with pupils. Teachers encourage pupils to act fairly, treating them with respect and encouraging them to treat each other in the same way. School assemblies are used to set out principles of right and wrong and to celebrate pupils' achievements and reinforce their social and moral awareness. Pupils know and care about right and wrong, and issues are dealt with sensitively in circle time. This was seen when children in Reception and Year 1 were exchanging thoughts and feelings about how we can affect the way people feel. Their discussions, led well by the teacher, showed mature awareness of the impact of their actions on others; they were encouraged to think of ways of becoming more responsible for their own actions. The school council further helps pupils to develop a sense of social responsibility. Pupils work well individually and in co-operation with each other. Their positive and much improved relationships reflect well on their social and moral learning.

39. The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' understanding of British and other cultures. Pupils study the central tenets of Christianity and other faiths in religious education. Major festivals, such as Easter, Diwali and Chinese New Year, are celebrated through assemblies, and help to develop pupils' wider cultural awareness. In English, pupils look at a range of texts which reflect different cultures, as evident in the display from 'Handa's Surprise' in the hall. In music and physical education, pupils are encouraged to

listen to music from different cultures and look at different traditional dances, as was seen during a Year 2 dance lesson. On the other hand, evidence from the inspection suggests that the work of artists from different traditions and cultures does not make a significant contribution to pupils' wider cultural awareness.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. Arrangements for pupils' welfare are very good. The staff know the children well and take very good care of them. The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance and personal development are good, and for behaviour they are very good. The procedures for assessing and supporting pupils' academic progress are satisfactory. Improvements have been achieved in almost all areas since the visit by HMI, and parents are pleased with the quality of care that the school provides.

41. Child protection procedures are in place and all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities with regard to them. Appropriate arrangements are in place for health and safety. All relevant risk assessments are undertaken, fire drills are carried out under a variety of circumstances to test for their effectiveness, and all members of staff have received training in first aid.

42. Relationships between all adults in the school and with and between pupils are mutually respectful, caring and trusting. They create an atmosphere in which pupils feel wanted, valued, encouraged and safe. A calm atmosphere prevails. Close attention is given to the needs of each individual. A well-run care club for before and after school gives many pupils a good opportunity to develop their social skills, in a caring and secure setting.

43. Attendance is closely monitored through a computerised system. Good behaviour is encouraged by the recognition of effort and achievement, including the use of stickers and a certificate book, house points, and celebration at weekly assemblies. The school uses the most effective means to promote high attendance and very good behaviour, and that is by providing a good standard of teaching. The pupils can look forward to interesting lessons that relate to their needs, and to activities that are challenging. These, and the near excellent relationships, result in pupils wanting to attend because they enjoy and value all their experiences in school. The school almost unobtrusively ensures that pupils understand its expectations, and they are pleased to do their best to live up to them. The same very good practices eliminate bullying.

44. The support for pupils' personal development is good. Teachers and helpers know the pupils well and help them adopt sensible attitudes towards moral and social issues. Within lessons, the pupils are given opportunities to exercise initiative, for example by debating topics, making decisions and predictions, organising themselves, working in pairs and groups, and carrying out research. They have many opportunities for responsible routine tasks as well as more challenging projects, such as producing designs for the school's environmental area and carrying out a town centre survey. The school is working with the county enterprise initiative in an effort to promote lifetime learning skills to raise pupils' aspirations. A number of features make a good contribution to pupils' personal development and learning. They include the programme for personal, social and health education, visits to places of interest and cultural relevance, extra-curricular activities, including residential experiences at an outward-bound centre, and support for charitable causes.

45. Procedures for assessing pupils' achievements have been improved since the visit by HMI and are now good. In English, mathematics and science, an appropriate range of tests and assessments provides a good picture of how well pupils are getting on. Pupils are assessed, targets of expected achievement are set, and pupils' progress towards those targets is tracked throughout their time in the school. Assessment in other subjects is

satisfactory in that teachers know their pupils well and use a variety of ways of assessing them, such as marking their work, questioning them and sometimes setting them assessment tests. Teachers make appropriate use of National Curriculum descriptors to help them make their assessments.

46. On the basis of day-day-day assessments made within lessons, teachers adjust their planning and, in turn, their teaching. They fill in lesson evaluation sheets, which are an effective way of making good use of these short-term assessments to plan the next step in learning. In English, mathematics and science, there are consistently applied procedures, which make it possible to use the assessments to find strengths and weaknesses within each subject, and among particular groups. This information proves useful in guiding longer term planning for the whole school, for example in identifying the need to give more attention to problem solving in mathematics. The action plans for English, mathematics and science are clear and precise, and related closely to the overall school improvement plan. However, assessment procedures for other subjects are less secure, and the assessments do not provide so much information to help the long term planning. This is reflected in the lack of clearly defined action plans in several subjects. The school has rightly concentrated on developing assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science. It is now in a position to consider applying similar principles to the rest of the curriculum.

47. Monitoring of academic progress is satisfactory. In the core subjects the tracking of individual pupils helps them to keep to the targets for attainment. The school is considering ways of further improving procedures by developing shorter term, specific targets for each pupil. The school recognises that the importance of this work for ensuring that pupils become fully aware of their targets, and that parents can be involved in the process.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. Parents express confidence in the school and are pleased with the quality of education and support their children receive. The school has a good partnership with its parents. Parents are more positive than at the time of the previous inspection, and the partnership stronger.

49. Parents are right to be pleased with the improvements that have taken place during recent years. They have well founded confidence in the headteacher and staff and are pleased with the progress their children make academically and personally. Relationships between school and parents are good. The school does its best to help parents who are unsure where to go for advice and guidance on the children's education and well-being. About one in three parents expressed a concern with the provision of homework. The school rightly recognises the need to provide a more consistent approach to homework. It has recently reviewed its policy for homework and will shortly pass the details on to parents and pupils.

50. The quality of information that is made available to parents is satisfactory overall. The prospectus is well presented, and a school newspaper prepared by the pupils gives good insight into their experiences and enjoyment. Informative newsletters are frequently circulated. Teachers and the head are easily accessible to parents. There are two formal opportunities each year for parents to consult teachers about pupils' progress and these are well attended. There are good opportunities for parents of children with special needs to discuss their child's progress and to be involved in their learning. Each child's own annual report provides helpful information about what pupils know, understand and can do. The

reports clearly set out pupils' strengths and general weaknesses, and offers suggestions for improvement. The involvement of parents in their children's learning would be further helped if specific, individual targets for improvement for the child were set and shared with them.

51. Parents' involvement in the life and work of the school is generally good. Some parents help with reading or as classroom assistants and others with improvements to the grounds. Several parents have for many years run a swimming club for pupils of the school. The parents' and friends' association organises many events and raises substantial funds to purchase important 'extras' for the school. Parents are very supportive of pupils' public performances but their attendance at formal meetings, such as about literacy development, not so good. Parents of pupils with SEN are appropriately involved in the review process. The school does its best to make parents feel welcome, and encourages their involvement in the life and work of the school and in their children's learning. However, although most parents support their children's learning at home, a significant proportion do little to help them.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The very good leadership of the headteacher is reflected in the commitment of staff and pupils alike to succeed. The head has won the confidence of pupils, parents, staff and governors for her clear and determined approach to improving the school. She works well with others in managing the school, leading by example and being fully involved in the day-to-day work of the classroom. She has not been afraid of making tough decisions over staffing, pupils, accommodation and funding to bring about improvement. Everyone in the school community is very aware of the need to strive for higher standards, and many of the measures put in place are proving effective.

