

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **BARDEN JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Burnley

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119260

Headteacher: Mr S Smalley

Reporting inspector: Mr Brian Griffiths  
2607

Dates of inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> February 2003

Inspection number: 247985

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Boys and girls
School address:	Able Street Burnley Lancashire
Postcode:	BB10 1QB
Telephone number:	01282 425438
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs P Bennett
Date of previous inspection:	November 1999

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2607	Brian Griffiths	Registered inspector	Science Music Religious Education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9348	Mary LeMage	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 and carers?
30823	Brenda Clarke	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and Design Design and Technology Physical Education Special Educational Needs Educational inclusion English as an additional language	
32568	Tara Kelly	Team inspector	English Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Barden is an average sized community junior school that caters for 220 boys and girls between the ages of seven and eleven years of age. Numbers are lower than when the school was last inspected, largely because of the demolition of some local housing; many houses close to the school are unoccupied due to their poor condition. The school serves an area close to the centre of Burnley, in east Lancashire. Almost 90 per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds, coming from families who originate in Pakistan. This is a much higher proportion of ethnic minority pupils than in most schools. A significant minority of pupils are at an early stage of learning English; many of them come from homes in which the language in use is Urdu, Pushto or Punjabi and this is reflected in their facility with English. Forty-four per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals; this is well above average. There is considerable socio-economic deprivation in the area and the parts closest to the school are in the bottom one per cent of the most deprived areas nationally. Fifty-two pupils are judged by the school to have Special Educational Needs and of these seven have statements of special need; both of these are above average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties with small numbers who are visually or hearing impaired, or with language related difficulties. There are high rates of pupil mobility; in the last school year 30 new pupils enrolled and 22 left to go to other schools. The school is a member of the East Lancashire Excellence Cluster. Attainment on entry is well below average with only a small proportion of higher attainers.

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

This is an effective school. From a low base pupils make good progress in almost all subjects because they are well taught. In a number of subjects they reach the nationally expected levels, or above. More remains to be done in English and mathematics although the school has carefully laid plans to improve these. Substantial improvements have taken place because the headteacher's strong leadership is translated into vigorous action by the hard-working and supportive team of staff and governors. Almost all pupils develop very well as caring young people who understand that the needs and beliefs of others are worthy of respect. Although the expenditure on the school is high, the good progress made both by pupils and the school as a whole ensures that it gives good value for money.

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

- Standards in science have risen fast to reach average levels
- Standards in Information and communication technology have improved considerably to reach nationally expected levels
- Standards are rising in English and mathematics
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning, behave very well and develop very well as increasingly mature members of society
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very well developed
- An interesting and carefully planned curriculum is well taught
- Strong leadership from the top and good management at all levels has brought about major improvements

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

- Standards in English and mathematics need to improve further
- Standards in music are too low
- Better use should be made of the skills of teaching assistants
- The learning needs of pupils whose English skills are least well developed should be assessed and tackled more systematically
- The learning targets of pupils with statements of special educational needs should more often guide the work they are given

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When the school was inspected in November 1999 it was judged to be failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. Substantial improvements were identified during Ofsted follow-up visits in 2000 and these have continued at a good pace. The key improvements to date include:

- Teaching is rigorously monitored; teaching was sound and is now good;
- Standards in ICT are satisfactory;
- Pupils are now grouped in ways that allow more flexible approaches to teaching and learning;
- Teaching support for pupils for whom English is an additional language is better;
- There is more parental support and involvement;
- Improvements have been driven by clear leadership and good management.

Although more remains to be done in these and other areas, the school has a recent good record of improvement and is well placed to take these next steps.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	E	E	E	C
mathematics	E	E	E	C
science	E	E	D	B

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

The well below average English and mathematics scores in recent years are largely a consequence of the less than satisfactory teaching and unsatisfactory progress that were reported at the time of the last inspection. This situation was not fully eradicated until last year's Year 6 were in Year 4. Both they, and this year's Year 6, have made up ground rapidly since 2000, so that the attainment of the current Year 6 continues to improve and is now below average, rather than well below, in both subjects. In both English and mathematics, pupils who joined the school after Year 3 did less well in tests than those who spent the full four years at Barden. Almost all pupils are making good progress. Science test scores began to improve sooner and more rapidly, mainly because pupils respond well to the school's practical, experimental approach. Standards were close to average in 2002 and the current Year 6 is on track to reach nationally expected standards in 2003. This is a very good rate of achievement for these pupils, whose attainment on entry to the school was well below average. In all three subjects pupils are moving at a good rate towards standards that would compare favourably with those in schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. Taken overall, results have improved at a rate that is close to that seen nationally. However, science scores have improved more rapidly. The school sets demanding targets for attainment in English and mathematics. In 2002 these targets were

not met; the attainment of a significant minority of pupils was lower than expected as a result of extended periods of absence.

In religious education pupils reach above the expected standards; good, expert teaching combined with pupils' particularly good attitudes help pupils to make very good progress. Standards in music are below the nationally expected level and the school's recent moves to enrich the curriculum will need to be supported by better resources and improved teacher expertise if they are to result in the planned improvements to standards. In all other subjects (that is in information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, geography and history) pupils make good progress to reach average standards. Attainment is improving largely because a systematic programme to improve teaching is having the desired impact on quality. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their personal learning targets although the progress of statemented pupils slows when the work they are given does not fully match their needs. Potentially higher attainers could do better and the planned improvements to provision for them is timely.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; pupils are interested in the varied activities that they experience and are eager to be involved.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in lessons and around school. This is largely because the school has a very positive attitude to behaviour, constantly stressing and rewarding pupils' good behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Very good; pupils willingly accept increasing responsibilities as they get older. They generously acknowledge the efforts and success of others. Their relationships with adults and other pupils are very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching in over two-thirds of lessons was either good or very good with all of the remaining lessons being soundly taught; one lesson in eight was very well taught. In English, including literacy, mathematics, including numeracy, and science, teaching is good. Teaching is also good in ICT, religious education, and history. In art and design, design and technology, geography, PE and music no judgement is made as too little teaching was observed to do so.

The good teaching ensures that pupils make good progress; it is underpinned in most subjects by teachers' very good knowledge and understanding of the subjects concerned. Good planning ensures that lessons are often supported by good quality learning aids, and learning often moves at a good pace. A particular strength is the very good relationships between adults and pupils that are used to ensure that pupils' behaviour and approach to learning are well-managed and positive. The great majority of pupils benefit from the good teaching, including those for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs. The teaching of statemented pupils is satisfactory although the work

they are given does not always cover the ground outlined in their individual learning plans and on these occasions their learning slows. Teaching assistants make many good contributions to the learning of both groups of pupils but on occasions they work with some who do not need their help as much as some who are not getting it; their contributions are not always sufficiently well co-ordinated.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good; it is enriched by the good range of additional activities including visits and clubs. All pupils are fully included in all that the school provides.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory; pupils receive good support in most lessons although additional help is not always fully or expertly focused on the needs of the pupils who need it most.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good; most pupils benefit considerably from the school's approach; the very small number of pupils at an early stage of learning and using English lack specifically targeted support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good and a major strength of the school. In particular, pupils are genuinely interested in and respectful of the similarities and differences between the ways in which the religious beliefs of people shape their lives
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well; pupils' all round development is very well supported in order to enable pupils to do their best.

