

INSPECTION REPORT

**CASTERCLIFF COMMUNITY PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Nelson

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119281

Headteacher: Mr I Chester

Reporting inspector: Dr B Blundell
23868

Dates of inspection: 25th – 28th February 2002

Inspection number: 243456

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

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Marsden Hall Road North Nelson Lancashire
Postcode:	BB9 8JJ
Telephone number:	(01282) 617627
Fax number:	(01282) 693526
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S Whiteside
Date of previous inspection:	September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23868	Dr B Blundell	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Equal opportunities	What sort of a school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19443	Ms N Walker	Lay inspector		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?
20348	Mrs M Marriott	Team inspector	English Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
10228	Ms S Russam	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Art Design and technology Religious education	
30439	Mr M Heyes	Team inspector	Science Geography History Physical education Special educational needs English as an additional language	

The inspection contractor was:

PPI Group Ltd
7 Hill Street
Bristol
BS1 5RW

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 7
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?	8 - 10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	10 - 11
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	11 - 12
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	12 - 14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	14
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	14 - 15
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	16
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	17 - 20
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	21 - 35

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Castercliff Community Primary School is a school for boys and girls, aged 4 to 11, situated in Nelson, Lancashire. There are 311 pupils on roll; the school is larger than most other primary schools. The ethnic background of the pupils is largely white with United Kingdom heritage, with a number of pupils being Pakistani. Seven pupils have English as an additional language; the languages spoken by these pupils include Urdu and Punjabi. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Both the percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs and the proportion with statements of special needs are above average. The nature of pupils' special needs includes specific and moderate learning difficulties and emotional, behavioural, physical and speech difficulties. Pupil mobility is relatively low overall, but was relatively high in the group of pupils who sat their national tests as eleven year olds in 2001 moved through the junior phase. Pupils' attainment on entry is well below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. Standards for pupils currently aged eleven are below national averages in English, mathematics and science. The overall quality of teaching is good. Leadership and management, when taken together, are good.

The school is providing satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The overall quality of teaching is good.
- Pupils' attitudes are good, as are relationships.
- Leadership and management, when taken together, are good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and for those having English as an additional language is good.
- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good.
- The quality of information for parents is good and is enhanced by the pupils' journals.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics and science by the age of eleven should be higher.
- Assessment in some foundation* subjects is unsatisfactory.
- The level of challenge in the teaching in the junior phase is inconsistent.

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

** Foundation subjects are those other than English, mathematics and science.*

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in September, 1997. The overall quality of teaching has greatly improved; the proportion of very good or better teaching has doubled and the amount of unsatisfactory teaching has dropped from sixteen per cent to three per cent. The key issue to ensure that design and technology meets the National Curriculum requirements in Key Stage 2 has been met, although standards are still below national expectations. The issue to improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 has also been met overall. Pupils' standards in speaking have improved. Schemes of work have been appropriately developed. Assessment procedures are now just satisfactory overall but are unsatisfactory in some foundation subjects. Parental involvement in school is satisfactory.

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

In the national tests in 2001 for eleven year olds, pupils' attainment was well below average compared with national averages in English, mathematics and science. Compared with those in schools of a similar type, pupils' results were average in English and below average in mathematics and science. Over the three years from 1999 to 2001 taken together, pupils have left the school at the age of eleven just over two terms behind pupils nationally in English and mathematics and nearly three terms behind in science. (Please note that pupils do start their education at Castercliff, overall, well below average.)

Standards at the end of the infant phase in 2001 were in line with national averages in writing and mathematics but well below the national average in reading. Compared to that in schools of a similar type, pupils' attainment was average in reading and well above average in writing and mathematics. Over the three years from 1999 to 2001 taken together, pupils have left the infant phase nearly two terms behind pupils nationally in reading, half a term behind in writing and nearly one term behind in mathematics. The results at the end of the junior phase up to 2001 rose at a similar rate to results nationally. The school's targets are lower for 2002 than 2001, but forty four per cent of pupils are on the school's special educational needs register; in the circumstances, these targets are reasonably ambitious.

In the work seen during the inspection, standards for pupils aged eleven were below average in English, science and mathematics. Standards for pupils aged seven matched national averages in reading, writing, mathematics and science. For pupils aged seven and eleven, in information and communication technology, geography, history, physical education and art and design, standards met national expectations. In design and technology, standards for pupils aged seven met national expectations but for those aged eleven they were below these expectations. Standards in music were above national expectations for pupils aged seven and they met national expectations for those aged eleven. In religious education, standards met the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for pupils aged seven and eleven. The majority of children aged five are on course to meet the majority of the Early Learning Goals. (The Early Learning Goals are the nationally expected standards for children at the end of the Foundation Stage.)

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, but standards at this school are not yet sufficiently high for pupils aged eleven.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to the school are good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour, both in and out of the classrooms, is satisfactory overall.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is good; relationships are also good.
Attendance	Pupils' attendance is satisfactory.

Pupils are generally interested in their work and are enthusiastic.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Satisfactory

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 overall quality of teaching is good, with sixty two per cent of lessons seen being good or better and ninety seven per cent being at least satisfactory. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good in the infant phase and satisfactory in the junior phase. There were, however, examples of excellent teaching of English and mathematics in the junior phase. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught satisfactorily. Strengths in teaching include the management of pupils and the way in which support staff are utilised. A weakness in teaching is a lack of sufficient challenge in some classes in the junior phase; in some classes, too little is expected of the pupils.

The school meets the needs of its pupils satisfactorily.

Strengths in pupils' learning include their overall productivity and pace of working.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the curriculum are satisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Sixteen pupils have statements of special educational needs; they are well provided for.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is satisfactory overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is satisfactory and, for their social development, it is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school's care for its pupils is satisfactory. Procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour are good.

The school works satisfactorily in partnership with parents. Parents' views of the school are positive. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. All areas of the curriculum meet statutory requirements.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management by the management team, when taken together, are good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors' fulfilment of their responsibilities is sound.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's evaluation of its performance is satisfactory.
The strategic use of resources	The school's strategic use of resources is good.

Staffing and accommodation are good and learning resources are satisfactory. Management of the school is good and leadership is satisfactory. Displays at the school are of a good quality. The support staff at the school work effectively. The caretaker and school cleaner ensure that the school is an attractive environment. The school's administrative officer and school secretary carry out their work efficiently.

The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily; funds are handled appropriately.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Teaching is good. • Pupils make good progress. • The school sets high expectations. • Parents are comfortable approaching the school with questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents would like more information about their children's progress. • Some parents would like the school to work more closely with them. • Some parents are not entirely happy with behaviour. • Some parents would like to see a wider range of extra-curricular activities.

The inspection team broadly agrees with parents' positive views. However, it judges that the areas where some parents would like to see improvements are satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Approximately twenty per cent of the pupils who sat their end of junior phase national tests in 2001 joined the school during the junior phase. Also, there is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, amounting to almost half of the current Year 6, for example. This needs to be borne in mind when reading about the school's overall results.
2. **Shortly after children enter the Foundation Stage in Reception**, they are assessed to see what they know, understand and can do; social and physical skills are also noted. This is known as the baseline test. The intake in 2001 was judged to be well below average. An analysis of previous intakes shows that the intake in 2001 scored at broadly similar levels to previous years.
3. **By the age of five, near to the end of their time in Reception**, children are again assessed against national standards known as the Early Learning Goals. The majority of the children currently in Reception are on course to attain the majority of these goals. They have made good progress.
4. **At the age of seven, close to the end of their time in Year 2**, pupils take the end of infant phase national tests in reading, writing and mathematics. The pupils who sat these tests in 2001 obtained levels that were well below national averages in reading and average in writing and mathematics. Their attainment when compared to that of pupils in schools of a similar type was average in reading and well above average in writing and mathematics. Pupils achieve well. Those who took the tests in 2000 attained standards that were well below average in reading, below average in writing and average in mathematics. Taking the results over the last three years from 1999 to 2000, averaged together, pupils' performance has been two terms below national averages in reading, half a term below in writing and nearly one term below average in mathematics. In all three subject areas boys have performed less well than girls; this is broadly in line with the national picture.
5. **Inspectors find that pupils currently in Year 2, who will take their national tests in May, 2002, are reaching average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science.** Standards in information and communication technology, art and design, geography, history, design and technology and physical education meet national expectations. Standards in music are above national expectations. Standards in religious education meet the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus.
6. **By the age of eleven, near to the end of Year 6**, pupils take the end of junior phase national tests in English, science and mathematics. Pupils' performance in the 2001 tests in terms of National Curriculum points scores was well below the national average in English, mathematics and science. It was average in English and below average in mathematics and science, when compared with the performance of pupils in schools of a similar type. Taking the three years from 1999 to 2001 averaged together, pupils have left the junior phase over two terms behind pupils nationally in English and mathematics and nearly a year behind in science. This does not necessarily mean that pupils' performance has gone backwards during the junior phase. To see whether this is the case, we need to look at how the same group of pupils has performed in each key stage. For example, if we consider those pupils who took their end of infant phase tests in 1997 and then went on to sit the end of junior phase tests in 2001, it can be seen that they made satisfactory progress overall.
7. **Inspectors find that pupils currently in Year 6**, who will take their national tests in May, 2002, are working at below average standards in English, mathematics and science, although the quality and quantity of work in their books show that they have made satisfactory progress over the last twelve months in all three subjects. As with pupils lower down the school, standards in information and communication technology, physical education, art and design, history and geography meet national expectations.