53. In the four years since the school was placed under special measures, much has been done to tackle the identified weaknesses. Two years ago, in the visit by HMI, the school was judged to provide an acceptable standard of education and was taken out of special measures. Since then, raising pupils' attainment has become central to the school's agenda for improvement. The significant improvements include:

- the standards achieved by pupils;
- the quality of teaching;
- the curriculum;
- the attitudes and behaviour of pupils and the quality of relationships;
- the overall quality of the education in the Foundation Stage;
- the contribution of the governing body;
- the accommodation.

54. The staff, including the support staff, work together as an effective team. They are keen to share their ideas and to develop their skills. One of the main reasons why the quality of teaching has improved is because the staff have taken advantage of the good opportunities for professional development. Their willingness to learn rubs off on the children and contributes to the school's learning environment. Newly appointed staff speak highly of the guidance and support they have received, and how this has helped them to settle quickly into their jobs.

55. Together with the governing body, the headteacher manages the school very well. Day-to-day management and organisation are very good. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and staff have specific management responsibilities that support the school well. The management of SEN is good and contributes well to the progress the children make. Individual education plans provide an accurate basis for helping the pupils in the

classroom and individually or in small groups outside. The school makes good use of outside support services to inform its planning for individual needs.

56. The school has responded well to the recommendations of the last inspection by substantially developing the role of the subject co-ordinators. They are particularly effective in planning, resourcing, and evaluating standards that pupils achieve. The decision to give the headteacher more time to carry out her management tasks was a good one. She has been able to develop a good overview of the quality of teaching and learning, and to use the information to promote good practice. It is important that plans for subject co-ordinators to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning are carried through so that teachers can build on what works well, and remedy any shortcomings.

57. It is to the credit of the chair of governors and a core of committed colleagues that the contribution of the governing body has significantly improved. In line with their stated aims, staff and governors have established a very positive ethos that supports and promotes pupils' learning. There is regular and useful communication between the headteacher and the chair of governors. The governing body is supportive, and increasingly committed to raising standards. All its statutory obligations are fully met. Governors are effective in supporting important areas of management, including monitoring the curriculum, planning for school improvement, and improving the accommodation.

58. Through their effective involvement in the performance management process, some governors have become more aware of the standards achieved by pupils. They are increasingly able to relate information about how pupils are getting on to the quality of education and to their financial decisions. As a result, the governing body is well placed to focus its monitoring role on how the school's provision effects standards achieved by pupils. The shortfall in the number of serving governing adds to the need to rely upon the active few. The governors should consider ways of recruiting new members. It is important for the governors to extend their awareness of the standards pupils achieve so that they can assess the effectiveness of the school's work and use this information to plan further improvements.

59. Through visits to the school, discussions with staff, and reports from co-ordinators, governors are increasingly aware of the work of the school and of its strengths and weaknesses. There is scope for governors to play a more significant role in supporting key areas of provision, such as special needs and the core subjects, especially in relation to checking on standards.

60. The school development plan gives priority to the most important issues facing the school, with an emphasis on meeting the needs of pupils. Staff and governors have become more involved in the planning process and this helps them to be clear about where the school is going and how they can contribute to its improvement. By becoming more systematic in their approach to monitoring and evaluating the things that really matter, governors are securing the school's capacity for future improvements. Although difficult, the school has faced up to the need for improvement, and its determined approach has helped it meet its own challenging targets. On the basis of its past success and of what has been put in place, the school is well placed to continue to improve and for its efforts to contribute to higher standards.

61. Educational priorities are soundly supported through financial planning. The school budgets systematically so that all spending relates closely to its priorities for improvement. Governors are actively involved in spending decisions, such as which provider to contract for the installation and maintenance of new equipment for ICT. The school maintains efficient records and ensures a satisfactory flow of relevant information between the headteacher,

finance committee, and full governing body. The school should consider allocating budgets to staff responsible for key areas of provision in order to improve accountability and efficiency further. Administrative procedures are secure and the governors exercise an adequate level of financial checks and controls.

62. The strategic use of resources, including specific grants and other funding, is good. As a result, initiatives have contributed to the improved quality of learning, including significant improvements to accommodation. The school seeks best value through audits of resources and their usefulness. The governors have started to monitor the effectiveness of spending, including grants allocated for the support of groups and individual pupils, and for the high percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational need. There is scope to inform and consult parents about the work of the governing body, particularly in relation to school improvements.

63. The school has a sufficient number of suitably qualified teachers and support staff to meet the needs of the curriculum and pupils. All the staff work very much as members of a team. Support staff work closely with the teachers and contribute a lot to the efforts to raise standards. Newly appointed teachers are supported well and this contributes to the overall good quality of teaching and learning.

64. The school makes satisfactory use of new technologies, in particular to record and monitor pupils' progress over time. Increasingly, ICT is used to present data, including analysis of pupils' performance and the management of special needs, in a way which staff and governors find useful.

65. The accommodation has been substantially improved and now provides a satisfactory level of accommodation for the school. The premises are very clean and orderly, and the buildings and site are maintained well so that everyone has pride and a sense of improvement in their school. There are some very pleasing displays of pupils' work. Pupils are very excited about the construction of 'the garden' at the side of the school. The co-operative spirit of the school is summed up in the way children, parents, staff and governors work with local groups to plan and construct the 'garden'. Although the children in the Foundation Stage do not have access to their own outdoor area for learning, plans are at an advanced stage. The resources for learning are adequate, including those for ICT and for literacy.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

66. In order to build on the school's existing strengths and to improve the quality of pupils' learning and the standards they achieve, the governors, head and staff should:

- Raise standards by the end of Year 2 in mathematics and science by:
(Paragraphs: 31, 56, 97, 99, 105, 113)
 - * giving more attention to developing pupils' enquiry skills and investigative skills in science and mathematics;**
 - * developing the role of the subject co-ordinator in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. **

- Use assessment information more effectively by:
(Paragraphs: 46, 50)
 - * adopting a systematic approach to the setting of individual targets in English, mathematics and science, involving pupils, and sharing the targets with their parents;
 - * developing a more rigorous approach to assessing pupils' progress in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. **

- Ensuring that governors become more involved in the monitoring of standards throughout the school by:
(Paragraphs: 58)
 - * making sure that governors' role in checking the work of the school is more closely related to the standards pupils achieve.

- In addition to the above issues, the school should consider the following points for inclusion in the action plan:
(Paragraphs: 32, 51, 72, 75)
 - * increase the opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage to learn through first-hand experience, including well-organised play;
 - * continue to look for ways to encourage all parents to support their children's learning, especially at home.

*** Indicates items that already feature in the school's development plan.*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	38
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	8	26	4	0	0	0
Percentage	0	21	68	11	0	0	0

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

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)	101
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	21

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR–Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	29

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.9
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000/1	8	7	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	7
	Girls	6	7	6
	Total	12	13	13
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	80 (89)	87 (89)	87 (89)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	6	7	5
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	12	13	11
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	80 (83)	87 (83)	73 (83)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	6	9	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	6	4	6
	Girls	9	8	9
	Total	15	12	15
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	100 (62)	80 (69)	100 (85)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	4	3	4
	Girls	9	8	9
	Total	13	11	13
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	87 (62)	73 (69)	87 (77)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	101
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes:

YR–Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	25

Education support staff:

YR–Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	105

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	291,053. 00
Total expenditure	283,807. 00
Expenditure per pupil	2,512. 00
Balance brought forward from previous year	17,789. 00
Balance carried forward to next year	25,035. 00

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out
Number of questionnaires returned

101
23

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	32	14	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	43	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	22	70	4	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	48	13	17	4
The teaching is good.	52	39	4	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	43	9	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	22	9	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	48	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	39	48	4	9	0
The school is well led and managed.	43	35	4	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	39	4	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	43	17	4	0

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

67. Provision for the Foundation Stage is good overall, with particular strengths in some of the teaching. The significant improvement noted in the visit by HMI in 2000 as compared with the original inspection of 1998 has been maintained.