Parents have high opinions of the school and many work closely with it in order to support their own children and the school as a whole.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good; the headteacher provides good, clear leadership and he is well supported by other key staff. The school is well managed. Most aspects of the school's work are enhanced because they are well co-ordinated.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well; many governors keep in close touch with the school, know its strengths and weaknesses in accurate detail and make well-informed contributions to its progress. All statutory duties are met, many of them well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good; very careful checks are made on pupils' achievements in key areas so that areas for further improvement are targeted well. Teachers' planning and teaching, especially in important subjects, benefit considerably from very helpful feedback arising from a systematic programme of checking.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Governors have a good grasp of the need to obtain the best value for their efforts and spending and they act prudently at all times.

The school is well staffed with teachers and support assistants who have a good range of skills. Imaginative use is made of the building, which is well kept and attractive. In most subjects there is a good range of learning resources.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children are taught well by teachers who expect them to work hard.</li> <li>• Children enjoy coming to school and progress well.</li> <li>• The school is led and managed well.</li> <li>• It is easy to approach the school with questions or concerns.</li> <li>• Children are helped to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The arrangements for setting homework.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views. The arrangements for homework are satisfactory and in line with national recommendations.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The standards reached by Year 6 pupils in the national tests of 2002 were well below the national average in English and mathematics and below average in science. In English and mathematics these scores were in line with those in schools at which similar proportions of pupils were eligible for free school meals while in science they were above. In English and mathematics, although the proportion reaching the expected Level 4 was close to that seen nationally, too few reached the higher Level 5 and too many could only manage the lower Level 3. A number of potentially higher attaining pupils do not reach the standards of which they are capable. However, the school is developing ways of accelerating their learning and they are beginning to make better progress in many lessons. Pupils who spent the full four years at Barden did almost 10 per cent better in national test than those who arrived later in the Key Stage 2 years. In science pupils did better than in English and mathematics, with the proportion failing to reach the average level being only slightly higher than nationally; too few pupils were able to take the step from average to above for the school overall to match the national average. In recent years boys have reached noticeably lower standards than girls in English, slightly better in mathematics and scores have been similar in science. These differences are not replicated in the current Year 6. .

2. The school sets itself and its pupils targets in the English and mathematics tests that require significant effort to achieve. They are based on the earlier standards reached by pupils but with an extra element of challenge. Last year's targets were not reached. However, a significant number of pupils who under-achieved were absent for a substantial period of time in the run-up to the tests.

3. The judgement of the inspection is that, from a very low base, pupils achieve well to reach below average standards in English and mathematics and average standards in science. Although standards in English and mathematics are below average this is an improvement on previous years, as test scores in both subjects have been well below average since before the inspection of 1999. The improvements are the result of better teaching that, in turn, owes a great deal to a systematic programme of improvement that draws on careful monitoring of teaching and learning. Teachers have used the resultant feedback to ensure that most subjects, but especially literacy and numeracy, are now taught well. Teachers are much more secure in their understanding and effective use of the National Literacy Strategy, which is now a positive feature throughout the school; the insecure knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy that was seen in 1999 has been almost completely eradicated. Science standards have benefited most from improvements to teaching – hence the rise to national average levels. The overall approach to science also has a major impact on standards. Pupils respond very well to the practical and investigative approach; not only do they find this enjoyable – so that they work hard – but many of them understand better when they see a scientific effect than they can by being told about it; many pupils who are at a relatively early stage of learning English respond especially well to the methods in use. In all three subjects the current Year 6 is on track to better the results of similar schools by the end of this year.

4. Most pupils achieve well and reach the nationally expected levels in ICT, art and design, design and technology, geography, history and games. Good teaching and the especially good attitudes of pupils result in standards in religious education being above the expected level. In music, standards are below the national expectation. A new approach is helping standards to improve in Years 3 and 4, but in Years 5 and 6 the improved materials cannot be adopted until later this year and standards therefore are not yet benefiting.

Current teaching of music to older pupils gives too little attention to the underlying skills of the subject. The lack of some learning aids, such as the essential tuned and un-tuned percussion instruments, is also holding back further improvements.

5. On some occasions, small groups of pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable – although all groups make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning through English sometimes struggle to understand difficult ideas in all subjects. Pupils with statements of special educational needs do not have always enough work planned for them that focuses on the needs identified in their individual learning plans and they need more regular personal attention if they are to make better progress. This is in spite of the fact that the great majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress because their learning needs are usually met well.

6. In most subjects standards are set to rise year-on-year. This is largely because teaching in all year groups is good. The pupils who left last year and those who are currently in Year 6 experienced less good teaching when they were in earlier year groups; hard work from staff and pupils has ensured that they have made up much of the lost ground, but pupils in lower classes will not have that to do.

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

7. The very good attitudes, values and personal development of pupils have a positive impact on standards reached. These aspects of the life of the school have improved substantially since the last inspection.

8. Pupils have very good attitudes to all aspects of school life. They almost always approach their work with enthusiasm, showing real interest in the varied range of activities presented to them in lessons. They are eager to take part in all experiences offered, volunteering for a variety of responsibilities and giving good support to the wide range of clubs available to them. In lessons, pupils listen quietly to the teachers and to one another, respecting other people's views and generously acknowledging the good work of their classmates. They show great interest in their work and co-operate very well in groups, spontaneously supporting each other. These very positive attitudes to learning result from the consistently good teaching pupils receive and the interesting ways in which teachers present lessons to the pupils.

9. Pupils' behaviour is very good. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school, respecting one another and remembering good manners at all times. The ethos of the school is consistently to support and reward good standards of behaviour, rather than dwelling on inappropriate behaviour. As a result, when a pupil's behaviour falls below the desired standard in lessons it is swiftly and sensitively addressed without detracting from the lesson. Behaviour in the playground is harmonious. There were no incidents of bullying seen during the inspection, and pupils are adamant that there is no bullying in the school. Nevertheless, they are very aware of the steps to take should bullying occur.

10. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good with mutual respect being very evident between all groups. The quality of relationships is so good that pupils feel completely comfortable speaking out in front of their classmates to say when they do not understand something. All adults in the school provide pupils with consistently good role models, invariably behaving as they would wish pupils to behave. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds learn and play together well. They welcome newcomers and visitors warmly and have a genuine interest in them, always showing politeness and courtesy.

11. The personal development of pupils is very good overall. The ethos of the school, where pupils are encouraged to consider the impact of their actions on others, has a positive effect on their development. Over their time in school, pupils gain in maturity and become increasingly self-disciplined members of the school community. Opportunities for pupils to make choices in their learning and influence the daily life of the school are satisfactory.

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

12. Not only are teaching and learning good overall, but in every year group there is:

- more good teaching than satisfactory teaching;
- some very good teaching;
- no teaching that is less than satisfactory.