Standards in design and technology are below national expectations. Standards in music also meet national expectations and standards in religious education match the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

8. **Since the last inspection**, standards have been maintained at the end of the infant phase in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards in other subjects for pupils aged seven have been maintained, although in music and information and communication technology, they have improved. Standards for pupils at the end of the junior phase are lower than those observed in the last inspection in English, mathematics and science. However, nearly half of the current cohort of eleven year olds is on the special educational needs register. Standards in other subjects have been broadly maintained and there has been improvement in art and design and information and communication technology.
9. **Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.** The progress of pupils with special educational needs, in relation to their prior attainments, and of those pupils for whom English is an additional language is more marked than that of many of their peers, owing to the nature of the support given to them to overcome their difficulties. They participate in all areas of the curriculum and are making good progress towards the targets identified in their individual education plans.
10. Pupils are generally achieving satisfactorily, overall, considering their prior attainments.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils have good attitudes to their work. Most of the time they are enthusiastic and clearly enjoy learning. In discussions during the inspection, very many pupils remarked that one of the reasons they like this school is because 'we learn a lot', or 'we learn good things'. The majority of pupils listen carefully, stay on task throughout lessons and try hard to produce their best work. Indeed, in some lessons, pupils display very good attitudes to learning. A good example was seen in a Year 5 / 6 mathematics lesson, where pupils concentrated and worked very hard for the full 60 minutes on some demanding work, especially when they were asked a range of fairly difficult spot questions at speed. However, in lessons that are less interesting or lack pace, pupils' attitudes are satisfactory at best and sometimes unsatisfactory. For example, some will sit chatting, while others will be gazing around or fiddling with another's hair and generally not paying attention. As a result, time is wasted with the teacher having to repeat material.
12. Behaviour is satisfactory. The majority of pupils behave well, both in and out of lessons. Many are polite to adults in the corridors and elsewhere and, for the most part, they get on together at play and lunch times. However, a number of pupils engage in rather too much aggressive play, such as dragging others around by their coats or pretending to kick each other, and there is some unruly behaviour along corridors when pupils are en route to lessons. Inspectors witnessed no incidents of real intimidation. Nevertheless, a small number of parents, in discussions with inspectors, expressed their concern about fighting and bullying. Some junior pupils stated that the one thing that makes them sad at Castercliff School is the incidence of fighting and bullying. Indeed, pupils have raised this issue as a concern to be addressed by the School Council. Although last year there were 17 fixed-term pupil exclusions and one permanent pupil exclusion, so far during this school year there have been five fixed-term pupil exclusions and no permanent pupil exclusions. This is an improvement on the situation found at the time of the last inspection, but records show that there are still too many incidents of inappropriate behaviour amongst boys.
13. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory and, in the main, pupils form good relationships, especially with their teachers. In lessons, pupils work well together in pairs, small groups, or individually. They share equipment and ideas well and they will often show their appreciation of others' efforts. Throughout the school, pupils can be seen running errands and carrying out other jobs in a sensible manner. Year 6 pupils are naturally given more responsibilities and they carry these out well and take them seriously. Such responsibilities include door duty at break times, watering the many school indoor plants, and having lunch with the youngest children in the school to help them to cut up their food or to open packets and cartons for them.

- Attendance is satisfactory. At almost ninety four per cent, it is similar to that of all schools nationally. The majority of parents say that their children like coming to school and, indeed, many pupils achieve near one hundred per cent attendance throughout the year. However, lateness continues to be a problem. During the week of the inspection, the atrocious weather conditions caused many pupils to arrive late, but the school's own records show that the number of pupils arriving late each day is not improving and has in fact deteriorated since the time of the last inspection.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- The overall quality of teaching is good; it is good overall in the Foundation Stage and the infant phase, but only satisfactory in the junior phase because of the variable quality of teaching in different classes. However, many of the classes are consistently taught very well in the junior phase. Teaching was at least satisfactory in all except two of the lessons observed. Overall, it was unsatisfactory in three per cent of lessons seen, satisfactory in thirty five per cent, good in forty three per cent, very good in eleven per cent and excellent in eight per cent. Excellent or very good teaching was seen in classes of every year group in the school.
- The biggest strengths in teaching include the manner in which teachers often share the learning objectives for lessons with their pupils, and the way in which they manage their pupils, which is good throughout the school. Weaknesses include insufficiently high expectations in a minority of classes in the junior phase.
- Teachers generally work very hard; some, exceedingly so. Pupils are generally aware of what is expected from them in terms of behaviour and respond appropriately. In an excellent literacy lesson for pupils in the infant phase, in which the teacher showed excellent class management, the pupils' response was also very good and they showed clear enjoyment of their work on words ending in 'll', 'ss', or 'ff' from 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff'. These pupils made excellent progress in their knowledge and understanding of reading and spelling such words. In an excellent mathematics lesson for pupils in Year 5, the pupils' response to the excellent class management was also first-rate. Classroom support assistants throughout the school make a most valuable contribution to pupils' learning; they work well with classroom teachers.
- The pace of lessons is generally good through the school. In the best lessons, pupils are reminded of the time limits on an exercise, as, for example, in an excellent Year 5 / 6 numeracy lesson.
- Literacy and numeracy are taught satisfactorily overall and, in the infant phase, taught well. Lessons generally start with worthwhile question and answer sessions. For example, in a very good English lesson for pupils in a class for Reception and Year 1 pupils, the teacher asked questions that thoroughly assessed pupils' level of understanding on work about non-fiction texts.
- Teachers' knowledge and understanding are generally at least satisfactory and good overall in the infant phase. In the infant phase, day-to-day marking of pupils' work is good; in the junior phase, it is satisfactory overall, but there was some good marking seen, for example, in Year 5, where pupils' work was marked thoroughly with appropriate comments to praise pupils' efforts, together with comments to stretch pupils who had obtained full marks for a particular exercise.
- Lessons generally have clear learning objectives and these are usually revisited at the end of lessons, to see how far they have been achieved. Many lessons end with a worthwhile oral question and answer session, as, for example, in the majority of literacy and numeracy lessons. The use of homework is satisfactory overall.
- The level of challenge is good in the infant phase but only satisfactory overall in the junior phase. For example, in a Year 6 numeracy lesson, pupils were allowed to spend too much time on the unchallenging activity of cutting out angles and sticking them onto paper. The scope for learning was consequently reduced and pupils' learning was only just satisfactory overall. There was also a lack of consistent challenge in the two classes for the youngest pupils in the junior phase; this is hampering pupils' attainment and adversely affecting standards by the end of Year 6.

23. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides teachers with advice and assistance when they are working with special needs pupils in the different classes in the school. This ensures that there is appropriate differentiation for the different needs of pupils and the co-ordinator also provides the appropriate resources that a particular pupil may need. She also ensures that classroom assistants receive training to meet their specific roles in school through effective use of in-service training.
24. Standards of teaching have improved since the last inspection. At that time, just over one in ten lessons were judged to be very good or better; that has now risen to around one lesson in five. Less unsatisfactory teaching was observed.

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

25. The school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum and statutory requirements are fully met. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those having English as an additional language, have equal access to all areas of the curriculum. The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory.
26. At the previous inspection, it was found that statutory requirements were not being met in the control element of information and communication technology and this element was not being taught throughout the school. In Years 3 to 6, the design and technology curriculum did not fulfil requirements where there were insufficient opportunities for pupils to plan, design and evaluate their work. The curriculum was not balanced; elements such as using and applying number in mathematics and developing investigations in science and enquiry based learning and research opportunities in other subjects, such as history, were limited, as was the opportunity for creativity and imaginative work in English. These issues have been resolved successfully.
27. The school has adopted schemes of work based on national guidelines in most subjects. Planning for lessons is good. An overall plan shows when different aspects of each subject will be taught and this framework works effectively and efficiently throughout the school. Skills are developed progressively from term to term and planning is matched to each age group and ability of pupils.
28. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught satisfactorily and links with other subjects are created, for example in English and information and communication technology. The implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is satisfactory. The organisation and structure of lessons follow national guidance and activities planned for pupils are imaginative and interesting. The school has a focus on guided writing, which is developing pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in this subject. However, there is a lack of challenge in some classes. Links with other subjects are satisfactory and continue to develop.
29. The school works hard to ensure that all pupils take a full and active part in all activities. The school's policy for equal opportunities is implemented effectively throughout the school. All activities are accessible to both boys and girls. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and it meets those needs well. The guidance in the code of practice for pupils with special educational needs is followed effectively and all these pupils have individual education plans that contain relevant targets. Work set is well matched to their abilities and they follow the full curriculum in classes. The school's provision for pupils of average attainment is good, but there is not enough challenge provided for higher-attaining pupils. The progress of all pupils is tracked at regular intervals and when, on occasions, the rate of progress slows down, the decline is quickly identified and support systems put into place. As a result, pupils across the school show an eagerness to learn, are well motivated and make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6.
30. A good range of extra-curricular activities extends pupils' interests. Seasonal sports are offered, including football, cricket and tag-rugby. There are chess and mathematics clubs and, in addition to choir, recorder, guitar and brass groups. Visitors to the school, such as educational theatre groups, enrich pupils' learning in music and English.

31. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, aspects of which are taught in assemblies, through school events, circle time and as part of separate lessons. The school scheme is based upon 'Health for life', and is being developed by the co-ordinator. Every opportunity is taken to develop pupils' self-awareness, confidence and independence. Drugs awareness and sex education are handled sensitively and linked appropriately to work in science.
32. Links with the community are satisfactory. The school, as part of its personal, social and health education programme, has strong links with the charity NSPCC, which they have adopted this year. Opportunities for pupils to raise funds for the charity play an important part in pupils' development. The school has strong links with a local special school. Parents help in school with shared reading activities. Homework is structured clearly so that parents are aware of the nature of the work to be done.
33. The school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is satisfactory and standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Standards in social development have improved and are now good. Spirituality is developed through assemblies, in which clear messages and appropriate songs and prayers are used to reinforce the ethos of the school. Circle time is well used to enable pupils to reflect on the consequences of their own actions. Opportunities are given for pupils to have a quiet time to discuss personal issues.
34. The school has systems in place to ensure that all pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and these make an effective contribution to the provision for pupils' moral development. Reward stickers and certificates are used extensively. Good behaviour and achievement are celebrated in assemblies. The school has four clearly defined rules of behaviour, which are implemented consistently throughout the school. These encourage pupils to adopt positive attitudes and behaviour in the school community. Pupils are encouraged to understand the consequences of their actions and to contribute to the welfare of others in the school.
35. There is good provision for pupils' social development. Opportunities are provided during lessons and at other times for co-operative and collaborative work. Older pupils are given responsibilities for supervising corridor areas and for caring for younger children during lunchtimes. Pupils are made responsible for carrying and setting out equipment during lessons, for care of the libraries and for tidying up at the end of activities. They are encouraged to adopt social skills that develop respect for others. As a result, they are polite and courteous to one another and to adults.
36. The provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils develop an awareness of Christian culture and religious education lessons enable them to widen their understanding of other world faiths. Subjects such as history, geography, music and art help to develop pupils' understanding of their own culture, past cultures and the cultures of other societies.
37. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils are withdrawn from classes to receive additional support, but not from lessons in the same subject each time, so that pupils with special needs receive their full entitlement to the curriculum. There are a variety of assessment procedures in place to meet the wide varieties of special needs pupils in the school. There is access to all the extra-curricular activities offered in school, including a residential visit. The school takes active measures to provide facilities for pupils' particular educational needs. It meets its obligations under the Code of Practice fully, and carries out all statutory reviews, and, as far as possible, pupils and parents contribute to the reviews.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school provides an appropriate level of care for its pupils. The school governors are clearly keen to ensure that pupils are safe in school. They inspect the school premises regularly and ensure that any concerns are quickly addressed. The caretaker is vigilant in providing a clean and safe environment on a day-to-day basis. There are regular fire practices and the school secretary keeps very clear records of who is on or off the premises, adults and pupils alike. Teachers and support staff are kind to their pupils and look after them well, should they become ill or injured in school. Teachers pay appropriate attention to the safety of pupils in lessons; for example, they explain how to use equipment safely in science experiments and other practical lessons.

Pupils have the offer of a good quality hot meal in school with plenty of choice and good-sized portions. The oldest boys in the school describe their school dinners as 'brilliant!' and 'lovely!'. Personal, social and health education lessons include sections on how to lead a healthy and safe life, including 'saying no to strangers', healthy eating and exercise. The headteacher expects any teacher taking pupils out of school on educational visits to consider the safety of the pupils in their care, but currently there is no formal system of procedure in place. Although the school's arrangements to protect all pupils from any form of abuse, either in or out of school, are satisfactory, they rely heavily on staff using their common sense and working closely together. Whilst there are two named persons for child protection, other staff, including teachers and non-teachers, need up-to-date child protection training. This need has been recognised by the school and the school has already applied to the local authority for such training to take place.

39. The school has adequate systems in place to provide a satisfactory level of educational and personal support and guidance for pupils.
40. Class teachers use praise rather than criticism to encourage good attitudes and behaviour and they draw attention to pupils who set good examples. Some parents and pupils do, however, feel that rewards are not always awarded fairly, suggesting that pupils who usually behave badly receive recognition immediately they improve in any slight way and yet pupils who consistently behave well are simply expected to behave well all the time and receive no reward. Inspectors find that there is a degree of truth in this. The majority of teachers have high expectations of behaviour in lessons. They expect pupils to listen and to wait their turn to be asked to answer questions. In the main, pupils rise to those expectations and so all are able to listen and learn. However, some teachers are not always consistent in what they expect and will accept calling out or fidgeting or gazing around. As a result, sometimes pupils do not give one hundred per cent attention and this results in instructions or teaching points having to be repeated, which slows pupils' learning.
41. The school makes good use of external support. It receives regular visits from the educational psychologist, speech therapist, school nurse, local authority inclusion and pastoral support services and the educational welfare officer. There are pupils in school who currently have individual education plans for behavioural problems, who are closely monitored by the special educational needs co-ordinator.
42. The school recognises the need for pupils to attend regularly and rewards those who do. With the help of the education welfare officer, it does what it can to get those pupils who are often absent without valid reasons to attend. Recently, the school designated a week when everyone concentrated on getting to school on time. Nevertheless, in general, the school has too casual an approach to the start of the school day. For example, during the inspection week, many pupils arrived a few minutes late (possibly because of the appalling weather conditions), but there was no sense of urgency amongst pupils or staff when pupils were still in corridors, hanging up their coats at 9.06, when school actually started at 08.55hrs.
43. There are good relationships between pupils and their teachers. Teachers are patient and take time to listen to pupils. As a result, pupils feel valued and are confident to join in discussions in lessons and to ask for help when they need it. The recently formed Pupil School Council provides an opportunity for pupils to raise their own collective concerns about life in school and, in turn, enables the staff to see things from the point of view of the pupils. Of particular note is the issue of bullying in school, which was raised in this way. The school responded positively by allocating a week when assemblies and other opportunities were used to talk about the subject of bullying and a competition was held for pupils to create anti-bullying posters. The best of these from each class are now on display throughout the school and serve as reminders to pupils of how to behave towards others and what to do about bullying in school. Serious incidents, such as fighting and other forms of violence, are clearly recorded and appropriate action is taken, including the involvement of parents. The school's records confirm that the occurrence of such incidents has fallen considerably over the past five years.

44. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed about the progress and needs of their children. They are fully involved in annual reviews and get copies of all documentation. There is a good partnership with pupils for whom English is an additional language; for example, the parents of a pupil in Year 1 come into school every day.
45. The assessment of pupils' work and its use to plan future work is satisfactory overall, but is unsatisfactory in some foundation subjects. Whilst progress in this area has been made since the last inspection, and some tracking is now taking place, assessment is not consistently implemented throughout the school. For example, rather than pupils being identified as at a Level 4a, 4b or 4c, they are generally assessed as being at Level 4. However, in English and mathematics, pupils' writing skills are assessed accurately three times per year. The school uses appropriately the optional national tests in Years 3, 4 and 5. Nevertheless, the tracking of pupils' academic progress could be improved.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. Parents have good opinions of the school. Over fifty per cent of parents expressed these positive opinions to inspectors through a meeting and a questionnaire before the inspection. They are particularly pleased with the school's expectations that their children should work hard and do their best, with the quality of teaching, and with the fact that their children like coming to Castercliff Primary School. They are also pleased with the progress their children make, particularly parents of pupils with special educational needs. Although the majority of parents are satisfied with the quality of behaviour in school, a small number of parents expressed concerns about bullying and inappropriate behaviour in school, through letters and in discussion with inspectors. Inspectors' findings, in the main, agree with parents' positive views of the school.
47. At the time of the last inspection, the school's partnership with its parents was judged to be unsatisfactory. Since that time, the school has worked consistently to improve this situation and involve parents more in the life and work of the school. For example, for the past three years, the school has held 'Parents as Educators' courses in school and a small number of parents have attended these regularly; at least 12 parents provide regular and valuable help in lessons. The school has also recently introduced 'journals' as a method of regular communication between home and school and parents are very pleased with these. They contain useful information for parents such as future learning targets, how to help with homework, the school calendar, homework tasks and awards received. However, these journals are not always used as well and as regularly as they could be by some parents and, indeed, by some teachers. The school now also informs parents of the topics and other work planned for their children on a termly basis, but this information is still brief and does not make suggestions as to how parents can help to further their child's understanding. The end-of-year reports to parents have also improved, and now report on what each child has learned in all subjects. However, there is scope for further improvement by making the reports more personal and individual and setting more specific learning targets. Nevertheless, as a result of the school's efforts, there is now a satisfactory partnership with parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. Leadership and management by the headteacher and senior management team are good overall. Leadership in the academic sphere is only satisfactory, but the headteacher and senior management team manage the school well and lead it appropriately in the pastoral sphere. The team is now coming to grips with ensuring that academic standards rise further for pupils aged eleven. Although this rise in standards may not be in evidence for the 2002 cohort of eleven year olds, in view of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs within the group, results look on course to rise for 2003 and beyond. The educational direction of the school is satisfactory. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior management team want the best for their pupils. The school's aims and values are easily seen in the daily routines of the school and the school's aims are appropriately re-drafted each year, following discussions with staff, governors and parents. The deputy headteacher is very competent and teaches her Year 5 / 6 class extremely well. She knows exactly what constitutes a good lesson and this helps her monitoring role greatly.

The senior management team, which includes the co-ordinators for the infant phase and lower and upper junior phase, is competent in its work. The subject co-ordinators manage their subjects appropriately, monitoring planning and marking, although they are not yet all involved in the monitoring of teaching in their subjects.

49. The governing body's fulfilment of its statutory responsibilities is sound. Their role in helping to shape the educational direction of the school is appropriate. Governors visit the school quite regularly and have monitored the implementation of some of the curriculum appropriately, particularly numeracy and literacy. The governing body has a good understanding of the main strengths and weaknesses of the school. Between them, the governors bring a range of expertise to the running of this school.
50. Whilst the headteacher and deputy headteacher have monitored teaching of literacy and numeracy in all classes, this has not yet spread to specific monitoring of teaching by all curriculum co-ordinators. Staff have been provided with both verbal and detailed written feedback.
51. The school's targets are lower for 2002 than for 2001 but, considering the level of special educational needs in the 2002 cohort, they are reasonable. Whilst pupil mobility has had an adverse effect on recent results, inspection evidence suggests that the targets for 2002 in English, mathematics and science will be met. The headteacher has raised the school's targets for 2003; these also look on course to be met. The school has a satisfactory capacity to succeed.
52. There are sound procedures for the induction of new teachers, who are mentored by the head of the phase in which they teach. Appropriate policies and plans are in place for performance management.
53. The management of special educational needs provision is of good quality. Statutory requirements are met, the register is up to date, and the school has implemented the latest recommendations of the new Code of Practice for special educational needs into its policy. The governors are fully involved in this aspect of school life and report on it fully in the governors' annual report. Funding for special educational needs is being used effectively to promote good learning throughout the school. Special needs classroom assistants are used very well to support pupils' learning in lessons and there are good resources to assist pupils who require them. In addition, there are plans to alter the front entrance of the school and a playground, in order to accommodate all pupils equally. There is a policy for English as an additional language, and four pupils of the seven in school with English as an additional language receive support from teaching assistants. There are resources specifically purchased for these pupils and the governors support the school's action plan to develop the teaching of pupils in the school having English as an additional language.
54. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is currently good. The accommodation is good overall and is very well maintained by a dedicated caretaker and cleaner. However, some of the toilets for the younger pupils are in need of up-dating. Classrooms have attractive displays. Resources are generally satisfactory in quality and quantity; the new information and communication technology suite is a big improvement in resources.
55. The effectiveness of the school's use of new technology is satisfactory. The school's competent administrative officer and school secretary help ensure the smooth running of the school and assist with the administration of the school's behaviour policy. Finances are handled well and the school applies the principles of best value appropriately. Specific grants are used for their intended purposes. The school development plan is a useful working document that prioritises the school's main needs.
56. Standards in leadership and management have been maintained since the last inspection. The recently appointed deputy headteacher is making her mark and is a shrewd appointment by the headteacher and governing body.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve the school further, the headteacher, senior management team and governing body should:

- raise standards in English, mathematics and science by the age of eleven; (paragraphs 78, 79, 92, 93, 94, 97, 98);
- improve assessment in some foundation subjects (paragraph 45);
- ensure that the level of challenge in the teaching in the junior phase is consistently high (paragraphs 22, 96).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	61
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	7	26	21	2	0	0
Percentage	8	11	43	35	3	0	0

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

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)	311
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	109

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	16
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	95

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	24
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.8
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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
		2001	26	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	22	26
	Girls	26	30	31
	Total	42	52	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74(69)	91(71)	100(91)
	National	84(83)	86(84)	91(90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	26	23
	Girls	29	31	31
	Total	49	57	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86(67)	100(80)	95(62)
	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	23	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	11	17
	Girls	20	13	20
	Total	32	24	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68(62)	51(65)	79(81)
	National	75(75)	71(72)	87(85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	15	13
	Girls	15	15	16
	Total	22	30	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	47(67)	64(69)	62(63)
	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	7
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	304
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	17	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.3
Average class size	31

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	306

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial Year	2000-2001
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	615128
Total expenditure	607120
Expenditure per pupil	1851
Balance brought forward from previous Year	23868
Balance carried forward to next Year	31876

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.6
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	275
Number of questionnaires returned	147

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	29	3	1	2
My child is making good progress in school.	64	29	4	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	39	10	3	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	41	11	5	3
The teaching is good.	69	27	1	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	34	12	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	29	5	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	24	1	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	46	39	11	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	53	36	7	4	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	36	7	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	39	9	3	7

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

57. Forty two children of reception age are taught in two classes. There are 13 children in a mixed-age class with some Year 1 pupils. These children scored more highly in the baseline assessment tests administered at the start of the school year. In the report these groupings will be referred to as the mixed-age class and the reception class, in order to distinguish any differences in what they are taught and learn throughout this stage of their education. The children's attainment when they join the school is frequently well below average. Many children have limited speaking and listening skills and some come to school with little social experience or breadth of knowledge.
58. The provision within the reception class has a noticeable impact on the performance of the children in all six areas of learning and they make good progress. Staff work together successfully and give the children in their care effective support. Work is planned to meet both class and individual needs. Adults manage the class appropriately and have realistic expectations of behaviour and performance. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory, and often good, in all six areas of learning.
59. The staff assess the children's progress and development and, if there are any concerns, parents are informed so that they can offer their children extra support at home. The reception classroom is suitably organised and has a good range of resources. However, the outside play area is not large enough and does not provide a bright or stimulating environment. It is not yet used as a carefully planned resource that contributes to all six areas of learning.
60. In the mixed-age class, the children make very good progress as a result of good and very good teaching. There has been an improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. Staff have very good relationships with the children. Work is well planned to cover the six areas of learning for the Foundation Stage. The teacher assesses the children's progress regularly, but does not keep detailed records of their attainment.
61. Assessment data show that, in previous years, children have generally achieved nationally expected standards in all areas of learning. However, the children currently in the reception class are achieving higher standards and, by the time they enter Year 1, the majority of them will attain these standards. All children by the time they enter Year 1 have made good progress. Children who have already been identified with statements of special educational needs achieve very well and make good progress as a result of the extra help and support they receive in class. However, sometimes other children are not given additional help soon enough.

Personal, social and emotional development

62. Children in the reception class are beginning to demonstrate confidence and an awareness of school routines. They are establishing satisfactory relationships with their teacher and other adults who help them. Children in the mixed-age class have very good relationships with all of the adults who teach them. They are provided with very good role models by staff, who work together very well and create a calm and happy atmosphere. The children learn quickly to take turns and work and play well together in pairs and groups. Most are able to put on hats, coats and gloves independently when it is time to go home. Snack time provides the children with an important social activity to which they adapt very well.
63. In the mixed-age class, the teacher uses early morning and registration activities very successfully to emphasise the importance of friendship. In discussion sessions, the children are keen to answer questions and are also good at listening to one another. In art activities, they demonstrate initiative and independence when finding and selecting resources. Children in the Foundation Stage are thoughtful, kind, aware of the needs of others and very happy following the routines established in the classrooms.

Communication, language and literacy

64. Many of the children join the reception class with limited speaking skills but, for most children, speech skills develop quickly through activities such as the role play in the 'Garden Centre' and discussions about what they have made from construction materials, sand, water and paint. Children are encouraged to talk and share experiences when they first come to school in the morning. The children are very keen to tell their news to the adults and other children. Story time sessions are successful in introducing children to the excitement of books. During the inspection, sharing a story about 'Jasper's Beanstalk' created excitement and interest, with several of the children able to suggest an ending. They understand that books give them information or provide them with stories. A minority of children in the reception class can identify single letter sounds and, during the inspection, they were keen to find words beginning with 'M' for Monday.
65. In the mixed-age class, most children know letter sounds and nearly all write their names. They are encouraged to do so on every piece of work. Their letter formation is reasonably accurate and they are beginning to understand the importance of keeping letter size the same. They are increasingly confident when reading and are beginning to mimic adults and thus read with some expression. Children write simple words and are beginning to write their own stories and news. Most know that a capital letter starts a sentence, but are less confident to explain the importance of a full stop. Children really enjoy listening to poems and rhymes, and join in with songs, performing actions with confidence and enthusiasm.

Mathematical development

66. Staff give the reception children opportunities to count and become used to the idea of numbers. When playing outside, children know which children are bigger and smaller and can count the number of steps. In the classroom, children count various objects and put them in patterns correctly. They know the shape and names of some numbers through handling two- and three-dimensional numbers and by placing them in correct sequences. During registration, children sometimes take turns to count how many people are in school that day and how many are absent.
67. In the mixed-age class, the children begin to gain a more formal understanding of number. Most count confidently to 10 and some count beyond. A few children find two numbers that add up to 10, with a small number achieving more than this, for example, adding three numbers to make numbers up to 20. Most children sort objects by different criteria such as 'big', 'small', 'tall' or 'short' and put themselves into different groups on the basis of gender or eye colour. The children recognise and name simple two-dimensional shapes, such as a circle and a square. They show a satisfactory understanding of terms like 'more than', 'less than' and 'longer' and 'shorter'.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

68. Staff give the children in reception various opportunities to learn about the world in which they live. The children are fascinated by the different colours, textures and smells of food at lunchtime, especially by those which are unfamiliar. Whilst not all respond positively to the suggestion that they should eat fruit for a snack, some understand that it is better for their health than eating a sweet or biscuit. Within the topic about 'Growing', there is an opportunity for the children to discuss the world around them and places they have visited, including the garden centre. A minority of children recall their experiences of going on holiday. However, they have no concept of distance or time and when asked how far they had to travel to a destination, the response was always similar; 'Oh, not far, I just went to sleep and when I woke up I was there'. Staff plan and organise occasional activities which enrich the children's experiences, such as a visit to Blackpool.
69. Children make use of computers to play simple games, which familiarise them with the keyboard and mouse. Good use is also made of 'listening centres' to encourage children's independence in selecting and listening to their favourite stories and rhymes.

70. In the mixed-age class, the children have explored the features of electricity. Through first-hand experiences, they have developed an understanding of how simple circuits work and discussed which everyday objects need electricity to make them work. Current learning activities provide children with the opportunity to observe similarities and differences in plants and flowers and they know that they all grow from seeds. They name their own body parts correctly and know how they have grown since being a baby. They develop knowledge and understanding about the weather through keeping a daily record, which they take turns to complete.
71. Most children are confident when they use computers. They use a mouse to move objects around the screen and name parts of the computer. They also operate other equipment in the classroom, such as tape recorders, confidently. Throughout the Foundation Stage, the children demonstrate an increasing and refreshing curiosity about the world around them.

Physical development

72. Staff give children in the Foundation Stage satisfactory opportunities to develop skills of co-ordination. In the reception class, the children build models out of 'Lego' and 'Duplo', finding ways to fit pieces together effectively. They demonstrate good manipulative skills when using play dough to mould into various shapes. They use a very limited variety of toys outside, to learn how to pedal cars and climb on play equipment. They are not yet aware of the effect of exercise on their bodies but do realise that exercise is good for them. They develop confidence when using small equipment and gain skills in throwing and catching a variety of balls and bean-bags.
73. In the mixed-age class, the children build effectively upon what they have already learned. They know how to hold and control pencils and use scissors successfully. They find more difficulty in using spatulas for spreading glue. The children kick balls to one another with increasing accuracy. They enjoy repeating an activity that they have mastered and they are beginning to adjust their awareness of the limits of their own bodies, seeing, for example, how far they can stretch and how long they can hold a position. At playtime, they enjoy chasing games and say that it makes them feel 'puffed out'.
74. Activities provided for children in the Foundation Stage offer appropriate physical challenge and there is sufficient space indoors to set up relevant activities. Opportunities are less well planned for outdoor activities. Children with physical disabilities are well supported by adults, who encourage increased independence. They work well with physiotherapists and occupational therapists in order to facilitate effective programmes to develop pupils' physical skills.