68. Currently, nine children are in the Foundation Stage. They share the Reception class with pupils in Year 1. Children whose fifth birthday is between 1 September and 31 March started school in the September. Children who are five between 1 April and 31 August started in January. At the time of the inspection, three children had started school in September and six more had been in school only a few weeks.

69. Results of initial assessments show that children's attainment on entry varies considerably between year groups. The attainment of the current group is slightly below average. There are more children below than above average in their communication, language and literacy skills. The attainment of previous year groups on entry to the school was below average. Most of the children's pre-school experience has been part-time, and for some the experience has been brief. When they start in the Reception Class most children need a lot of support and encouragement to get them interested in their learning. It is for this reason that the school has introduced a Friday afternoon pre-school session.

70. The children in the Foundation Stage make good progress because the teaching is good. Most of them are likely to achieve, or nearly achieve, the expected levels. Children with SEN make good progress and are supported well. The contribution of an experienced and well-qualified teacher significantly adds to the quality of the provision and is a major reason for its continued improvement.

71. The quality of teaching is good, with some examples of very good practice. Relationships between the staff and children are very good, and even children who recently started school already feel at home in the classroom and around the school. However, the teaching would be even more effective if the learning opportunities were extended to include planned outdoor experiences. The school is aware of this shortcoming and there are plans to develop an outside area in the near future. Overall, the provision is managed well. Very good procedures are in place to support children's induction into school. Children due to start in the school come along to a weekly pre-school group. They get a good introduction to the activities and get to know the staff and meet the other children.

72. After an unsettled past, the curriculum and teaching in the Foundation Stage is secure. It is timely to consider enriching the opportunities for the children to develop their independence and social skills. Particular attention needs to be given to a timetable that is flexible enough to give the children some control over when and how experiences/activities are carried out. Consideration should be given to children gaining wider experiences of literacy and numeracy, both in and out of the sessions. The Reception children share a lot of the activities with the Year 1 pupils, and there is scope to extend the opportunities for the younger ones to learn through first-hand experiences, including well-organised play.

Personal, social and emotional development

73. All the children are making good progress because of the good quality of teaching, and they are likely to reach the expected levels. Most of the children are talkative and show a reasonable amount of self-assurance when they start school. Even so, they need a lot of help to develop their concentration, independence and social development. The staff get to know the children well, and recognise their individual needs. At all times, the teacher and support assistant provide the children with excellent role models. They are particularly good at helping the children to develop at their own pace. Within a few weeks of starting school, most of the children feel settled and secure, and are slowly but surely gaining in confidence and independence.

74. The initiative to offer children a half-day pre-school session is a good one, and it is helping them to get to know the routines and expectations of the class. Even the children who started in January are becoming more aware of others and, with a little adult help, are learning to take turns in different activities. They are getting used to routines, such as lining up and changing for games, and are beginning to take on simple responsibilities, such as taking the register to the office. They are very well behaved and respond well to the fair and consistent expectations of all the staff.

75. As noted earlier, the children need to develop their social skills and independence through more open-ended activities. However, the planned and structured opportunities to develop the children's personal and social development are very good. In a group session on the carpet, the children responded well to the teacher's encouragement for them to share their sad and angry feelings. She skilfully used 'Mo' the puppet to create interest and a sense of trust and belonging. This helped the children not only to express their own feelings but also to develop an awareness of the impact of their actions on others.

Communication, language and literacy

76. By the end of the Reception Year, about two out of every three children are likely to reach the expected goals for reading, writing, and speaking and listening. Those who are unlikely to reach the goals enter school with language and literacy skills at an early stage of development and needing more support. In spite of their low starting point, they too make good progress because the quality of teaching is good.

There are good planned opportunities for the children to speak and listen to adults and to each other, in groups or as a whole class. For example, they listened attentively to the story of Babuska, and some joined in enthusiastically. Although the children are often very 'chatty', they need encouragement to get them to speak in a group. They nearly all listen reasonably well to adults telling stories and giving explanations and instructions, but find it harder to take on board what others have to say and to engage in conversation. The adults know how and when to intervene in activities to stimulate talk. However, although they support imaginative play well, they need to extend the opportunities for the children to make up their own stories, and even to take on the role of different characters.

77. The children's literacy skills are promoted well through an adapted version of the literacy strategy. The children enjoy looking at books and talking about the pictures, and they regularly take books home to share with their families. The children learn the sounds that letters make, and the older ones can think of words that start with the same sound.

78. Older children recognise different letter shapes and younger ones are beginning to know how to form letters correctly. They are encouraged to 'have a go' in writing, for example about the old woman in the story of the Enormous Melon. The younger children

are starting to realise the purpose of writing. Most of them attempt to write their own name and older ones can at least form some of the letters on their own. The good opportunities for children to attempt their own writing include sending messages to each other in their role-play.

Mathematical development

79. Most of the children are likely to reach or nearly reach the national expectations by the end of the Reception Year. They make good progress in their mathematical development because the quality of teaching is good. Opportunities for children to develop a mathematical understanding from planned situations, such as the adapted numeracy session, are good. Resources, including number lines, board games and bright displays, are used well to capture the children's interest and aid their awareness of number.

80. Staff are increasingly aware of the need to help the children to develop their mathematical language and understanding beyond the timetabled session. There are some opportunities for the children to use their skills in an everyday and practical way, such as in weighing and using a timer in cookery.

81. Overall, however, the children should be given more opportunities to solve simple problems and to relate mathematical concepts to everyday situations outside the numeracy session, especially through practical activities.

82. Younger children are learning to count and recognise numbers up to ten, and some of them can count out the correct number of objects to match a given number. Older ones are encouraged to read and write numbers in the same way as letters. Adults make good use of mathematical vocabulary, and encourage the children to take part in counting games. More able children are beginning to use and understand simple terms, such as 'add', 'counting on' and 'altogether'.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

83. The children are likely to reach the expected levels in most aspects of their knowledge and understanding of the world. The children make satisfactory and occasionally good progress in all areas except scientific understanding, where progress is limited because there is no outdoor area for learning. In other respects, the children have good opportunities to develop their historical and geographical knowledge and understanding. They handle computers with growing confidence. Teaching in this area of learning is good.

84. Children talk in simple terms about their home, school and neighbourhood. They are aware of features such as the railway station, and have a go at describing their journey from home to school. Walks and visits encourage the children to observe, ask questions and talk about local features and their environment. The improved resources for ICT are giving the children good opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding. They are aware of terms such as mouse and keyboard. About half of them use the cursor to create a lined effect and use the arrow keys to move the cursor in a desired direction. They use programmable toys to good advantage.

85. In spite of a well-planned programme of scientific activities, opportunities for the children are limited because currently there is no access to the outdoor area. Even so, children in the younger class are encouraged to carry out small-scale experiments, such as planting seeds and seeing how they grow. They need help to express their ideas in terms of

predictions, questions and explanations. Without an outside area, the opportunities for children to learn and to talk and think about their experiences are limited.

Physical development

86. With the help of good teaching, the children make good progress in physical development. Most of them are on course to achieve the expected levels by the end of the Reception Year. Although the children do not have their own outdoor area for more adventurous physical activity, they do have regular access to the school hall for dancing, jumping, balancing, and climbing in space and on apparatus. They make good use of the playground when the weather is fine, to play games and explore their movements in a large space.

87. Children run, skip and hop with increasing control. In dance, they move and respond well to music and are becoming aware of their own space. Older children are beginning to take account of others when moving. They are given plenty of time and encouragement to explore their movements. Older children are starting to think about ways to improve their movements. They use the good range of equipment safely and with enthusiasm.