13. Over two-thirds of lessons were taught well and one in eight very well. This marks a very significant stride forward since the inspection of 1999, when one lesson in five was not satisfactorily taught, and marks a continuing good rate of improvement since the last Ofsted monitoring visit when just one half of lessons were taught well. The school's progress in this aspect has been achieved through a systematic programme of improvement, founded on rigorous observations of teaching. The subsequent identification and sharing of the strategies seen to be the most successful have helped to promote better learning, good behaviour and better concentration. These factors are playing a very significant part in raising pupils' standards in almost all subjects.

14. A number of key members of staff have helped to create this more consistently good quality teaching and learning. In particular, English, including literacy, mathematics, including numeracy and science have benefited considerably from high quality co-ordination that has considerably enhanced teachers' competence and confidence in their skills. Religious education has also benefited greatly from the sharing of expertise. A carefully planned programme for the future that will involve all subjects, puts the school in a good position to continue to improve.

15. Teaching and learning are of good quality in English, mathematics, science, religious education, information and communication technology and history. In art and design, design and technology and music teaching is sound. Most pupils with special educational needs are taught well; pupils whose needs require individual learning plans are taught satisfactorily although a sharper focus is needed on their personal learning targets if they are to make the best possible progress. The great majority of pupils for whom English is an additional language are taught, and learn, well. Those who are at the earliest stage of learning through English need their learning needs to be identified more precisely and addressed systematically if they are to benefit fully from the otherwise good provision.

16. Many features of teaching are good. However, the most consistently powerful characteristic of the best teaching is the very effective ways in which teachers manage pupils in lessons. Teachers successfully foster very good relationships with pupils; pupils respond by working hard and giving of their best; they concentrate very well and their growing independence ensures that they have the confidence to ask for help when they need it and make imaginative contributions when teachers ask questions. Teachers' good knowledge of the subjects they teach leads to good planning of lessons that in turn ensures that learning aids are used well to help pupils' understanding. The time given to lessons is usually used well, so that pupils very often experience a good mix of listening to teachers' explanations, working practically and writing up what they have learned. A few morning lessons are timetabled to be half an hour long. In practice they are often considerably less than this, and these lessons are sometimes rushed and, for example, too little time is left towards the end of the lesson to revise and consolidate learning. Teaching assistants make many good contributions to pupils' learning. Particularly good work takes place when they

support individuals or small groups during sessions when all pupils are working in groups. In these situations very skilful questioning makes pupils think before they can respond; the individual attention and the warm relationships ensure that pupils try hard and so make good progress. Teaching assistants occasionally have productive roles when the teacher is talking to the whole class but not enough opportunities are made for them to participate in teaching, monitor pupils' levels of understanding or unobtrusively give support to pupils having difficulty in concentrating or understanding. On other occasions they work with pupils whose needs are far less than others who are not getting their help. More systematic use should be made of their wide range of skills.

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

17. The school provides a good curriculum, which meets statutory requirements. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are being successfully implemented and as a result, attainment in English and mathematics has improved steadily. Provision for history, information and communication technology and religious education is particularly good. Subjects are taught separately but many links between subjects, for example mathematics and science, help pupils in both. The short length of some PE, history and music lessons limits the amount of progress made by pupils but this has been recognised and plans are being made to modify the arrangements.

18. Both the organisation and curriculum of the school promote equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. The schools' policy for special educational needs embraces the principles and practice of the national Code of Practice. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory; the great majority of lower attainers are given work that matches their needs but pupils with statements should make better progress; their work does not often enough match their individual learning plans.. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good (this is almost 9 out of 10 pupils, and progress is good) . The school has recently started a register for gifted and talented pupils. A co-ordinator is funded through the Lancashire Excellence Cluster and manages the project effectively. It is as yet too early to gauge the impact of the individual education plans that are being designed for them.

19. The governing has approved a sex education and drugs policy although these are both currently under review. Sex education is taught through the science and personal, social and health education curriculum. Year 6 pupils recently represented the school at a drugs awareness discussion group and they are developing a confident and sensible set of views on related issues.

20. The school provides a wide range of activities to develop pupils' interest and increase their commitment to and motivation for school. Lunchtime and after-school clubs including sport, gardening, choir, information and communication technology and cookery. Pupils in Year 4 were observed in an after-school cookery club. They were totally absorbed and produced food of high quality, which tasted wonderful. These clubs are available to all pupils and enrich their experiences and contribute well to the positive ethos of the school. A range of visits is arranged to support the history and geography curriculum. Year 5 and 6 pupils make a residential visit to a local authority activity centre, where they engage in activities that enhance their experiences in geography, science and physical education.

21. The school has good links with the community. One project links schools from different areas, to work on collaborative projects. For example, during the inspection, pupils worked enthusiastically in mixed-school groups. Links with Burnley Football Club have been established and has enabled some pupils to develop skills of ball control and teamwork. Burnley College is helping with the organisation of training in parents' computer skills,

helping to bring the school closer to its community and enhancing parents' abilities to help their pupils with school work as well as improving their own skills.

22. The school has good relationships with the neighbouring infant school from which almost all pupils transfer at the age of seven. Year 2 children visit the junior school in summer to experience a number of assemblies and a meeting is held for their parents. Liaison with staff ensures a smooth transition. Relationships between the two schools are enhanced as subject coordinators meet to share ideas and ensure the smooth progression of pupils' learning. The pupils transfer to number of secondary schools and all have an opportunity to visit these prior to transfer. High school staff visit Bardon and the Year 6 teachers are released to discuss pupils' achievements and needs, thus helping pupils to make smooth transitions.

23. The school's provision for personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and makes a significant contribution to promoting the aims of the school. The school provides a good ethos that maintains a happy and supportive learning environment.

24. Pupils' spiritual development is very good and is promoted through assemblies where the children reflect on the thought for the day. This encourages an ability to reflect on life's experiences in increasingly mature ways. For example, a young girl told other pupils that it didn't matter what you wore for a pilgrimage as long as you make the journey. In carefully planned lessons there are opportunities for pupils to discover new things for themselves. Throughout the school there is a strong sense of community, which supports regular reflection on issues that impinge upon the pupils' lives. School links with local mosques, the local evangelical schools' trust and the local church enriches pupils' understanding of a range of faiths.

25. The school's behaviour policy makes a very good contribution to pupils' moral development, but the school's very successful provision for moral development goes beyond that; there is a very warm and supportive atmosphere, which is largely under-pinned by strong mutual respect and concern for others. Pupils' are generous with spontaneous reactions to reward the efforts of others. Class and school rules operate effectively and the positive behaviour policy is applied successfully. Assemblies are used to celebrate pupils' achievements and behaviour. The pupils are proud of the certificates they receive and bands they wear. Members of staff provide very good role models by consistently taking advantage of the opportunities to promote good behaviour. Pupils are thanked and praised for lovely manners. They are encouraged to be courteous at all times and as a result, they, for example, hold doors open for adults and greet visitors warmly.