Creative development

75. Staff give children in the reception and mixed-age classes an acceptable range of creative experiences. The children are uninhibited when painting, using bright colours boldly. They are keen to explain what they have painted and most name the colours they have used. They sustain interest when using their fingers and hands to draw shapes and make patterns. Opportunities to print and make collages further promote their creativity. Imaginative role-play takes place not only in the classroom, but also when playing outside.
76. Opportunities for children in both classes to engage in musical activities are less well planned. Too few instruments are readily available for children spontaneously to pick up and play. As a result they have little knowledge of the names of instruments or how they are used to create sounds. Opportunities to sing traditional songs and nursery rhymes are satisfactory. The children could name and sing the introductions to some of their favourite rhymes, such as 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star'. They also enjoy singing with older pupils in the hall. Whilst they have some difficulty recalling the words, they have a good recall of the tunes and can join in clapping to a chorus. They all enjoy listening to pupils in Years 1 and 2 practising popular hymns and songs, such as 'Peace is Flowing Like a River' and 'Thank You, Lord, for this New Day.'

77. Throughout the day, children in both classes engage in opportunities to play with small world toys, adapting them to a variety of roles. They develop their competence in using creative tools including scissors, paint brushes and a variety of mark-making instruments. As a result, they are developing confidence to express and communicate their intended ideas, thoughts and feelings through their work.

ENGLISH

78. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, standards attained in reading were well below the national average, but were broadly average in writing. When compared to schools in similar contexts, attainment in reading was average and above average in writing. Overall results in English remain the same as they were at the time of the last inspection.
79. The 2001 National Curriculum test results for pupils at the end of Year 6 were well below the national average in English. When compared to the results of schools in similar contexts, pupils' attainment was broadly average. Over the last five years, results have fluctuated considerably but overall, results in English have fallen since the time of the last inspection. This is attributable to the differing ability levels in cohorts; at present, the school has a very high percentage of pupils with special educational needs in Year 6.
80. The school has worked very hard since the last inspection and pupils make satisfactory progress overall. This is due to the quality of teaching and to the schools' use of assessment information. The school has put assessment procedures in place and these are used well to identify the learning needs of pupils. The school has focused on writing, to develop pupils' skills in various styles. Individual and group targets are set for pupils. Marking is not applied consistently throughout the school but, where it is used correctly, it is effective in helping pupils to achieve their targets. Early indications from the school's own analysis point to standards being maintained at the end of Year 2 and a dip in standards at the end of Year 6, as that cohort contains an unusually high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Taking into account all of these contributory factors, the overall progress of pupils through the junior phase has been at least satisfactory. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.
81. Inspection evidence from lessons, from pupils' work in books and on display and from discussion with pupils, shows that currently satisfactory standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing are achieved in Years 1 and 2 and that in Years 3 to 6, pupils' standards are below the national average. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6. This includes pupils with special educational needs and those having English as an additional language, who are all given good support in lessons.
82. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are given many opportunities for speaking and listening. They express their ideas clearly and listen well to others. All engage readily in conversation about their work. In a Year 1/2 reading session, pupils talked confidently about the characters in 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff' and sequenced the story through drama. Junior pupils talk about a range of topics and respond sensitively to their classmates' ideas. They organised their thoughts to express precisely what they wanted to say; for example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils used appropriate expressions and word choices to explain what the 'Iron Man' is thinking at various stages of the story. Pupils in Year 5/6 demonstrated their ability to use expressive language when they acted out the myth of Pandora's Box in an assembly. Progress for all groups of pupils is good.
83. Pupils' achievement in reading is good. Those who have special educational needs achieve standards that are appropriate in relation to their prior learning and make good progress. Guided reading is used effectively in the infant phase and there is a good match of texts to pupils' prior attainment and developing expertise. Skills such as the recognition and articulation of letter sounds are developing well and help pupils to tackle unfamiliar text. Some pupils recognise the features of fiction and non-fiction text and know how to use the contents and index sections to find information. All take reading books home regularly. By the end of Year 2, pupils talk about the plot and characters of a story and can predict what will happen next.

84. By the end of Year 6, some pupils read fluently and show satisfactory levels of comprehension. They can recall what they have read and their skills of inference and deduction are developing satisfactorily. Pupils state their preference for favourite books and authors and justify their views. They extend their reading by borrowing from the class libraries. They understand the library classification system and can locate information effectively and efficiently. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress, due to the quality of teaching and positive attitudes fostered by the school.
85. In the infant phase, pupils practise writing in logically sequenced sentences. They apply their knowledge of letter sounds effectively when spelling simple words. By the end of Year 2, writing is becoming well structured. Capital letters and full stops are used to demarcate sentences. A few pupils use speech, question and exclamation marks and their writing tasks include stories and factual exercises. In Year 1/2, pupils used speech marks and speech bubbles to help them identify what a character in 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff' is saying. When writing, pupils are beginning to use longer sentences and connecting words. Handwriting is becoming well formed and legible.
86. In the junior phase, pupils begin to write imaginatively. They experiment in writing in different genres, including poetry. Most pupils have a secure grasp of basic grammar and punctuation. In Year 3, pupils wrote their own myth on the birth of a rainbow. In Year 4, pupils developed their ability to write a short description by writing about the 'Happy Families' card game characters and their belongings, using apostrophes. Pupils in Year 5 read a short passage from 'Odysseus and the Cyclops', and changed it into a passage with direct speech, using powerful verbs for 'said'. In Year 6, pupils understood the Haiku form and wrote their own Haiku poem entitled 'Autumn'.
87. Most pupils spell accurately and use the thesaurus and dictionaries well. Pupils have a developing style of handwriting and begin to pay attention to the presentation of their work.
88. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual programmes of learning are used to plan work and pupils have additional support to help them meet their targets. The quality of this support is very high. Their rate of progress is at least equal to that of their peers and they show levels of competence expected for their ages.
89. The Literacy Hour has been successfully implemented in the school. The quality of teaching is mainly satisfactory, with examples of good, very good and excellent practice seen. In the better lessons seen, the high quality of teaching makes a direct, positive impact on pupils' learning, resulting in improving standards in these classes. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and use it effectively to plan and prepare lessons. This careful planning ensures that tasks are matched to pupils' prior learning and are set at appropriately differentiated levels. Resources are used effectively to support pupil's learning and time is never wasted. However, in some classes, teachers' subject knowledge is weaker and lessons are not as well planned. Expectations of pupils' learning are inconsistent. In some classes, expectations are low; the nature of the work planned and the pace of the lesson are sometimes insufficiently demanding. Resources are not always used to good effect and often time is wasted. Marking also is inconsistent; where it is good, detailed comments point the way forward for pupils and congratulatory remarks are specifically related to pupils' targets, so that they know how well they are progressing. Information gathered from regular assessments is used to track each individual's progress and to ensure that all are achieving what their teachers expect. Prompt action is taken where necessary.
90. The drive towards higher attainment in English is managed very well by the co-ordinator. Detailed, accurate analysis of pupils' test results shows what pupils know and what they need to learn next. The work set ensures good rates of progress in the infant phase and at least satisfactory progress in the junior phase. All pupils have personal targets in English that are shared with parents and are regularly reviewed. The success of the strategy is slowly being seen in the increased numbers of pupils reaching Level 4 over the Years. However, there is room to improve attainment further at the higher Level 5 in writing. The co-ordinator produces appropriate action plans and tackles issues as they arise. She has an informed action plan for future developments.

She has worked very hard in the short time she has been at the school, particularly developing assessment procedures and an analysis of learning to enable the school to focus on priority areas in English.

91. The use of information technology to support learning is developing well, especially in the application of word processing. This is seen clearly in a display of pupils' writing taken from the writing competition held in school each year and in an exercise where pupils had word processed their factual accounts of the story of the caterpillar and sequenced them. Resources for English are good. All books are stored very carefully and easily accessed. The quality and range of reading books in class libraries are good and well chosen to meet pupils' tastes. All books are coded into bands, which pupils understand and therefore access easily. Book monitors look after the books efficiently in the younger library and the one situated next to the older classes. The non-fiction library is fully classified according to the Dewey system and pupils from Years 3 to 6 use it for research purposes. The school has spent a large amount of money renewing the books, to enhance the quantity and quality of pupils' reading material.

MATHEMATICS

92. On the basis of 2001 national test results based on average National Curriculum points scores, attainment was in line with the national average at the end of the infant phase. The percentage of pupils obtaining Level 2, the expected level, was average; the proportion obtaining the higher Level 3 at the end of the infant phase was also broadly in line with the national average. Pupils' performance in the end of the infant phase mathematics test was well above average in comparison with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. The average attainment of pupils in the three years, 1999 to 2001, was nearly one term below the national average in the tests for seven year olds. The performance of girls was higher than that of boys in the end of infant phase tests over the last three years; on average, they were one term ahead.
93. In the 2001 national tests at the end of the junior phase, pupils' attainment in terms of points scores was well below the national average. The proportion of pupils obtaining Level 4, the expected level nationally, was broadly average, but the proportion reaching the higher Level five was well below average. When compared with pupils from schools of a similar type, standards were below average. The performance of boys has been less good than that of girls over the last three years, but this is less pronounced than in the infant phase. An analysis of the performance of those pupils who took their national tests aged seven in 1998, and then went on to take their tests in 2001 as eleven year olds, showed that generally they had made satisfactory progress and that they had achieved satisfactorily.
94. For the current groups of pupils, evidence from the lessons observed, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils indicate that attainment is average at the end of the infant phase and below average by the time pupils leave the school at the end of the junior phase. The reason for the difference between previous, less good, test results at the end of the junior phase and inspection findings is that pupil mobility has not been quite as great for the current cohort, which does, however, include a high proportion of pupils having special educational needs.
95. Within the range of mathematics work seen during the inspection, many pupils in the infant phase demonstrate a satisfactory level of attainment related to investigative mathematics and number. Pupils in the junior phase do *not* have sufficiently good knowledge of their multiplication tables, because they are not practised in class with sufficient regularity. This *really* hinders standards of attainment in other areas of mathematics. Pupils aged eleven recognise acute, obtuse and reflex angles and construct such angles accurately. Pupils are encouraged to use correct mathematical vocabulary throughout the school and this is a strength in mathematics at Castercliff. They are reasonably adept at developing their own strategies when solving problems in their heads and explain why they have chosen a particular method. Pupils aged seven are appropriately familiar with number patterns, including patterns of 2s and those of 5s. They generally understand division. There was no discernible difference in the performance of girls and boys in the lessons seen, which is at odds with national test results. However, some teachers neglected opportunities in lessons to have rapid mental mathematics sessions, which is the type of work to which boys often respond very well because of the instant feedback they receive.