The children handle tools, scissors, paintbrushes, construction sets and malleable materials safely and with increasing control. The staff encourage them to try things out and give them the right level of support, often by working alongside the children. When making models, the children show growing confidence in cutting, sticking and shaping different materials.

Creative development

88. Nearly all the children are on course to reach the expected levels. The quality of teaching is good and there is a good range of opportunities for the children to express themselves in a creative way.

89. Adults working with the children encourage them to use their imagination through role-play and stories. The children create small imaginary environments and act out scenes in them, exploring ideas and feelings. Although there are opportunities for role-play, these need to be an even stronger feature in the school day.

90. The children experiment with colours, materials and a variety of media to draw, paint, print, and make models. They use crayons and pencils and paints in their own self-portraits. They enjoy listening to and making music, and have a good understanding of loud and quiet sounds. They all sing enthusiastically, tunefully, and with a growing sense of rhythm.

ENGLISH

91. In the 2001 national tests, pupils in Year 2 achieved standards in both reading and writing which were close to the national average. Standards were below the average for similar schools. There has been a steady improvement during the past five years, from well below average results in 1997 to average in 2001.

92. In the 2001 national tests for pupils in Year 6, the school's results in English were well above both the national average and the average for similar schools. All pupils achieved at least the expected, Level 4, and one in every three of them achieved the higher Level 5. Between 1997 and 2001, there has been a very significant improvement in pupils' performance, from well below average to well above average. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in Years 1 and 2, and very good progress in Years 3 to 6.

93. Pupils in Year 2 have good listening skills, which are evident in the careful way they listen to their teacher. Speaking skills are less well developed because many of the pupils still have a limited vocabulary. They do not find it easy to express themselves clearly and with confidence. Pupils make good use of their reasonable knowledge of phonics to read with understanding, if not always with expression and fluency. Year 2 pupils can find words spelled 'ee' and 'ea', and most can put them correctly into an appropriate list. One pupil noticed that part of his own name also makes the same sound but is spelled differently. Higher attaining pupils go to a selection of books and pick out a whole range of words with the same sound and with different spellings. Pupils can use a dictionary to find words, and talk about the difference between fiction and non-fiction. They are familiar with the contents page, and most of them know that words in the index are arranged in alphabetical order. Their writing is still not as well developed as their other skills in English, but progress is being made because writing is very much a whole-school focus for development. Their handwriting is legible, and letters are usually correctly formed. By Year 2, most pupils can write in sentences, using capital letters and full stops correctly. About one in every four pupils produces examples of extended pieces of writing, both in English and in other subjects.

94. Progress is accelerated in Years 3 to 6. Listening skills continue to be well developed in most lessons. Pupils are improving their speaking skills. As they gain confidence, they are able to express themselves more clearly and with a more varied use of vocabulary. For example, four pupils in Year 5 discussed the advantages and disadvantages of computers compared with those of books. Year 6 pupils can explain what mnemonics are and how to use them. Another group of Year 6 pupils were involved in a quite complex discussion with their teacher on euthanasia, arising out of a passage in their guided reading. They are beginning to understand and use unbiased arguments. Most pupils in Year 6 are reading fluently and often with real expression. They show good understanding of what they are reading and like to discuss the plots, characters and settings. They know about indices and glossaries and how to use them to help find information. They use books, compact discs (CDs) and the Internet to access information. By Year 6, pupils' writing is usually correctly formed and most of them produce extended pieces of writing on a number of topics. Initiatives such as the Children's University Project, motivate pupils, broaden their interest, and contribute to high standards and broadened their interest. Workshops in poetry in Year 5, and in drama in Year 6, produced some very good poetry and one-act performances. Pupils of all abilities are keen to take part in discussions and to answer questions.

95. The quality of teaching and learning during the inspection was good. Basic skills are taught well and in a progressive way. Phonics are developed well in Reception and Year 1, and spellings continually reinforced through Year 2. Teachers plan lessons well and have a clear idea of their objectives. Sharing these objectives more consistently with the pupils would make the focus even clearer and help the pupils become more aware of their own learning. Teachers usually have high expectations of both behaviour and work, and insist that these standards are met. This means that pupils know what is expected of them, and they listen, concentrate, settle down to work quickly and sensibly, and stay on task. On those occasions where teachers do not use a range of behaviour management skills, or where they lack consistency, pupils can get over-excited and the pace of learning slows. However, nearly all the lessons featured good relationships between teachers and their pupils, based upon a mutual respect and rapport. In the best teaching, the brisk pace and a good range of activities stimulates pupils and gives them something new to aim for.

96. Teachers know their pupils well, and the day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress is good. The use of a range of assessments allows teachers to track pupils' progress through the school and to set targets for their attainment. The booster class in Year 6 helps to raise pupils' standards and to attain the target set for them, Level 4. To further help pupils throughout the school, targets need to be in the form of smaller, specific and easily

measurable steps for improvement, which should be shared with pupils and their parents. The early and additional literacy support groups are well organised and taught, and are helping to raise standards. The family literacy project also helps raise standards and is particularly successful in involving parents. Classroom assistants work well with teachers and give good support to pupils, including those with SEN. Work is well targeted to the needs of pupils, and their learning is effective.

97. The good leadership and management of the subject have contributed to the significantly improved standards achieved by pupils. The co-ordinator has been supported well by the headteacher in setting realistic but ambitious targets for improvement. The National Literacy Strategy has been effectively put into practice and is helping to raise standards. There is a strong commitment, shared by all staff, to continue to raise standards, and there is an appropriate action plan for future development. The headteacher monitors the teaching of English systematically, providing feedback to teachers. The co-ordinator monitors the standards achieved by pupils and makes good use of this information to oversee planning of the curriculum. Plans are rightly in hand to give the co-ordinator more time to monitor all aspects of provision, to bring together the work to promote the quality of teaching and learning, and the standards pupils achieve. Resources are satisfactory. The library, although not fully accessible for all the school day, has a reasonable range and quality of books and provides a resource which is much better than at the time of the last inspection. The very good use of the county library service provides valuable additional resources and useful guidance. The good rate of improvement noted at the time of the visit by HMI has been maintained.

MATHEMATICS

98. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 attain the standards expected for their age. Standards are improving, and since 1997 there has been a steady increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels in national tests. The inspection evidence shows that standards have continued to improve. However, there remains room for improvement in helping pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge to solve problems.

99. In the 2001 national tests, the standards achieved by pupils in Year 2 were well below average. The results attained by pupils in Year 6 were in line with the average. Both sets of results were lower than in the previous year and did not continue the trend of improvement achieved since 1997. The dip in results in Year 2 was because the group included a higher than usual proportion of pupils with special needs, and fewer higher attaining pupils. A close analysis of the results in Year 6 shows that the percentage of pupils achieving the expected, Level 4 was above the national average. The percentage gaining the higher Level 5 was below the national average. The Year 6 pupils' results in 2001 were better than those of schools that attained similar results at Year 2 in 1997.

100. Inspection findings show that pupils currently in Year 2 achieve the standards expected for their age nationally. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. More than one in every three pupils has a special need and is supported well by classroom assistants. Progress has been made in developing pupils' skill in mental calculations since the HMI visit, when this was noted as a weakness. This is because a lot of attention is given to developing mental skills at the beginning of lessons. Pupils can add three single-digit numbers with reasonable speed and accuracy. The few higher attaining pupils can competently order numbers to 100 and partition two-digit numbers. Nearly all pupils have satisfactory mental recall of number facts and a fair understanding of the value of numbers. Most pupils can tell the time by the hour and half hour. They know the names of common shapes and can describe their properties, using correct terms, such as angle and face. Higher attaining pupils can draw and rotate irregular shapes. The standards achieved by the current Year 2 pupils are a higher than those attained by pupils in the national tests in 2001.