26. The provision for pupils' social development is very good, promoted by frequent opportunities in lessons to work collaboratively. The school promotes a 'buddy' system where pupils are trained to help others who are left out or fall out. They are involved in making decisions about playtime. Older pupils have responsibilities around the school; they take these seriously and carry them out conscientiously. Pupils interact calmly and sociably with each other during lunch. The weekend residential visit provides a valuable opportunity to develop social skills. On return from various visits out of the classroom, the school has received letters congratulating them on the behaviour of the pupils. The cookery and gardening club are very good opportunities for younger pupils' to learn about commitment and the need to work well together. The planting for which they are responsible gives them an early stake in the work and appearance of their school..

27. The school makes very good provision for the pupils' cultural development. The school recently took part in Burnley art week where they developed skills in multi-cultural dance, music and art. This culminated in a performance of an Islamic based dance at a local theatre and was broadcast on television. Pupils were justifiably proud of themselves and

their school. The school has recently updated a study pack for pupils to use when they go on extended holiday to Pakistan. This includes a disposable camera, which adds to the cultural provision in school when the photographs are shared on return to school. Educational visits provide opportunities for pupils to learn about the heritage and culture of their local community. The school arranges for many visitors such as artists and theatre groups to share their talents and ideas with the pupils.

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

28. The steps taken by the school to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety are very good and have improved since the last inspection. This is undoubtedly a very caring environment where the safety of pupils is given high priority; all statutory checks are in place and the general welfare of pupils is very well catered for in the daily life of the school. The school believes high standards of pastoral care to be essential to the removal of any barriers to learning and as a result of this philosophy the school has two, full-time learning mentors, who give very effective learning and pastoral support to carefully identified pupils. The obvious care within the school is underpinned by rigorous procedures and monitoring to ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

29. Child protection procedures are in place, are known by all adults in the school and are very good.

30. The educational guidance and personal support given to pupils make good contributions to the raising of their achievement. There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. The school's philosophy is to create a climate where good behaviour is the norm and this supports pupils in their development of self-discipline rather than relying too much on imposed discipline. However, where adult intervention is necessary it is timely, appropriate and effective. The management of behaviour is very effective. This ensures that there is very little anti-social behaviour. Where unacceptable behaviour occurs it is closely monitored and well-documented within the school. Parents are involved whenever it is appropriate.

31. The procedures for monitoring attendance are very good. Absence without a known reason is followed up as soon as it occurs. Where there is persistent poor attendance the school employs a variety of means, individually suited to the pupil's needs, to try and re-engage them in learning.

32. Procedures for assessing pupils' academic attainment and progress are good. The system for checking progress in English, mathematics and science is effective, with a range of assessment activities including the optional end of year national tests. In most other subjects there are also effective assessment procedures. As yet there is no formal assessment process for physical education. The school makes good use of assessment information to guide future teaching, especially in English and mathematics. During the inspection, lessons were adjusted when the teacher assessed the pupils not to be reaching the level of understanding they needed in order to proceed. Assessments at the end of a course of study highlight areas in need of extra practice before the pupils can begin the next step in the subject. The analysis of test results highlights areas of the curriculum to be modified in the following year, as well as areas of revision for the pupils.

33. A clear record is kept of each pupil's progress in English, mathematics and science. It also incorporates a predicted level of attainment for the current end-of-year tests for each pupil. This is used to allocate pupils to various additional, academic support programmes in the school. Pupils are set academic targets for the end of the current year and in literacy, groups of pupils are also set specific half-termly targets; working towards these contributes to pupils' work rates and progress.

34. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' all-round personal development are good. They rely on pupils being well known by the adults they have regular contact with and include support from the two learning mentors. Pupils feel well supported. Although there are no formal, whole school procedures to record pupils' personal development except for some with special educational needs, pupils' needs are known well and they are supported appropriately.

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

35. The effectiveness of the partnership between the school and the parents of its pupils is good. Parents feel this is a very good school and their views of the school understandably show much improvement since the last inspection.

36. The impact of the involvement of parents on the work of the school is satisfactory and parents make a satisfactory contribution to children's learning at school and at home overall. There is a home/school reading system but parental support is too variable for it to have a full impact on pupils' progress. This is true of support for homework in general. It is very difficult for parents who normally use a language other than English to engage fully in supporting, for example, their children's school reading programme. However, the school has run a course for parents to understand better their children's experiences at school. Very small numbers of parents attended this course, but those who did, found it very helpful. Their success has encouraged more parents to enrol on the next course and the school is about to begin a follow up course to explain ways in which parents can support their children's learning. Individual advice is always available to parents who want to speak to their child's teacher and spoken translation is available in the school. The school has also begun to provide parents with regular, high quality newsletters giving an overview of what is being taught and also describing very practical ways in which this learning can be supported at home. However, it is too early in this initiative for the school to have conducted any evaluation. Because it is in written form it may have limited accessibility for a significant number of parents. Parents are very supportive of school functions and raise funds for the school. This involvement enhances the learning opportunities available to pupils in the school. However, very few parents work in school on a regular basis as volunteers, although the numbers are growing very slowly. The contribution of these volunteers is valued by the school and makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning.

37. There is opportunity for regular contact with parents through reading diaries, homework, school newsletters and open evenings, as well as planned opportunities for informal contact at the start and end of the school day. The school's prospectus contains all necessary information in an attractive format. All parents receive an annual report on their children's progress. These reports cover all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education and are of a satisfactory standard. They clearly state what the pupil can do in all subjects and usually include a deliberate statement on the progress made by the pupil. However, they do not contain any information to enable parents to assess their children against nationally expected standards except at the end of Year 6. Overall the quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory.

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

38. The major improvements that have taken place over the last four years owe a great deal to the good, determined and clear thinking leadership of the headteacher and by well-designed management methods that are consistently well-used by all staff.

39. The headteacher is now supported well by other senior staff and, in particular, co-ordinators of many subjects play substantial roles in the monitoring of teaching and of

standards in their subjects; the resultant feedback has improved teaching greatly and is having a growing impact on standards. This monitoring has also identified a need to give more time to some lessons that currently are too short for real learning to take place; changes are imminent. The progress of individual pupils, groups and classes is also carefully monitored. When individuals achieve their personal targets they are praised and when they do not, analyses are made of the reasons and new approaches planned. The degree to which groups and classes approach or better their targets is monitored and continual adjustments made to the school's provision in order that pupils do as well as they can. For example, the need identified in a Year 5 class for teaching that focused better on pupils' personal and academic achievements resulted in the deputy headteacher taking over the class; the very positive effect on the pupils fully justifies the step. The school's motto of 'Only my best is good enough for me' underpins the work of staff and governors as much as it does that of pupils.

40. The work of teachers whose main responsibility is for pupils experiencing difficulties in learning through English is much better managed than it was when the school was inspected in 1999, and is now often good. However, there are times when the work of teaching assistants is not sufficiently directed at pupils whose needs are greatest; sometimes they give general classroom support when they would be more effective working with individuals in need of special help. Similarly, most lower attaining pupils are supported well, but those who find learning most difficult, and so have statements of special educational needs, do not always get the help that they require even though this is well outlined in their individual learning plans.