Standards in mathematics currently match those at the time of the last inspection for pupils at the end of the infant phase, but are lower at the end of the junior phase. The junior phase, in particular, has a much higher incidence of pupils having special educational needs than at the time of the last inspection. To raise standards of attainment further in the junior phase, there is a need to continue the work of building up a coherent mathematical vocabulary, and to ensure that all pupils have immediate recall of their multiplication tables, by making sure that all classes practise them regularly. Current procedures are not good enough.

96. Overall, learning of pupils in mathematics is good in the infant phase and satisfactory in the junior phase; this includes those pupils having special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Factors aiding progress include the good attitudes and the generally satisfactory behaviour of the pupils and the overall good standard of teaching. The teaching observed was excellent in two of the eleven lessons seen, very good in two lessons, good in four lessons and satisfactory in the other three. The features that made the two best lessons excellent, and contributed to a very high rate of learning, were high and appropriate levels of challenge on the part of the teachers, coupled with a brisk pace and rigorous use of correct mathematical vocabulary. Such lessons had learning objectives that were clearly explained at the outset, which were re-visited in a brief session at the end of the lesson to see how far they had been achieved. In a lesson that was only just satisfactory, however, the teacher did not always have the attention of the entire class; the pace was slow and the lesson was disjointed, because of unsatisfactory class management. The lesson had insufficient challenge. Teachers in most numeracy lessons begin with effective question and answer sessions, to revise previous work and to set pupils thinking. The recently appointed co-ordinator has analysed the latest national test results and has identified areas requiring improvement for other teachers. The use of ICT in the subject is satisfactory as is the level of resources. The headteacher is currently co-ordinating this subject in tandem with the new co-ordinator. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall; with more consistent levels of challenge in the junior phase, it should be better.

SCIENCE

97. The attainment of pupils currently in Year 2 matches national expectations and reflect the recent teacher assessment results. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 because of the good teaching they receive, which harnesses their enthusiasm and inspires them to do well. The emphasis on first-hand investigative experiences is helping them to think for themselves in a practical and scientific way. Pupils apply their skill of scientific enquiry to gain knowledge about life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical forces.
98. The attainment of pupils currently in Year 6 is below national expectations, although it represents an improvement on last year's statutory tests and is part of an improving trend in Years 3 to 6. During the lessons observed during the inspection, there was an emphasis on pupils learning from direct first-hand experience and investigations, although this was not reflected in pupils' previously completed work in some classes. There was an emphasis on an over-directive and prescriptive style of learning, with little opportunity for pupils to work in small groups to develop their knowledge and understanding of the subject through scientific enquiry, in a manner suited to their particular needs. This, coupled with pupil mobility and a large proportion of pupils having special educational needs, is having a detrimental effect on the performance of pupils in the statutory tests. Pupils' learning is satisfactory, however, and the school has succeeded in maintaining the standards identified in the previous inspection.
99. By Year 2, pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of living things, materials and forces and can follow a line of enquiry confidently by observing, predicting and classifying. In a Year 1/2 lesson, pupils knew that electricity could be stored in batteries and could be used in their everyday lives. Higher attaining pupils in the class could construct a circuit and knew that the correct connections had to be made to make the bulb light, whilst lower attaining pupils needed adult supervision to complete their circuits. In Years 3 to 6, pupils develop their scientific understanding and knowledge of predicting, observing and recording accurately. Pupils in a Year 4 lesson, for example, had a sound understanding of how different materials could insulate an ice cube, with higher attaining pupils realising that the thickness and absorption of a material were a key factor in keeping the ice cube cold.

Lower attaining pupils in the class needed adult guidance to realise that the thickness of a material had an effect on keeping the ice cube cold. In a Year 6 class, pupils were learning how the earth rotates to create night and day. Higher attaining pupils could use a plastic ball and torch successfully to show the change from day to night. Lower attaining pupils needed guidance to understand this process.

100. The overall quality of teaching observed in the inspection was good. The teachers use their good subject knowledge effectively, planning lessons with clear learning objectives that are shared with pupils in lessons. Pupils are actively involved in their own learning, particularly when engaged in group activity. All teachers use open-ended questioning and intervention that makes pupils think like young scientists and find answers and conclusions about everyday things in a scientific way. This was clearly demonstrated in a Year 4 lesson, when the teacher moved around different groups, offering advice and suggestions to pupils when they were observing which materials kept the ice cube coldest. Because pupils were engaged in practical activities, the lessons proceeded at a good pace. They worked productively and made good gains in their learning. Resources are used well in lessons; for example, a range of batteries, bulbs and holders were used effectively in a Year 1/2 lesson. Pupils use equipment safely and with respect and have due regard to the effect that their actions have on others. They enjoy working together and have a good rapport with their teachers. All pupils have positive attitudes towards their work in science, including those with special educational needs and those having English as an additional language. In all lessons seen, pupils were generally well behaved and keen to participate.
101. The leadership and management of the subject are sound. The co-ordinator monitors planning on a half-termly basis and has undertaken teaching observations in the junior phase classes. There is a policy and scheme of work, which reflect national initiatives, and assessment procedures are being trialled across the school, and will be in place at the start of the next school year. Science makes a positive contribution to pupils' moral and social development in lessons. For example, in a Year 1/2 lesson, pupils collaborated well in their groups when discussing what made a complete circuit, using batteries and bulbs. The effective use and development of vocabulary such as 'electricity', 'circuit', 'insulate' and 'axis', and the encouragement given to the pupils to use their speaking and listening skills well, make a positive contribution to the development of literacy overall. An analysis of last years National Curriculum test results has been undertaken and the data obtained has been used to plan both class targets and individual targets for pupils. Resources for the subject are adequate and are accessible to all teaching staff. Although information and communication technology is used to support learning in some science lessons, there is not yet a consistent approach to this across the school.

ART AND DESIGN

102. By the age of seven, pupils' work in art is satisfactory, including that of pupils with special educational needs and of those having English as an additional language. Pupils make satisfactory progress through the school and, by the time they are eleven, they maintain satisfactory standards of work, although they make best progress and achieve highest standards in painting and drawing.
103. Through cross-curricular links with other subjects, pupils are provided with good opportunities to observe objects and record their observations, using pencil, crayons, felt pens, chalk and charcoal. The range of work promotes the development of all skills associated with the subject systematically. Pupils' ability to appraise and evaluate their work is good. One art lesson was observed in Years 1/2 during the period of the inspection. Judgements, therefore, also take into account evidence gained from an evaluation of teachers' planning, school documents, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussion with staff and pupils.
104. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 explore the media of paint and pastels by mixing colours, examining texture and application, using a variety of tools including brushes of various sizes and shapes, their hands and simple shapes for printing. They use paint and collage to illustrate various themes and as part of many other subjects. To illustrate their work in religious education they painted pictures of harvest baskets and created their own designs based upon Islamic patterns.

They have studied the work of well-known artists, including Van Gogh, and produced their own work by replicating his style. Pupils have sketch books, which are beginning to be used effectively and which link what pupils produce in art lessons to preparatory work, such as testing the effects of different types of pencil, crayon or shade matching. Throughout Years 1 and 2, pupils show respect for and pride in their work especially when it is displayed in the corridor and in their classrooms. Several pupils in Year 2 were especially proud of their 'Winter' collage, which was on display in the school hall.

105. Within Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of the subject. However, the progress they make is erratic and the standard of work they achieve is not consistent. This is because not all teachers have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the subject to teach it well. Pupils make the best progress in painting and drawing and because of this they achieve better than average standards of work. For example, pupils in Year 6 evaluated Missouri Jenkins' work, 'Spring in New England', and used it as a stimulus for creating their own pictures. They were able to capture both the perspective and compositional details accurately, mix colours to match the originals by combining two or three colours together and use a variety of brush strokes to create texture and effect. Younger pupils study the work of artists such as Mondrian and Matisse when they prepare to develop their own skills of appliqué. By doing so, they develop an understanding of overlaying materials as a basis of the technique. They evaluate the properties of different fabrics and how they can be utilised in their own craftwork.
106. Pupils talk positively about their art lessons and behave well. Older pupils are eager to discuss their work and are confident about suggesting ways in which they could improve it. They are familiar with explaining and discussing different techniques. In discussion, Year 6 pupils recalled a range of work they had enjoyed as they progressed through the school. Most particularly they enjoyed painting and evidence was found to suggest all pupils gained valuable experience from working in watercolour. In the Year 1/2 lesson observed, pupils enjoyed the practical activities, concentrated on what they were being taught, and took care of their own and other's work. They talked enthusiastically with each other whilst working and showed a pride in having their work praised and admired by their teacher and other adults helping in the class.
107. The overall standard of teaching is satisfactory, but varies from good to unsatisfactory. Over time, some teachers do not always place enough emphasis upon teaching skills, knowledge and understanding of artistic techniques, but more upon using art as an activity related to other subjects. This is more evident in classes where teachers are less confident in their own artistic expertise. However, great importance is attached to celebrating pupils' achievements by displaying their day-to-day efforts sensitively and creatively. Examples of high quality work produced by the pupils are well annotated and clearly attributable to individuals within classes.
108. Informal systems are in place for monitoring classroom practice. Very good portfolios of pupils' work have been compiled by the co-ordinator, to inform teachers about standards and to assist them in planning for the development of skills, knowledge and understanding. The use of assessment informs curriculum planning to ensure continuity and progression and breadth and balance of experience. Most teachers are making good use of the guidance provided in the national planning document as the basis for their lessons. Opportunities for art to contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils are well used, but more use could be made of visiting artists, especially from non-western cultures, to add variety to pupils' learning experiences. The co-ordinator is aware of the value and importance of using sketchbooks and this practice is now established throughout the school.
109. Since the time of the last inspection, the school has made good progress in sensitively monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and in assessing the quality of work that pupils produce. Emphasis has been placed upon developing a consistent, thorough and rigorously implemented assessment system. The very good leadership and management by the co-ordinator for the subject, who is very knowledgeable and highly skilled, have been instrumental in bringing about these improvements. She is aware of the need to support less confident colleagues and help them to develop their own expertise within the subject, so that all pupils benefit from good quality teaching and learning opportunities. Resources are satisfactory, as is the application of information and communication technology to the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