This is because the numeracy strategy is making a positive impact on teaching, and because the current Year 2 pupils have benefited from improved teaching since they started in the school. Where pupils remain less secure is in applying what they know in mathematics to the solution of problems, a weakness that was evident in the results of the tests in 2001.

101. Pupils currently in Year 6, including those with special educational needs, have made good progress in all aspects of mathematics. As in Year 2, pupils' ability to tackle problems is relatively weak. The school is aware of this shortcoming and is doing something about it. The setting of work involving real-life problems has been made a regular feature of most lessons. Pupils receiving extra support in the homework club are helped to break problems down into two or three manageable steps. The lower attaining pupils are less secure in making sensible estimates and in checking their answers. Most can use a range of methods to add, subtract, multiply and divide accurately, and have a good understanding of the relationships between these operations. They have a sound understanding of fractions, are developing their skills in measuring, and use and interpret a range of diagrams and charts. They use their data-handling skills by using computers for such tasks as producing spreadsheets. They use the correct mathematical vocabulary when describing their work in shape and space.

102. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented, and the recent high priority given to mental mathematics is beginning to pay off. Homework makes an effective contribution to pupils' learning, especially in Years 3 to 6, and in helping pupils to learn their multiplication tables. However, there is scope to increase the expectations for work at home, especially in pupils' final year at school. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are put into ability groups for their lessons and this helps the teachers to set work that is matched well to pupils' needs, and to target their efforts to support and extend the pupils. Although there are targets for groups of pupils to achieve, individual targets are yet to be set as a necessary step to pursuing higher standards. The additional mathematics 'booster' programme helps pupils make good progress.

103. The school has made good use of its assessment information to identify areas where pupils need more help or where greater attention is required. The analysis of national tests and other assessments is used well to group pupils, set group targets, and pick up and act on areas of weakness. For example, the Year 5 group includes a high proportion of pupils with special needs and it had previously experienced unsatisfactory teaching. Pupils' progress has been carefully monitored, specific targets set, and a plan put in place to support their needs.

104. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection and is consistently good. Learning is effective because pupils are well motivated and challenged by the tasks they are set and by the brisk pace of lessons. Nearly all teachers share the objectives of the lesson with the pupils. This gives a clear idea of its purpose and allows pupils to be part of the evaluation of their own learning at the end of the session. Teachers manage the lessons well so that very little time is wasted, and resources are well organised and easily accessible. Through good relationships and well-focused tasks, pupils are happier to work at activities with little thought of misbehaving. In the one very good lesson in Year 3 and 4, the teacher moved around the class and engaged pupils in questions, supporting those in need, and assessing their progress as she went around the groups. Teaching assistants give good support, especially to pupils with special educational needs, whom they help to make good progress. The standard of marking is good, with marking in Years 3 to 6 very good. Pupils are given appreciative comments, together with clear indications of what they must do to improve.

105. The good leadership has contributed to the improving quality of learning, which is now leading to higher standards. The co-ordinator gives her colleagues a good level of support and guidance. There is a clear and shared understanding of what needs to be done to sustain the improvement and to raise standards. The co-ordinator has a good insight into the standards achieved by pupils and into their particular strengths and weaknesses. Currently, the co-ordinator is not involved enough in the monitoring of teaching and learning so that what goes on in the classroom can be linked to the pursuit of higher standards. The school plan rightly identifies the need to develop the use of numeracy skills in subjects other than mathematics, including ICT to support pupils' learning.

SCIENCE

106. Standards achieved by pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with those expected nationally. The satisfactory rate of improvement noted in the last inspection has been maintained. Pupils, including those with SEN make satisfactory progress. However, pupils throughout the school are less secure in the investigative and experimental aspects of science than in other aspects of the subject.

107. In the 2001 teacher assessment, the standards achieved by pupils in Year 2 were well below average. The results achieved by pupils in Year 6 were average. Their achievement in both Year 2 and Year 6 in experimental and investigative science was particularly low. A close analysis of the results in Year 6 shows that all the pupils achieved the expected, Level 4. The percentage gaining the higher Level 5 was broadly average. The Year 6 pupils' results in 2001 were better than those of schools that achieved similar results at Year 2 in 1997.

108. Although there has been a steady improvement in standards in science, it has not been at the same rate achieved in English and mathematics. This is because of the greater emphasis placed upon English and mathematics with the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The school is now giving greater attention to science, and the improved teaching and planning is beginning to lift standards.

109. Pupils in Year 2 are beginning to grasp the basic elements of fair testing. Year 2 pupils classify materials into scientific categories, such as plastics and metals, and suggest uses for them based on their properties. Their work on forces and electrical circuits reflects a sound understanding for their age, indicating an improvement in standards in this aspect of science, which was relatively weak in the 2001 assessments. This reflects the good use that teachers make of their analysis of assessment information to identify areas that need more attention. The pupils' drawings and diagrams are of a satisfactory standard, including clear labels and simple explanations. Teachers place an increasing emphasis on pupils undertaking simple experiments and investigating for themselves. This is slowly beginning to improve the pupils' enquiry skills, but needs to continue especially if they are to achieve the higher levels.

110. During the inspection, pupils in Year 3 and 4 enjoyed investigating forces and friction. They carried out tests to find out the effect different surfaces had on the distance travelled by a toy car. Most of them know that only one variable can be changed at a time for the test to be fair. They made predictions based upon their prior knowledge of friction. Most of them have a good understanding of a fair test, recording their results accurately in their science books.

111. Working in small groups of three or four, pupils in Year 5 and 6 studied the parts of a flower. In this lesson, there were good opportunities to develop their observation, recording and speaking and listening skills. Nearly all Year 6 pupils know the main parts of plant, such as the stamen and petal. They can explain how seeds are dispersed by insects and on the

wind. The higher attaining pupils understood that insects are drawn towards brightly coloured plants. Two average attaining pupils used Encarta and Science Explorer to research about pollination. Talking to pupils revealed their satisfactory knowledge and understanding of electrical circuits. Pupils in Year 6 have a good knowledge and understanding of materials. They know the differences between solids, liquids and gases. They describe experiments to separate mixtures using processes, such as filtration and evaporation. In some of their written work, the explanations for their observations are not detailed or scientific enough for them to achieve higher levels of attainment. Although their skills of enquiry are a little below expectations, they are improving. Pupils carry out experiments independently, taking measurements with increasing accuracy, and use a variety of charts, tables and graphs to record their results, some produced on computers. They occasionally suggest ways of testing their own ideas, although this aspect of their work could be developed further.

112. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with a number of strengths that account for pupils' good progress in Years 3 to 6:

- Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is based on a good subject knowledge that enables teachers to ask probing questions that make pupils think and talk. This was particular apparent in a lesson in Year 5 and 6 on plant life where the teacher made suggestions about what to look for that got the pupils interested and led to very careful observations and thoughtful comments;
- teaching assistants play a significant and effective role in supporting all pupils, but especially those with special needs;
- good use is made of resources to capture and hold pupils' interest.

113. The co-ordinator has a good picture of the subject's strengths and weaknesses, and is clear about what needs to be done to improve standards. Staff are supported well, aware of the issues, and share the co-ordinator's commitment to improvement. Pupils' results in national tests and assessments are analysed and weaknesses addressed. For example, increased emphasis has been given to investigative and experimental science because this was a stumbling block for pupils in the assessments and tests. Standards are rising because the right issues for improvement have been tackled. In order to extend improvements to Years 1 and 2, and to secure improvements in Years 3 to 6, the school should:

- Extend opportunities for pupils of all ages to share and justify their own ideas in science;
- give greater emphasis to accuracy of recording;
- help pupils to use the evidence from their investigations;
- continue to develop the subject's links with ICT;
- develop individual target setting;
- develop a systematic approach to the monitoring, evaluation and promotion of the quality of teaching and learning.