41. The governing body is ambitious for its school. Many governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses intimately because they regularly spend time in school – for example, helping children who need support with reading. This helps the governing body to understand the issues brought to it by the headteacher and ensures that governors meet their statutory duties well. The school's Improvement Plan is well focused on the key areas in need of attention. Most improvements that have been sought recently have resulted from inspections and follow-up visits and these have been pursued both vigorously and successfully. Governors and senior staff value greatly the analyses and suggestions made over recent years by both Ofsted inspectors and Local Authority advisers; several of them go so far as to say that being identified as a school in need of special help was '...the best thing that could have happened to us'. This has not prevented the governing body from identifying, without outside intervention, areas that it wishes to see improved and addressing these with the same degree of determination. The role of the governing body as the school's critical friend is fully understood and the whole school benefits from this.

42. Funding comes from a number of sources but all of it is spent with a keen eye on the intended impact on pupils' attainment. The results of key spending decisions are carefully monitored, although some opportunities are not made at the planning stage to identify precisely and measurably what is the intended impact on pupils' standards or personal development. Effective use is made of funds from the local 'Excellence Zone'. For example, the provision of learning mentors is having an increasingly positive effect on the attitudes and behaviour of the significant minority of pupils with whom they work.

43. The school's immediate locality contains significant amounts of empty, poor quality housing in potentially unwelcoming streets. The picture is immediately different on entering the school. The building is very attractively maintained and welcoming, with colourful displays of pupils' work in all public areas as well as in classrooms. From soon after 8-00am there are adults around school preparing for the day's learning and available to talk. Music is often playing. Pupils feel welcome as soon as they enter the school. Administration runs very smoothly and visitors to the school are welcomed warmly and are immediately aware of the school's positive, friendly and business-like atmosphere. The learning resources are, in

most subjects, good, well-organised and accessible. Thus they are used regularly and have a positive impact on learning.

44. Since the inspection of 1999 the leadership and management of the school have improved greatly. The energy and commitment of the headteacher, that was identified then, remains. However, there is now a much greater degree of highly professional support from all members of staff, particularly those with key management roles, that has resulted in the best intentions now being translated into effective action. A recently appointed deputy headteacher is beginning to have a positive impact, especially, in his most recent role, as an exemplar teacher in Year 5. Governors now participate fully in management and oversee a much improved and still improving school. The school is well placed to continue to improve.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

45. In order to continue its good recent rate of improvement, the headteacher, staff and governors should address the following issues.

### **1. Improve standards in English and mathematics. In order to do this, actions will need to include the following.**

- Monitor closely the new arrangements for teaching writing and quickly implement any necessary changes.
- Increase the number of occasions when teachers and pupils jointly produce writing of good, exemplar, quality.
- Increase the range of library books.
- Give more, and interesting, practice in the interpretation of mathematical problems that are expressed in words.

(See paragraphs 47 – 50; 53 – 59; 83)

### **2. Improve standards in music.**

- Complete the introduction of the revised curriculum for music.
- Ensure that teachers fully understand the work to be undertaken and are fully trained and expert.
- Improve resource levels so that they fully support an enriched curriculum.
- Consider ways of enriching pupils' experiences through out-of-school activities.

(See paragraphs 4; 16; 94 – 96)

### **3. Improve the learning of pupils whose English skills are least well-developed.**

- Assess in detail what pupils can and cannot understand or do; and do or do not know.
- Ensure that the appropriate staff support this learning on all possible occasions.

(See paragraphs 15; 16; 18; 27; 40; 61; 63; 82.)

### **4. Improve the rates of learning of pupils who have statements of special educational needs.**

- Ensure that their learning targets are known in detail and are fully understood by those who teach them or support their learning.
- Direct their learning more systematically towards their learning targets.
- Ensure that appropriate support is available when needed.

(See paragraphs 5; 15; 16; 18; 40; 63)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	45
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	12	55	32	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	220
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	89

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	52

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	175

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	30
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	22

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	4.9	School data	0.8
National comparative data	5.4	National comparative data	0.5

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

## Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	33	30	63

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	22	28
	Girls	21	19	26
	Total	34	41	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	54(57)	65(48)	86(85)
	National	75(75)	73(71)	86(87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	21	24
	Girls	20	21	24
	Total	34	42	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	54(48)	67(57)	76(76)
	National	73(72)	74(74)	82(82)

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	175
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	0
White	43
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

### Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.7
Average class size	27.5

#### **Education support staff: Y[ ] – Y[ ]**

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	307

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A

Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A

Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	671110
Total expenditure	629299
Expenditure per pupil	2537
Balance brought forward from previous year	68523
Balance carried forward to next year	110334

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contracts of less than one term	0

**Results of the survey of parents and carers**

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	220
Number of questionnaires returned	141

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	28	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	38	4	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	40	3	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	39	15	4	0
The teaching is good.	65	33	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	61	35	3	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	26	3	2	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	25	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	52	42	2	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	66	30	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	64	33	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities out side lessons.	60	31	6	0	2

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

### **ENGLISH**

46. The findings of the inspection are that standards of English are in line with the national average in reading, below the national expectation for speaking and listening and below average in writing. This shows good progress from the time the pupils enter the school.

47. Pupils are used to working in pairs and small groups to discuss tasks and consequently learn to listen carefully to one another's ideas. They pay attention to teacher explanations, although for children with English as an additional language there, on occasions, needs to be further visual support to guide their understanding. Pupils concentrate and listen well in school assemblies. In some lessons pupils are encouraged to respond to questions with answers in a sentence and are prompted with subsidiary questions when they respond with short answers. These opportunities develop their speaking skills well and need to be developed in all lessons if the best possible progress is to be made. When pupils discuss their work in pairs they have ample opportunity to share their solutions with the rest of the class. Pupils elect a spokesperson after discussing in groups. Monitoring by the teacher generally ensures that all pupils develop their skills in this way. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.

48. Standards in reading are average throughout the school and pupils of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, achieve well. The pupils have regular opportunities to read aloud in class and guided reading sessions develop these skills further. Consequently, pupils read stories and non-fiction books that are appropriate for their age with reasonable understanding, and, for higher attainers, with good levels of expression. Pupils are taught to break down words if they have difficulty in reading them and most are good at this. Some pupils self-correct when they read a sentence that they cannot make sense of. Most pupils use an index and locate information in a non-fiction book. Pupils with special educational needs locate the index but have difficulty in using it. Higher-attaining pupils use the text to back up opinions independently. In a Year 5 lesson observed, the pupils were encouraged, through appropriate questioning, to refer to the text when making deductions. Reading is regularly set for homework for all pupils but the reading record is not used to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Teachers' reading records are adequate overall but do not always record what specific reading difficulties the children are having. The school has a generally good, bright and attractive library with a range of texts. However the section of dual language books and poetry books is small and some information books are out-dated.