110. Standards of pupils' work at the age of seven are in line with national expectations. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those having English as an additional language, make steady progress. However, by the time pupils are aged eleven, the standard of work they achieve is lower than expected for their age and their progress has been slow. Pupils with special educational needs make swifter progress, in relation to their prior attainment, because of the additional support they receive. Four design and technology lessons were observed during the inspection therefore judgements take into account a range of other evidence available in the school. Since the last inspection, improvements have, nonetheless, been satisfactory overall.
111. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve average standards in the work they produce in their lessons. In both year groups, the teaching promotes and encourages the pupils to create their own designs and evaluate the success of their ideas. Pupils gain skills in making choices about materials, giving reasons as to their suitability for a purpose. A good example of this was observed during the inspection when pupils tasted a wide variety of bread before deciding which they liked best and which they would use to make their own sandwiches. Some liked the taste of croissants, but did not feel they would taste as nice if filled with their favourite sandwich filling of chicken paste. Throughout Years 1 and 2, the standard of pupils' work, whilst satisfactory, could be even better if teachers commented more constructively when evaluating their work.
112. In spite of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 being broadly satisfactory, pupils are not achieving high enough standards of work. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, pupils who were designing money containers could generate ideas and recognise basic features about the product. However, when asked, they could not clarify their ideas about choosing suitable tools, equipment or materials. They produced labelled sketches, but did not have the opportunity to test these by making a model or prototype for the finished article. Similarly, in a Year 5/6 lesson, where the pupils were investigating how they could construct greetings cards with movable parts, they could assemble, join and combine paper components having watched the teacher's demonstration. They were less successful in generating their own ideas, or their own designs as they progressed, considering the end use of the product.
113. Pupils enjoy the practical aspects of the subject. They work together safely and sensibly. When given the opportunity, older pupils discuss their work objectively and offer and receive help willingly, whilst being sensitive as to how they discuss the work of others in the class. Their limited experiences mean that in discussion about their work, they are not confident in suggesting improvements. They do not know how to use features such as electrical components, information and communication technology control or mouldable materials.
114. Pupils are not achieving high enough standards of work because they are not always taught the basic skills they require. Since the last inspection, the level of resources for the subject has improved and the school has adopted a national policy document to help teachers plan their lessons. Design and technology appears as part of the planned curriculum on class timetables, but there are no regular monitoring procedures in place to ensure that lessons take place or that pupils produce satisfactory standards of work. The subject is not as well led or managed as it could be. In particular, insufficient help has been made available for those teachers who lack expertise in the subject. Also, there are no assessment procedures in place, so there is no information for teachers to use to help them plan what they are going to teach next and why. Too little use is made of information and communication technology to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

115. Pupils' attainment in Year 2 and Year 6 matches the national expectations for both subjects. This maintains the standards identified during the previous inspection and the school has made satisfactory improvement in both subjects. Due to timetabling arrangements during the inspection, it was only possible to see a limited number of lessons in both subjects.

Judgments about attainment in both subjects are supported by the scrutiny of pupils' previously completed work, a review of teachers' planning and discussion with the subject co-ordinators, teachers and pupils. In most lessons seen during the inspection, there was a clear focus on developing the key skills associated with both subjects. However, the scrutiny of previously completed work reveals that this is not consistent practice. Pupils' previously completed work revealed an over-prescriptive approach used by some teachers, with little opportunity for pupils to develop their research skills, and the use of extended writing when recording their findings. Throughout the school, pupils' achievement over time is satisfactory, including that of pupils with special educational needs and of those having English as an additional language.

116. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop a sound understanding of the passage of time and can distinguish between the past and present. For example, in work previously completed by pupils in Year 1/2 class, they identified objects that are more than a hundred years old, such as a Roman coin, a brooch and a button hook; they could describe how old toys appeared by using words like 'dull', 'shabby' and 'torn'. Pupils' geographical skills are developed by using aerial photographs of the school, which help in developing their understanding of human activity. This was seen in a Year 1/2 lesson, when pupils could identify features on the aerial photograph and transfer them on to a sketch map they were producing.
117. Between Years 3 and 6, pupils build appropriately on the skills they have acquired in both subjects. For example, in a Year 5/6 lesson, pupils were learning about the nature of deserts and where they are located. Higher attaining pupils in the class could use an atlas and key to identify world deserts, such as the Arabian and Turkestan deserts, whilst lower attaining pupils needed adult support in locating a particular desert on a map. Pupils in the junior phase also develop their understanding of how a particular environment affects the type of housing found there and the types of materials used to construct the houses. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils knew the reasons why the housing found in Nelson is different from homes found in Peru. Higher attaining pupils in the class could describe a 'rain forest house' of Peru, comparing it to houses in their particular neighbourhood.
118. The development of historical skills is continued in the junior phase classes when they study a number of themes to enhance their understanding of past civilizations. For example, in previously completed work, Year 6 pupils have undertaken work on the Victorian period and have written accounts of what it was like to be a chimney sweep. They have also studied pastimes of the Ancient Greeks and how they were played. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils undertook a detailed study of the life of Henry VIII, from his birth in 1491 until his death in 1547. Higher attaining pupils in the class, having researched Henry VIII's life independently, could give detailed information of his birth at Greenwich Palace, his six marriages, his quarrel with the Pope and his death in January, 1547. Lower attaining pupils needed adult guidance in compiling their sentences about Henry, after researching both his life and reign.
119. Pupils have positive attitudes to their work in history and geography. They are keen to share their work and celebrate the achievements of other pupils, as seen in a Year 4 history lesson. Both subjects make a positive contribution to the development of literacy, as pupils use appropriate vocabulary such as 'features' and 'environment' in geography and 'power' and 'court' in history, and are encouraged to use their speaking and listening skills extensively in lessons. The teaching of geography and history also makes a positive contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development, with visits to Marsden Park for field work and to the local area of Nelson to look at housing in geography, and visits to Goldthorpe Hall and Wigan Pier as part of their history work.
120. The overall quality of teaching seen in both subjects is satisfactory, with some lessons judged to be of good quality. All teachers use their secure subject knowledge to plan work that holds pupils' attention and interest well. This was clearly demonstrated in a Year 4 history lesson on Henry VIII, in which the teacher's initial explanation interested the pupils and stimulated learning, which was then developed in different group activities about the important events of this period. Teachers also use questioning and intervention well to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding about both subjects. For instance, in a Year 1/2 geography lesson, the teacher moved around different groups in the class, offering suggestions as to how pupils might approach their work on creating sketch maps from aerial photographs.

At the end of lessons, teachers use their plenary sessions effectively to sum up and reinforce what the pupils had learnt in their activities. All adults managed the pupils well in the lessons seen. This helps to build positive relationships between staff and pupils, which in turn enables the pupils to learn well. Although the teaching staff use information and communication technology to support learning in the two subjects, there is not yet a consistent approach to this across the school.

121. Both subjects are led and managed satisfactorily. Policies and schemes of work which reflect national guidance are in place for each subject. Planning is monitored by both co-ordinators and both have undertaken lesson observations to evaluate whether pupils' learning is continuous and progressive. Currently, there are no assessment procedures in place for both subjects, but the school intends to have them operating for both subjects by the next school year. Resources for both subjects are adequate - the school is well resourced with maps - and are accessible to staff. The school uses the local environment and library loan service to support pupils' learning effectively.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

122. Attainment both at the end of the infant phase and of the junior phase meets national expectations; this is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be below national expectations. By the end of the infant phase, pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) to assemble text linking with their work in literacy; for example, they produce a description of a given object or person, which others then have to identify. They are adept at changing font size, cutting and pasting. By the end of the junior phase, pupils use the Internet to access required information confidently, using their 'favourites' list. They have an appropriate range of ICT vocabulary and use hypertext and hyperlinks appropriately for rapid access to information, as they were seen to do in work in geography about regions of the world. Overall, cross-curricular links are satisfactory. Pupils' work on control, monitoring and modelling is being developed appropriately.
123. Learning is satisfactory in both key stages, for all pupils, including those having special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. It was possible to see three lessons in this subject, two of which were taught very well, one being taught satisfactorily. The school makes efficient use of its new ICT suite; all classes are timetabled for one session each week there, although a disadvantage is that the suite can only comfortably take half-classes. A further disadvantage is that the computers are not networked to the computers in the classrooms, thus preventing work begun in the suite from being completed in class. Some of the computers in the classrooms are out-dated. Assessment is not yet used effectively to monitor pupils' progress in this subject.
124. Pupils' response is very good. They are very interested in this subject and work hard in practising their skills. They work co-operatively, demonstrating good relationships, and they respect the equipment they are using.
125. The co-ordinator for this subject has only recently been appointed to this post. He has not yet had time to monitor and evaluate the work of colleagues throughout the school. There is a satisfactory and appropriate range of cross-curricular software. Improvements have been made since the last inspection in terms of the hardware available, with the new ICT suite.