114. The school has identified the above issues for development and is well placed to bring about further improvements in the subject.

ART AND DESIGN

115. It was not possible to observe the teaching of art and design during the inspection and no overall judgements could, therefore, be made about the quality of the teaching. Judgements about standards in art and design are based on an analysis of their work, teachers' records and assessments, and photographic evidence. Pupils' attainment in art and design is in line with what is expected for their age at the end of year 2 and Year 6. Their achievement is satisfactory, although some individual pupils have a particular talent in using their observational skills to creatively apply ideas to their work.

116. Sound improvement has been made in the provision for art and design since it was last reported on, in the inspection in 1998. Although the co-ordinator is not a specialist, she has improved her knowledge through training and has an enthusiasm for the subject; this is particularly borne out in the good quality of the work produced by the pupils in the class she teaches. Pupils now undertake a wide range of work, which include textiles, collage and three-dimensional media, such as clay work, in addition to painting and drawing. Information and communication technology is used for research purposes, to observe the work of artists and sculptors and find out their background. Although there is some use of software for producing simple artwork, such as 'drawing' and 'painting', there is little use of software for producing finished artwork or the use of digital media for creating effects.

117. Towards the end of Year 2 pupils show good observational skills through accurate drawing, such as the position and shape of handles on a cup. They present imaginatively what they see. In the pencil drawings of their self-portraits, pupils show that they have carefully observed the features of their own faces. Their use of pastels for emphasising the light and dark parts shows a good understanding of how to represent shadow. The pupils further develop their ideas by creating a montage of different parts of the face in the style of Picasso. They examine patterns in the brickwork and the shape of window openings in their school, and then produce good quality clay plaques that show a clear understanding of form, pattern and line. Through Key Stage 2, pupils steadily develop their skills. By Year 4, they apply their skills well in other subjects, such as illustrating characters from *Theseus and the Minotaur*. Some of their drawings remain immature, even though their representation and pencil control has improved. Pupils investigate pattern and shape in everyday life and show a good awareness of how repeating, matrix-type patterns can produce interesting effects. By Year 6, pupils consider pattern and tone in landscape. Themes are used well to help pupils understand the ideas of artists such as Degas, and there are examples of carefully executed sketches to illustrate their studies. Some of their studies in movement are particularly striking, are well drawn, and show good attention to detail.

118. The subject is soundly led and the co-ordinator provides a good level of support to her colleagues. A start has been made in collecting samples of pupils' work and photographic evidence, and assigning National Curriculum Levels to particular pieces of artwork. This is a good system for monitoring and recording how different groups progress. The school is now considering how individual pupils' progress can be assessed and tracked as part of its developing scheme of work; it aims for this to be completed by the end of the summer term 2002. A lot of thought is given as to what works and does not work, and this information is then used to adjust longer-term planning accordingly. Evidence shows that a wide range of media is used and that work is well linked to studies in other subjects, such as their textiles work on Henry VIII. Resources are good and visits to galleries enhance pupils' cultural development.

Design and technology

119. It was possible to observe only one lesson in design and technology during the inspection. Evidence drawn from a review of pupils' work and teachers' planning confirms that standards are close to those expected nationally in both Year 2 and Year 6. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Since the subject was last reported on, in the 1998 inspection, standards have significantly improved. It was reported that the school needed to develop planning for the subject, raise the staff's levels of confidence and expertise, and increase the range of resources. There have been improvements in all these aspects, though there remains work to be done.

120. Pupils in Year 2 have a sound grasp of what is involved in designing a product for a given purpose. They talk about the sandwiches they like, and draw pictures of them. A few pupils go beyond thinking in terms of their own preferences, and take account of what others like and dislike. They are aware of health and safety, including washing their hands before handling food, and how to use a knife when spreading on to bread. Pupils in Year 1 can cut, shape and join a variety of materials to construct model houses. They steadily develop their early skills because the teachers' planning gives a clear, step-by-step idea of what is to be learned during each lesson and over time. Year 2 pupils test and try out their ideas for making a wind-up drawbridge, using thread, a cotton reel and card. They use their growing knowledge of different materials and techniques to improve their work. For example, they folded the card to make it stronger, and used a hole-puncher to allow the thread to run more smoothly.

121. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 have some good ideas about how to plan a healthy salad. They make a list of the ingredients that would give different tastes and also be good for them. A few of them have thought about the balance of colours and how the salad might be presented. They are aware of health and safety issues, including the need to prepare food in a clean environment, the correct way to handle cutting tools, and their personal hygiene. They are developing a sound idea of how to evaluate their work in suitable terms, although they need some encouragement to go beyond saying what they like and dislike. The few higher attaining pupils can think of original ideas for improving their work.

122. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, as well as working with food, use an increasing range of tools, materials and components, including different textiles and wood. The evidence of earlier work on slippers shows that pupils have a secure idea of the purpose and the look of what they produce. They closely observe existing products, such as toys which involve the use of cams, to find out how they work, and use the idea to influence their own initial plans for similar toys. Most pupils are competent in their design and making, even if tending to follow what has been suggested or taught by the teacher. A few come up with their own ideas. Pupils in Year 6 are aware of the appearance of their moving toys as well whether they are likely to work. The introduction of 'storyboard' planning sheets is a good idea, as it helps pupils through the planning, making and evaluating process. This has led to sound skills of evaluation, sometimes giving rise to changes in the products during construction. Pupils in Year 6 talk positively about their work in design and technology. Inspectors agree that the work they are given is challenging, and presented in manner that involves boys and girls, and pupils of different abilities.

123. The quality of teaching and learning in the one lesson seen was good. The evidence of this lesson and from a scrutiny of teachers' planning gives an indication of how the subject has improved since it was last reported. The planning is purposeful and relates particularly well to the development of skills. There is evidence that plans take account of assessments of what pupils can do, know and understand. In the lesson seen, the teaching reflected the teacher's good knowledge and understanding not only of the subject, but also of the pupils. This made a good contribution to pupils' understanding, especially of the

design process. Skilful questioning encouraged the pupils to think for themselves and apply their skills in different contexts. The imaginative and relevant tasks, in this case designing their own healthy salad, captured the attention and interest of all pupils, including those with special needs.

124. The co-ordinator has done well to steer the subject into a far stronger position than was the case four years ago. The most important issues for improvement have been addressed, including the need to improve planning at a school level. The recommended national guidance has been sensibly taken into account in developing an effective two-year cycle, which provides a suitable breadth of experience and a good build-up of skills. Resources have been improved and enough invested in training to bring staff expertise up to a level that contributes well to pupils' progress. To secure the creditable improvements in standards, the co-ordinator's role in monitoring teaching and learning should be developed.

HISTORY

125. Because of timetabling it was not possible to see any full history lessons during the inspection. The scheme of work and planning indicates that all areas of the National Curriculum are being taught. Work seen during the inspection suggests that pupils in Year 2 and in Year 6 achieve standards that are in line with expectations nationally for their ages.

126. History is usually taught in blocks of half a term, as pupils look at a range of topics, such as the ancient Greeks, Egyptians and the Tudors. An interesting display of work on Greek mythology in the assembly hall indicates satisfactory standards, and shows that there are useful links with other subjects, in this case with collective worship.

127. Good use is made of the rich local heritage, including the local history society, old log books and the Heritage Centre. Further afield, pupils are stimulated by visits, such as to air raid shelters in Stockport to find out how children were affected by World War II. Another example was a visit to the Manchester University Museum, which provided particularly good resource information for the Egyptian topic. Good use is also made of the library service for a range of books, pictures and artefacts.