49. Standards in writing across the school are below average; although progress is often good it is from a low base. The school has identified this as a key area for improvement and has altered its approach to the teaching of writing. It is too soon to evaluate the impact that this will have. Pupils have writing targets that are entered in their exercise books and these are dated when the targets are achieved. This provides a good incentive for improvement. Pupils in Year 6 write for a broad variety of audiences and purposes. Pupils of all levels of attainment are taught to write in paragraphs and most children achieve this. Although children of lower attainment write using full stops and capital letters and with increasingly complex sentences in guided and independent literacy sessions, they find it difficult to extend these skills to longer pieces of writing. This is due to the lack of progress most pupils made in lower Key Stage 2. Pupils in Year 3 to 5 write for a variety of purposes. This includes: instructions, reviews, reports, explanations, letters poetry and narrative. Higher-attaining pupils write with more complex sentences and improved vocabulary whereas pupils

with special educational needs are not always consistent with their use of basic punctuation. Pupils in Year 3 get additional literacy support and pupils in Year 5 use further literacy support to guide their learning. Across the school, marking is positive in that it identifies and praises success as well as showing where improvement can be made. For example, some highlights three good sentences and phrases that the pupils have used and gives clear indication for improvement. This is a new initiative and needs time to embed in practice for standards to improve.

50. Teaching and learning are good. The purposes of the lesson are shared both orally and by being displayed in the classroom. Extensive and intelligent questioning allows the children to consolidate previous learning and extends their thinking. Questions such as, 'How do you know?' encourage the pupils to extend and justify their answers. In Year 6 the children responded to 'How would you feel?' with answers that had clearly taxed their emotions as well as their facility with English. In some classes pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language are supported well, for example, through use of vocabulary on whiteboards to clarify ideas and additional questioning from learning support assistants. This was clearly the case when good progress was made by all pupils in a lower attaining Year 6 English set. Use of individual texts in shared reading sessions allowed pupils to de-mark the text to enhance their understanding. It also allowed most pupils to read aloud. Short tasks in shared reading sessions enhanced the pace of the lesson and pupils' motivation. During inspection, the teaching of extended writing focussed on the structure of writing and questioning challenged the pupils to offer ways to make it more interesting to the reader. There were limited opportunities for writing that involved all pupils and the teacher in composing a joint piece of work and so setting a high standard for pupils to aspire to.

51. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are good. They respond well to the high expectations of the teachers. They listen attentively and respond to tasks that are well organised and resourced. In a Year 6 lesson, all pupils are interested and pupils are enthralled due to the expressive reading of the teacher. Praise is used gently to encourage and involve all the pupils.

52. The coordination of the subject is very good. National tests are analysed for strengths and weaknesses. The information is used to set whole school curricular targets, matched to three levels in each class. The pupils are aware of their targets and these are displayed in appropriate language in their books. The coordinator is responsive to the difference in attainment for boys and girls by suggesting texts that will motivate the boys and plans to monitor progress through scrutiny of work. Informal advice is given to colleagues and demonstration lessons are taught. As an outcome of the monitoring of lessons a document, 'Good Practice in Literacy' was produced that neatly summarises effective teaching. Teachers' planning and pupils' work are monitored and feed-back is given to staff; this is accepted very willingly and so contributes to improvement to teaching. The coordinators have a clear understanding of what needs to improve and has a clear plan for the next year to monitor the effectiveness of the changes to the way writing is taught and to set up a speaking and listening area and use this as a basis for improving writing. This puts the school in a good position to make further improvements to provision and to standards. Opportunities to write are used in many other curriculum subjects. For example, pupils across the school use appropriate writing in design technology and write clear assessments of their own work in information and communication technology. These make good contributions to standards. The school is well resourced with texts for guided and shared reading. Display across the school is of a good standard. The progression of drafting, editing and presentation skills are displayed in the hall and each classroom displays the writing of the week by a pupil, thus contributing to high levels of motivation.

## MATHEMATICS

53. Whilst test scores in the 2002 national tests were well below average at the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment at age eleven was similar to that of pupils from schools similar to Barden Junior School. Inspection findings for the current generation of Year 6 pupils show an improving picture, with pupils' attainment below, rather than well below, average when compared with national expectations. Factors that have impacted on the progress made by this cohort of pupils include:

- the unsatisfactory teaching they encountered at the time of the last inspection and for some time afterwards;
- the above average number of pupils who leave and join the school each year.
- the high percentage of pupils who are at a relatively early stage of learning through English and the impact of this on their learning.

For example, pupils enter Year 3 with well below average attainment overall. Whilst teachers spend time explaining new work clearly and with good repetition, pupils' progress is inhibited by their uncertainty about new language, especially when following a series of instructions.

55. However, there has been good improvement over the last two years so that a higher proportion of pupils are attaining at average and above average levels. For example, ten per cent of pupils attained the higher level 5 in 2002 tests, whilst approximately 20 per cent are on target to achieve this level in the current Year 6. This good progress is due largely to:

- the setting of Year 6 pupils into three groups, enabling high and average attaining pupils to work at a faster rate, and those with below average attainment to work in smaller sets with a good level of additional support;
- the good teaching of mathematics throughout the school, brought about by the careful evaluation of teaching and learning in classrooms and the effective implementation of a daily lesson in mathematics;
- the rigorous analysis of pupils' strengths and weaknesses in national and school-based tests, and taking effective action to address areas of low score.

56. By the end of Year 6, number skills are close to average levels. This is because teachers ensure that pupils develop good mental agility through daily practice of number facts, for example, multiplication tables. Throughout the school, teachers challenge pupils to explain the processes they have used when answering mathematical questions. This is successful and by Year 6 those of average and above average attainment demonstrate a sound ability to manipulate numbers, using a range of strategies such as rounding up to the nearest 10; for example  $79+15=80+15-1$ , or by partitioning numbers:  $66+85=60+80+11$ . However, most pupils cannot apply these skills when facing problems expressed in words, especially when new language occurs or the question has more than one number operation involved. Pupils correctly change simple fractions into equivalent forms, for example,  $\frac{4}{5}$  into  $\frac{8}{10}$  or 0.8. High attaining pupils reduce fractions using common denominators, and check answers using appropriate calculator skills.

57. In Years 3 to 6 the bulk of the teaching is good. Teachers' planning sets out clearly what is to be learnt by the end of the lesson, and these expectations are shared with pupils, giving purpose to their learning. Because teachers plan tasks that carefully build on previous work, pupils learn in a consistent way, and in most instances, with a sound degree of confidence. Teachers provide effective visual aids and give clear demonstrations which show pupils exactly what to do, thus increasing levels of understanding. They explain new words effectively, and usually encourage pupils to speak in sentences. Teachers manage pupils very well, resulting in few interruptions, so that lessons continue at a good pace and

no time is lost. There are good relationships between staff and pupils so that pupils concentrate well and persevere.