MUSIC

126. All the lessons observed during the inspection were in Years 1 to 2. Through discussions with teachers and pupils, looking at planning, attending assemblies and listening to pupils sing, it is apparent that the school provides a satisfactory programme of work and that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those having English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress. Inspection evidence shows that attainment is in line with national expectations for pupils aged eleven and above national expectations for pupils aged seven. Since the last inspection, the school has improved standards for pupils by the time they are seven and has maintained standards for pupils aged eleven.

The school has developed a scheme of work in line with national guidance, which supports planning, teaching and learning effectively.

127. By the end of Year 2, pupils begin to use their voices expressively when singing. They develop their skills by singing loudly, quietly, high and low. They enjoy listening to music and express their likes and dislikes, using a developing musical vocabulary. Pupils learn to sing simple songs from memory, use their voices confidently in a variety of ways and learn to modify tempo when playing musical instruments. Pupils use their 'thinking' voice to improve their performance of known songs such as 'Chick-a-boom'. In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to build upon the good musical foundations established in Years 1 and 2. They begin to understand that music, like pictures, can describe images and moods. A display in a Year 4 class, in which pupils had responded to music through drawing, illustrated this very well. Pupils showed a good understanding that artists and composers both create a response to a musical pattern, such as Fleetwood Mac's 'The Albatross' and 'Central Park in the Dark' In a Year 5/6 class, pupils listened to 'The Planets' by Gustav Holst and linked this into their science topic on the planets, a good example of cross-curricular linking. Music is used in Year 6 to create a calm learning environment, and this was appreciated by pupils.
128. The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good. Pupils make good gains in their knowledge and skills in interpreting, performing and composing. The teachers' good understanding of the subject, based on a scheme of work that gives confidence to non-specialists, ensures that pupils are becoming confident musicians by the age of seven. Pupils' attitudes to music are good and they behave well in lessons. There is skilled management of pupils, a fast pace to activities and plenty of variety. Planning indicates that teachers in Years 3 to 6 have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subject and provide pupils with stimulating and interesting lessons. This was seen in Year 6 planning, where the teacher expected pupils to learn to explain what a lyric is and to tell from the lyrics what the writer is describing; for example, the mood or story.
129. Peripatetic teachers visit the school to provide additional expertise and tuition to those pupils who choose to take part.
130. Music is incorporated into seasonal performances. Each year the school takes part in the local musical festival, where recorder and guitar groups and the choir perform with other schools. This is part of a one-week festival of drama and music. Visiting artists, such as a theatre group, send songs for pupils to learn and then to take part in performing them. A brass section brought instruments into school for pupils to explore. Music note-books are used to record pupils' compositions, but their use is not consistent across the school. The co-ordinator works hard to maintain standards and provides support for colleagues. She has monitored some planning, but has not yet monitored teaching and learning. Assessment is in its early stages and varies in quality from class to class. Resources are satisfactory; no use of information and communication technology relating to music was seen during the inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

131. The physical education lessons observed during the inspection were games and dance activities. Discussions with the co-ordinator, teachers and pupils, and an analysis of teachers' planning, show that the school provides a balanced programme of physical education lessons that meets national requirements. Pupils learn to play games, participate in athletics and gymnastics activities and respond to music through dance. Pupils in Year 5 attend the local pool in Colne, and most pupils in Year 6 can swim 25 metres by the time they leave school. Pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity to undertake adventurous games on residential visits to the outdoor education centre at Whitehough.
132. Pupils' attainment is as expected nationally in Years 2 and 6. Throughout the school, pupils of all abilities achieve well in this subject. They develop skills and perform with increasing competence in the activities offered to them. They have a clear understanding of the effects of exercise on their bodies. This was clearly demonstrated in a Year 1 and 2 dance lesson, when pupils used every part of their bodies in the warm-up before starting their dance activity. The school has maintained the standards identified in the previous inspection and has made satisfactory improvement.

133. Pupils in the five to eight age-range respond to music creatively through dance and movement. For example, in a Year 1/2 lesson, pupils could respond to music using movements and gesture to create large and small balloon shapes. Higher attaining pupils in the class could express themselves fluently, combining movements and gestures in rhythm, whilst lower attaining pupils needed adult reassurance and supervision. As pupils move into the eight to eleven age-range, they develop the skills they have already acquired. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils could interpret the characters of Denis the Menace and Minnie the Minx. Pupils used facial expression to help create the authentic movements of the characters, with higher attaining pupils having the ability to vary their dance movements in relation to the details of the story. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils developed their skills of controlling and passing a ball with their feet. Higher attaining pupils could dribble, control and pass the ball confidently. Pupils in this age group gain a good experience of a wide range of sports and many compete successfully in school and in competitive tournaments in the local area.
134. The quality of teaching is good overall and was outstanding in a junior phase lesson. All teaching staff use their secure understanding of the subject to plan activities that are progressively more demanding as the lesson proceeds. This effectively challenges the pupils, who become enthusiastic participants, co-operating well and displaying good attitudes to the subject. They listen attentively because they want to do well and they know that they are going to be asked to evaluate each other's performance, as in a Year 5/6 games lesson. All lessons begin and end in an orderly manner and include appropriate warm-up and cool-down activities. Teachers provide good role models for pupils by dressing appropriately and showing real enthusiasm for physical activity. All teachers give clear instructions and explanations and encourage pupils to develop their skills in activities. This was clearly demonstrated in the outstanding lesson in which the teacher planned activities that developed very successfully the pupils' skills of responding to music and story through dance movements. All lessons are well planned and structured to show progression in a safe working environment. The teachers have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and the pupils' respond well to these, by working safely and following instructions well.
135. The subject makes a positive contribution to the pupils' moral and social development. When they play team games, they develop a sense of competitiveness and fair play. Teachers also make good use of opportunities for pupils to develop and practise their speaking and listening skills in lessons. For example, in a Year 5/6 games lesson, pupils were encouraged to evaluate the work of fellow pupils and give reasons why they had formed that particular opinion. A wide range of extra sporting activities is provided for all boys and girls in the school. These include netball, soccer, tag rugby, country dancing and cricket. These activities are well organised by members of staff and are well attended by the pupils.
136. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. There is a policy and scheme of work, which follows national guidance. The co-ordinator monitors planning on a half-termly basis, to ensure that pupils' learning is continuous and progressive and has undertaken lesson observations of classes in both the infant and junior phase classes. Although teachers assess pupils' work in lessons, there are currently no formal whole school assessment procedures in place. They are currently being formulated and the school intends to introduce them in the next school year. Resources for the subject are adequate and include a hall, playground area and a large grassed area, which are used to provide an interesting and well-planned curriculum.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

137. Standards in religious education are average and reflect the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus by the end of Year 2 and of Year 6. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress in their understanding of Christianity and in their ability to discuss issues and empathise with others. They also make satisfactory progress in gaining knowledge about other world religions. Overall, standards have been maintained since the last inspection. This is the result of the school's decision to focus on developing the Agreed Syllabus scheme of work, to improve the planning of the subject and the assessment of pupils' progress. However, the standards of work produced by pupils in Year 6 at the time of the inspection were not as good as those of other pupils in the school. Pupils in Year 6 are not making sufficient progress in their knowledge and understanding of the subject.

138. By the end of Year 2, the pupils recognise the importance and value of friends. They list the qualities they would like in a friend. They develop a good sense of community and recognise the value of belonging to organisations and groups. They are familiar with Bible stories such as the Good Samaritan and Noah's Ark and understand well that there are special events recorded in this 'special' book. They are familiar with the story of the Creation and have recorded each day's events using a pie chart. They have learned about the festivals of Christmas and Easter and their importance to Christians. All pupils know Jesus is an important and powerful person. They were also able to name others who come into the same category and these included their headteacher. Although they have studied Islam, few could remember many facts about it except that women and girls painted patterns on their hands for special occasions, such as a wedding.
139. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of stories about Jesus and how to use the Bible to extract information about Him. Some are aware of the Ten Commandments, are able to talk about their own 'special rules' and extend this to thinking about the ways in which they can make their own lives peaceful and positive. They know some of the major stories from the Old Testament. Their understanding of other world religions is unsatisfactory. Whilst they talk superficially about Buddhism, there is some confusion about the other major world faiths, especially Sikhism and Islam. Some pupils did not volunteer opinions in discussion about world issues, such as war and racism, and were not sufficiently confident to share their own personal experiences. The developing links between religious education and personal and social education are, however, helping to raise pupils' awareness of the importance of religion and faiths in a multicultural society.
140. The pupils' attitudes to the subject are satisfactory. Most pupils are keen to participate in classroom discussions and happy to share their feelings and thoughts with other members of the class and their teacher. They usually listen well to different points of view. An example of this was seen in a Year 4 lesson, where the teacher gave pupils good opportunities to discuss the release of Barabbas by Pilate. Many could argue the injustice of releasing a murderer in preference to Jesus, just because Jesus had upset some powerful people who did not like Him.
141. The quality of teaching throughout the school is satisfactory. The majority of teachers try to present work in an interesting manner and often have high expectations of the pupils. In some classes, the good management of the pupils enables them to participate well in class discussions and to learn from each other's experiences. Lessons are usually well planned, and the worksheets that pupils are given are designed effectively to promote a variety of responses. Marking of pupils' work is not sufficiently thorough, especially in Years 3 and 6, and progress is harder to measure because worksheets are not always dated. Little unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection but, over time, some pupils are not taught as well as others. A minority of teachers are not sufficiently confident of their knowledge and understanding of the subject to present their lessons in an imaginative way, so pupils may not be motivated to do their best.
142. The recently appointed subject leader is committed to continuing to raise standards. Through the scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning, she intends to gain a good grasp of the strengths of the subject and the areas for development. Opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching across the school through lesson observation are planned for the future. She is aware that pupils would be helped to gain a greater understanding of other religions if they were able to visit more places of worship in addition to a Christian church and to talk to more visitors to the school who belong to other world faiths. By assessing pupils' work rigorously, the co-ordinator will be able to help less confident colleagues to use the information to help them plan their future lessons more effectively.