128. In the part of one lesson seen, the teaching was good and the Year 3 and 4 pupils showed a lot of interest in the history of the bicycle. The lesson was well planned, with particularly good use of pictures showing the development of bicycles over the last two centuries. Work was well targeted to the needs of pupils of different abilities and there was an atmosphere of activity and business. One pupil with special needs was especially interested. He explained in some detail about the hobbyhorse and the penny-farthing, and about what a difference pneumatic tyres made.

129. The subject has a temporary co-ordinator who provides satisfactory leadership and management. The school is aware of the need to give the co-ordinator time to regularly monitor both teaching and standards, and to develop formalised assessment procedures to help monitor standards.

GEOGRAPHY

130. The limited evidence from the inspection shows that pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 achieve standards broadly in line with national expectations for their age. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.

131. In the Year 2 lesson seen, pupils were discussing what Barnaby Bear had found out about Dubai in his 'travels' there. Pupils understood that deserts are dry places because there is little rain, and they talked about palm trees and camels. They knew that a globe is a more accurate representation of the world than a map. Shown a large continent, such as Africa, on a map, they were then able to find it on a globe. The more able pupils were then able to use clues to help them find a much smaller country, Dubai. Pupils drew and labelled some of the things they had learned about Dubai. A group of five pupils was withdrawn to work with an assistant, using a 'story sack' and 'planning' a journey with Barnaby Bear. Pupils discuss routes, make a list of what to 'pack', and prepare their own 'passports'. There are good links here with ICT as pupils use a digital camera and then print their 'passport' photographs.

132. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 were following up earlier work on a local traffic survey. They discussed what problems might have to be considered if it were decided to make part of the town centre traffic-free. They showed understanding of possible problems and consider questions, such as, 'Should all traffic be banned?' They sensibly suggested that emergency services would need access and thought about what exceptions might be made for the disabled. They discussed restricting parking and the question 'What about cyclists?' led to a range of issues, such as safety, access, convenience and cost. Pupils showed a mature appreciation of the importance of such issues. Using street maps, pupils worked out an alternative route from one part of town to another, avoiding the suggested traffic free area. A variety of different routes were proposed and pupils could explain the thinking behind their chosen route. About half the Year 6 pupils made a link between co-ordinates on a map and co-ordinates in mathematics. Almost all pupils were able to recognise the school on a simplified map of the area.

133. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Both of the lessons seen would have benefited from an injection of pace in the learning. In the Year 2 lesson the work the more able pupils could have been more challenging. Lessons are well planned and resources are used to good effect: Pupils are interested in the lessons, behave well and are keen to join in. In both of the lessons seen, there were good examples of pupils working well together. In Year 2 a valuable link was made with another school, in New Zealand, via a web site on the Internet.

134. Resources, including artefacts, books and material from the library service, are good and add to the quality of learning. Good use is made of the locality to bring geography to life and help pupils' understanding. Younger pupils look at local features and take walks around the school. This helps them to understand places and routes, and to describe journeys, such as the one from home to school. Good use is made of the local Heritage Centre and the annual residential trip to extend older pupils' learning.

135. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and gives satisfactory leadership. There are plans to include the monitoring of teaching in the role. At present, the co-ordinator has a good insight into teachers' planning and takes a regular look at standards of pupils' work. Even so, assessment opportunities need to be identified so that information on strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning is available to help teachers' in their planning for the subject. There is a framework for planning based on the latest nationally recommended guidance.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

136. Standards in ICT have significantly improved since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are now achieving standards in line with those expected nationally for their age. The requirements of the National Curriculum have changed a good deal and more is required of pupils. The school has been successful not only in keeping pace with the higher expectations of the National Curriculum, but in actually improving standards in all aspects of the subject.

137. There are four main reasons for the improved standards:

- An improved curriculum, giving a structured approach to the development of pupils' skills;
- improved resources for all aspects of ICT;
- improved levels of staff expertise and confidence;
- increased opportunities to link ICT to work in other subjects.

138. Much of the improvement can be attributed to the co-ordinator's effective leadership and management. At the same time, the head has ensured that ICT is high on the school's agenda for improvement. Funding from the National Grid for Learning (NGfL) has been spent well and has contributed to higher standards achieved by pupils. Other grant funding provides effective, direct teaching from a specialist teacher. The school is well placed to continue to raise standards and to make increasing use of ICT to support other subjects.

139. Pupils with SEN are fully included in lessons and are supported well by classroom assistants and teachers. They learn at the same good rate of progress as the rest of the class. Pupils of different attainment talk enthusiastically about their work in ICT. Older pupils are particularly keen to access information and to research topics, for example searching the Internet for information about a different part of the world.

140. Pupils in Year 2 achieve the standards expected nationally in all aspects of ICT. This is mainly the result of sound teaching. The teachers use their improved knowledge to ensure that pupils have access to a full range of work. They have appropriate expectations of what pupils can achieve and competently give them the basic skills of ICT. Each pupil has a password and knows how to 'log on'. The pupils reap the benefits of the improvements of the past two years, and this gives them a good platform to build upon in Years 3 to 6. They confidently use the mouse and keyboard to sort and classify information. They create, save, load, edit and move files with growing surety because the staff know how to demonstrate these skills in a clear way and because the pupils have enough opportunities to practise. They can use the paintbrush cursor to create line images, and are able to clear the monitor screen and restart, selecting the position and colour. Pupils, including those with special needs, use programs to support their language development, and show a good understanding of how their skills can be applied. They are aware of the use of ICT in different environments and for different purposes. Teachers' planning shows that pupils have experience of giving instructions to a programmable floor robot. Pupils in Year 2 can sequence instructions to control the movements of the robot. They evaluate and then adapt their instructions in the light of their experience.

141. Standards achieved by pupils in Year 6 are in line with those expected nationally. The improvements have affected only their most recent experience, and it is therefore to the school's credit that most of them have 'caught up' enough to achieve the typical standards for their age. Pupils, including those with special needs, make very good progress. They have developed good word-processing skills. Many can draft and re-draft on screen. They merge pictures, symbols and words into the same printout. They use the CD-ROM to research various topics. At the time of the inspection, the facility to send and receive e-mails was not

available. However, discussions with pupils made it clear that most of them are reasonably confident e-mail users, and that some can describe how to add attachments. They can describe procedures to set up a database. They have a sound understanding of control through giving instructions to a control box sensor to complete a pre-determined route.

142. The quality of teaching and learning is good, and it highlights the value of the investment in a training programme that has substantially improved levels of skills and confidence. Pupils in a Year 1 lesson, which was linked to their work in literacy, were being well taught to use the shift key, space bar and back space bar when devising a simple sentence. As a result of patient teaching and effective intervention by the class teacher and her assistant, most pupils produced a sentence demarcated by a capital letter and a full stop. In a lesson for pupils in Year 3 and 4, the teacher played a key role in helping pupils to develop their ideas and understanding by encouraging them to ask questions, explain their ideas and demonstrate their skills. The lesson had been carefully planned, with clear learning objectives, which were shared with the pupils. This allowed the teacher to focus on what she wanted pupils to learn, and gave them a good understanding of their own learning. Teachers plan effectively, making good use of national guidance. This helps to ensure the progressive development of skills as pupils move through the school. Teachers' explanations at the start of lessons are always clear, and pupils consequently understand what they are to do. Teachers make good use of the plenary to revise the main points of the lesson and to encourage pupils to learn from any difficulties. The positive way staff approach the subject rubs off on the pupils, who are keen to learn and not afraid to make mistakes.