58. A weakness in teaching in a significant number of lessons relates to the under use of support staff at the beginnings of lessons. At this point, some staff are involved in administrative tasks rather than enabling individual pupils to take part in the question and answer sessions. This limits the progress made at this time by a small number of pupils with special educational needs, and those at an early stage of learning English. However, all staff support pupils very effectively when working in groups, spending time explaining problems and encouraging pupils to try hard. Whilst work is planned to meet the differing needs of pupils within the class, teachers do not routinely identify the specific tasks required by those pupils with statements of special educational need, so that opportunities are sometimes missed to meet pupils' individual targets. This reduces the amount of progress they make.

59. Teachers use computers regularly in mathematics lessons, so pupils have good opportunities to effectively extend and consolidate their learning. For example, in Year 4, pupils worked in pairs to revise multiplication facts. Through the teachers' good use of whole class information and communication technology lessons, pupils develop a sound understanding of the range and scope of computers. For example, Year 4 pupils translated information about different countries into a range of computer-generated graphs, whilst Year 6 pupils demonstrated good understanding of place value whilst imputing information on to spreadsheets.

60. Some good examples were observed of opportunities for pupils to apply skills taught in mathematics to other subjects. For example, in science, Year 6 pupils recorded measurement of liquids in millilitres, and in Year 5, they used stop watches to measure the rate of a pulse per minute. However, scrutiny of pupils' work over time indicates that teachers frequently miss opportunities to apply pupils' skills in this way.

61. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and provides good support for her colleagues by scrutinising planning and observing, and commenting clearly on, teaching and learning in classrooms. This year there has been a strong focus on assessing the work of pupils, carefully analysing their strengths and weaknesses, and planning new work to address these areas. This is a successful whole school initiative that is enabling the school to use assessment to guide future planning and to begin to set increasingly challenging targets for pupils. There have been good improvements since the last inspection enabling pupils to make good progress. Weaknesses in teaching have been tackled, and pupils are placed in sets where teachers plan work more closely related to need, whilst also providing good opportunities to stretch more able pupils. The school is well placed to continue to improve both provision for mathematics and pupils' attainment in the subject.

## **SCIENCE**

62. Although standards in almost all subjects have increased in recent years, the greatest improvements have been in science. Pupils have achieved very well because they have responded enthusiastically to the experimental and practical approach used at Barden. This has had two related and powerful effects. Firstly, pupils have thoroughly enjoyed the approach to teaching that compasses teacher explanations, then interestingly designed experimental work, followed by careful recording of their conclusions. The good mix of imparting scientific facts and allowing pupils occasions when they design experiments in order to find things out for themselves has resulted in a high degree of commitment to learning. Secondly, pupils whose skills with English are limited have relished the opportunities presented by practical work to achieve success without their English skills slowing their work rate – and a bonus is that some of these pupils' better writing follows from their work in science experiments, especially in Years 5 and 6.

63. Pupils learn very well from Year 3 onwards in all aspects of science; many lessons are very well planned in order to focus on the intended learning. For example, in a typically very well organised lesson on the different characteristics of a range of materials, many Year 3 pupils could discuss the differences between natural and man-made materials, and higher attainers confidently identified plastics as 'coming from oil'. Teaching systematically extended pupils' vocabulary and ability to phrase their thoughts by the skilful use of repetition and the introduction of new words alongside known words with similar meanings. Some social immaturity caused pupils to wander off the scientific work onto loosely related events of the previous few days but the teacher brought them back to the point and the lesson maintained its momentum.

64. The overall strengths of teaching include good subject knowledge; very careful and effective planning, very pertinent and good quality learning aids that ensure the success of the practical approach, the communication of a sense of excitement in science and high quality advice as teachers and teaching assistants circulate during group work and sometimes during whole-class inputs.

65. From Year 3 through to Year 6 a full range of scientific ideas and facts is developed, with a very high degree of consistency of approach to the curriculum and to teaching. Pupils make good progress from Year 3 to 6, reaching the nationally expected standards by the end of their time at Barden. In Year 3 many pupils know the parts of plants and can identify what they need in order to grow; by Year 5 they can identify the purpose of many parts of the human body and by Year 6 the higher attaining pupils confidently and accurately write of 'micro-organisms'. Similar improvements are seen in the studies of materials and their properties - such as how heat affects some materials, sometimes permanently and sometimes only for as long as the heat is applied; and physical processes such as the relationships between the sun, planets and the moon. Some of this work is given an added dimension that fosters pupils' interest in and commitment to the subject by including questions such as, 'If you were on the moon what would it look like'?

66. The science curriculum is enriched by imaginative 'extras'. For example, a visiting expert puts on a 'Scientific Extravaganza' that uses scientific ideas to entertain as well as educate. This is described by staff and pupils as 'dynamic', 'about everyday but still exciting' and 'just great'. It, and a good range of visits with some scientific content, help to foster the enthusiasm for the subject that, together with the overall investigative approach, has brought about the improvements in the teaching and learning of science.

67. Much of the quality in science stems from good co-ordination of the subject. Although not a trained scientist, the co-ordinator has a keen interest in science, attends well-chosen training courses and disseminates information well. This has resulted in teaching that is planned and resourced to focus tightly on pupils' learning needs; these draw well on national recommendations for teaching science but are made most appropriate by the careful assessment of pupils' progress with earlier work. For example, the results of national tests are carefully studied in order to identify and respond to strengths and weaknesses seen there.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

68. During the inspection it was possible to observe only three art lessons. Work was scrutinised in classrooms, pupils' sketchbooks and around the school, and discussions were held with staff and pupils. At age eleven pupils attain at the levels expected for their age. The standards found in the previous inspection have been maintained. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, achieve satisfactorily.

69. One of the art and design lessons observed during the inspection was satisfactory, one was taught well and one very well. The good teaching was supported by being planned in small stages over a number of weeks, enabling pupils to gain confidence as they systematically acquired new knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils experimented with paint mixing techniques, developing tones and shades before completing paintings in the style of the artist, Kandinsky. Good teacher demonstration focused on small detail so that pupils learnt to add water carefully and use different thickness of brush. Pupils responded well, taking painstaking care, and producing paintings of good quality. The teachers' very good behaviour management resulted in a very positive, industrious environment in which pupils concentrated well and persevered for long periods of time.

70. The evidence from pupils' work indicates that teaching over time is at least satisfactory. Teachers provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to use a satisfactory range of media and techniques. Year 6 pupils sketch in oil pastels onto fabrics; they make detailed drawings before constructing teapots using paper and glue; all at the level expected for their ages. Some of the work increases pupils' learning about other cultures, for example, carefully copying aspects of Islamic art. A sound feature of the teaching is the way teachers promote the work of famous artists. For example, using digital photographs, Year 5 pupils cut and rearrange sections of paper to produce effective portraits in the style of Hockney. A weakness in teaching is the limited use of sketchbooks to show pupils' progress over time. In these, pupils' pencil sketches frequently lack detail and quality. Pupils' work is rarely marked or annotated to enable them to improve their work.

71. Teachers make a satisfactory range of opportunities to teach pupils new words; for example, *abstract*, *thickness* or *tone*. However, whilst in the lessons seen additional staff were used appropriately to support pupils with painting techniques, opportunities were missed to encourage pupils to talk about their work in ways that would lead to their identification of how it could be improved.