143. Information and communication technology is increasingly being used to support work in other areas of the curriculum such as English, science, history and geography. Good examples are to be seen in Year 6, where pupils have produced a PowerPoint presentation linked to their work in geography. The use of a specialist teacher is a good move; it has not only had an impact on pupils but has been a positive influence of staff. Work has been carefully planned to include spreadsheets, control and multi-media presentations. Another strength of the teaching is the way teachers ensure that the correct vocabulary is taught. Pupils understand what they are being asked to do and can discuss their work using correct technical terms

144. The co-ordinator is clear that, in order to secure recent improvements in standards achieved by the pupils, the school needs to:

- Continue to develop its currently adequate resources, including extending networking into the Reception and 1 class, aiming for at least three PCs in each classroom, and restoring the e-mailing facility;
- continue to build-up staff expertise, including use of the digital camera;
- use staff ICT skills to develop pupil tracking programs;
- further extending links with other subjects.

Music

145. It was possible to observe only one lesson of music during the inspection, so no secure judgement can be made about standards. Teachers' planning shows that all elements of the National Curriculum are covered adequately. The evidence of the one lesson and of the quality of the pupils' singing and playing in assemblies indicates that standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with those expected nationally.

146. The lesson seen was very good. It was well planned, with clear objectives, and the teacher had a very good knowledge of the subject. Following on from a previous lesson in which they had composed some music, the pupils were playing a range of tuned and

untuned percussion instruments. Using simple symbols, the teacher taught pupils to follow a conductor by watching the 'baton'. Pupils concentrated extremely well throughout and by watching where the baton pointed were able to play their instruments loud, soft, quickly and slowly. Many of the pupils are able to recognise the difference in pitch between different instruments and can explain, for example, 'That one's higher than the other. There is good attention to tempo, and pupils show a good grasp of rhythm. The teacher has high expectations of behaviour and work and the pupils clearly know this. They behave well, treat the instruments properly and listen carefully to make sure they follow instructions and play at the right time and in the right way. At the same time, they are clearly enjoying the lesson. Towards the end of the lesson pupils sang 'Someone's in the kitchen' and again there is an emphasis upon standards as the teacher emphasises the need for clear diction. Pupils sing tunefully and keep good rhythm as they clap and mime a variety of instruments as the teacher accompanies them on her flute. Pupils sing well in assemblies where a recorder group accompanied them. As well as the recorder group there is a school choir, and both groups meet weekly. Pupils also have the opportunity to take part in concerts and productions, and Year 3 and 4 pupils were rehearsing for a concert during the inspection week. Pupils are also closely involved in the Buxton Festival this year, in which they are one of the schools taking part in a children's opera.

147. The subject co-ordinator is knowledgeable and has a clear grasp of what is happening in music in the school. Her specialist knowledge is used in teaching different classes but it has not been possible for any monitoring of other music teaching in the school to take place. There is a satisfactory range of resources, including tapes, CDs and a range of instruments, and these are well used.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

148. The evidence of the two lessons, and part of a third, which were seen during the inspection, indicates that standards are in line with those expected nationally for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This represents a clear improvement on the unsatisfactory standards reported in the 1998 inspection.

149. There were good multi-cultural links during a Year 2 dance lesson, as pupils listened and danced to Indian music. All the pupils were fully involved and moving to the music, sometimes individually and sometimes in pairs. The teacher gave clear directions and was able, through speaking to individual pupils, to prompt them to think about ways in which they might improve what they were doing. Pupils showed a good awareness of their own bodies and the space around them, and used it well. They displayed good listening skills and an appreciation of the mood of the music, expressively moving their bodies, arms, legs and in some cases fingers and eyes, to reflect the music.

150. Pupils benefit from a well-planned swimming programme, which includes regular opportunities to learn and develop basic skills. In the well-managed lesson for Year 3 and 4 pupils, they learnt to jump into water, use a float, and conserve their energy. Teachers' records confirm that pupils achieve the required 25-metre standard by the age of 11.

151. Supported by the class teacher, pupils in Year 6 developed their ball and control skills well in a lacrosse lesson led by a visiting coach. He is clearly very skilled and has high standards, which he expects pupils to adhere to. The lesson was well paced, with a range of activities to enable pupils to develop ball control skills, stick control, catching, passing, dodging and marking. Pupils were fully engrossed in the lesson, and worked extremely hard and with obvious enjoyment. The area was quite small and was sloping, with a hard surface. It was therefore far from ideal, but there was good attention to safety and pupils were aware of the need for sensible behaviour. A short eight-a-side game took place, during which the

coach continued to emphasise the rules of the game and the basic skills required. Pupils showed a good understanding of strategy as they marked and dodged, and some of them displayed good ball skills. They were able to make some difficult passes and catches and showed good skills for their age.

152. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, and pupils have the opportunity to play sports, such as soccer and netball, against other schools. The school is a member of the High Peaks Sports Development Group. Other good links include Stockport County Football Club and Derbyshire County Cricket Club, and all of them offer equal opportunities to boys and girls to improve their skills.

153. Accommodation for physical education is satisfactory, although the hall is not very large and outside facilities are for large-scale activities. Resources are also satisfactory and are effectively used. There is a useful scheme of work that helps pupils to develop their skills in a progressive way. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership. At present there are no formal assessment procedures in place to develop and inform planning, but these are being planned.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

154. Only two religious education lessons were observed during the inspection. Evidence from these lessons and from pupils' work indicates that standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils make satisfactory progress through the school. This represents a similar picture to that at the time standards were last reported, in 1998.

155. In a lesson on stories of creation, Year 2 pupils looked at the Christian concept of God as a creator, in the biblical account. Pupils understand the concept of creation and of making something 'special' and 'unique'. They were able to retell the main features and the sequence of creation, and discussed the wonders of different plants and animals. Pupils talked about their favourite plants and animals and enthusiastically described features such as where they live and what they eat.

156. Year 5 and 6 pupils consider what makes places of worship special to different people. They show understanding and empathy as they discuss and explore ideas of places that are special to them. Questions such as, 'What makes it special to you?' 'Why do you go there?' and 'What do you do?' provoke thoughtful answers. 'It helps me to calm down when I get stressed' and 'Sometimes I just like to feel there's just me' show a developing awareness of spiritual needs of themselves and others. As they go on to write about their own special places, they begin to think about atmosphere and usage. They contemplate how the school hall might feel at different times and in different situations. One pupil talked about the hall during assembly as being 'quieter and more thoughtful' compared to when it is being used for physical education or for dinners. Pupils are beginning to show an awareness of why it is important to value and respect people's special places, individual characteristics and beliefs.

157. Pupils enjoy the lessons and respond well. They discuss ideas sensibly and work well, individually and in groups, showing respect for one another's views. Relationships are very good. In the two lessons observed the teaching and learning was satisfactory in one and good in the other. Both were well planned and ideas and discussions were sensitively handled to make the pupils think and to encourage a flow of ideas. Work is not always targeted to the needs of individual pupils and is not always challenging for the higher achievers.

158. At present there is an acting co-ordinator, who provides satisfactory leadership and management of the subject and has devised a long-term plan for religious education, in

collaboration with colleagues from other local schools. The scheme links with the locally Agreed Syllabus but is designed more specifically to meet the needs of pupils at the school. Resources, including artefacts, are good and they are well supplemented by the Derbyshire Library Service. The subject makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Effective use is made of trips, including those to local churches and occasionally to Manchester to visit a synagogue or a mosque. By celebrating festivals such as Easter, Chinese New Year and Diwali, pupils develop a good understanding of other faiths and beliefs.

159. The subject co-ordinator sees teachers' plans and sometimes the pupils' books, but there is no formal monitoring of teaching or standards, and no whole school assessment procedures for religious education to help in forward planning. Overall, however, the subject has made a steady improvement since the last inspection.