72. The many colourful and informative displays around the school give real value to pupils' work, demonstrating the time and care that staff devote to this aspect. This results in a stimulating environment, and encourages pupils to produce work of good quality. When work such as the art club's *Collages of natural things* is displayed, the self-esteem of pupils is raised.

73. Teachers make satisfactory use of information and communication technology. For example, Year 3 pupils use word-processed skills to design posters depicting rules for a good play time, and in Year 4 use *spray* and *fill* techniques confidently when using a paint-mixing computer program. Teachers sometimes apply pupils' artistic skills well to support work in other subjects. For example, in history, Year 6 pupils made detailed pencil sketches of World War 2 artefacts, enhancing their learning in both in art and history.

74. Co-ordination of the subject is effective. The co-ordinator has provided comprehensive subject guidelines that give good support to teachers but has not monitored the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms. A new assessment sheet has been introduced, enabling teachers to keep regular checks on pupils' progress. Provision for the subject is enriched by the additional activities provided by the school. For example, the visit of a puppet theatre resulted in all year groups designing and making puppets, whilst Gujarati art was explored as pupils constructed decorative banners.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

75. No lessons took place during the inspection. Pupils' work in books and on display was scrutinised, school timetable planning was reviewed, and discussion took place with the

subject manager. However, insufficient evidence was available to make overall judgements about the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' attainment.

76. In the examples of work seen, the learning tasks undertaken have been completed successfully and pupils have a satisfactory range of skills when making objects. Teachers plan work that carefully builds up the design process, so that pupils examine a range of options before they begin work. For example, prior to designing and making money containers, pupils looked closely at different purses to decide purpose and methods of closing. When they had completed their own purses they made honest evaluations of them, saying what could be improved. Through the use of carefully prepared written questions teachers ensure that pupils are made aware of important design implications; for example, when designing slippers, aspects such as warmth, price, fashion element and ease of fit. This effectively focuses pupils more closely on their work, enabling them to produce items which fit the design specification more accurately.

77. Teachers ensure that pupils learn new skills in a consistent way so that they have all they require before making an item. For example, teaching how to sew running stitches and constructing paper prototypes before making purses. This supports pupils well and ensures that the finished results are successful. There are some weaknesses evident in teaching. In a significant number of instances, pupils take insufficient care when drawing design intentions so that sketches lack detail; for example, to show how a mechanism works, or to give views from different elevations. Because teachers do not routinely expect pupils to include measurements on designs, opportunities are missed to apply numeracy skills. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning. Teachers produce attractive displays of pupils' work, giving real value to the finished products so that pupils develop self-esteem and pleasure in work well done.

78. The subject manager is new to the post but has undertaken recent training and has already made a significant impact on provision. For example, through the development of a well-organised resource area, teachers have all they require to teach the subject effectively. An appropriate subject plan and detailed guidance enables all aspects of the design curriculum to be taught. The co-ordinator acknowledges that staff expertise in some technical aspects, such as the use of motors, cams and gears, is an area for development and outline plans are in place to remedy these. Learning is enriched by visits to interesting places such as a supermarket to examine the range of bread products, and through out-of-school activities such as gardening and cookery clubs.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

79. Only one geography lesson was seen during inspection and the judgements are based largely on a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils and teachers. By the time pupils leave the school their attainment in geography is at expected levels. This is good improvement from the time of the last inspection where attainment was judged as unsatisfactory.

80. Pupils' in Year 6 use a range of resources to research, for example, rivers and their features. They explain the water cycle effectively and discuss the causes and effects of flooding. In some classes pupils' recording sometimes consists of filling in gaps in texts provided by the teacher. This is economical of time but does not make a significantly powerful contribution to their geographical enquiry skills. In Year 5, pupils investigate and record the use of water in their homes. They successfully use the Internet to research water, list ways in which it is used and make suggestions on how to save it. In Year 4 the pupils discuss the cause and effect of throwing litter. In one lesson observed, the children did this effectively, aided by the teacher's skilful questioning which developed and extended their

ideas. In Year 3, pupils can record features of the school on a plan. They understand key features of their own locality and have used a map to locate and name British cities. Pupils with special educational needs are supported through work that is adjusted to meet their learning needs and this results in them making satisfactory progress. There needs to be further emphasis on geographical skills in order to make further progress.

81. The coordinator has recently taken up the post. She has a clear vision of how to move the school forward. She recently updated the policy and the scheme of work following advice from the local education authority, in order to ensure breadth and balance across the school. After attendance at coordinator courses she updates staff and provides practical guidance to ensure skills progress across the key stage. Monitoring has concentrated on ensuring coverage of the curriculum and the need to focus on monitoring the teaching of geographical skills has been rightly identified, as has the need to build assessments into units of work and to record pupils' progression in the subject. Planning to remedy these is at an early stage. A range of up to date maps and aerial photographs is available and often used well. The curriculum is enriched through visits to places of geographical interest such as Towneley Hall, Lord's House Farm Trust and Colne recycling centre. The school has a vibrant display of the world's flags, in which all pupils' were involved, researching the country whose flag they reproduced.

## **HISTORY**

82. By the time the pupils' leave the school, their attainment is at the nationally expected levels for eleven year olds. This is an improvement from the last inspection and pupils are making good progress.

83. Pupils' in Year 6 recount events with understanding and involvement. They discuss the effects that the main events of the period had on life. They can make research notes using a variety of sources and arrange them into a report. Pupils' enthusiasm for the subject is enhanced by visits to places of historical interest. One child recounted his visit to Stockport Air Raid Shelter with a concluding sentence ' If I could go again, I would!' In Year 5, the children use timelines to plot important events. They discuss similarities and differences between the past and modern times. They express preferences and give reasons to support their views about which period they would like to live in. Research about the topic is compiled using a range of sources. In Year 4, pupils use artefacts to make deductions about the past and find similarities and differences with ease. Pupils in Year 3 write about the past as if they were there and support this with reference to facts. All pupils make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language have work that is planned to meet their needs and so they take a full part in lessons. They make better progress when they are supported during independent work.

84. Teaching and learning are at least good in all year groups. The purposes of the lesson are shared with the children, displayed and referred to in the final part of the lesson. This ensures that all pupils' understand what they are doing. Vocabulary is carefully explained and pupils use it accurately. Questioning is used to recap on previous learning and enhance this knowledge. This is most effective when the children are encouraged to respond fully.

85. Teaching in Year 5 is very good. Pupils are well supported during discussion, with key words clearly written onto a flip chart. This, and discussions in mixed ability pairs, ensures that all pupils join in and learn well. Learning support assistants encourage children with special educational needs through skilful questioning and drawing their attention to resources. The use of resources that they could examine was motivating and the children

were enthusiastic when researching and presenting their findings. One boy proudly announced that he was using evidence from a logbook of the first day of this school.

86. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good and they behave well in all lessons. As they work in pairs, they discuss co-operatively and help each other to complete the tasks. They listen attentively in to the teacher and to each other. Pupils show enthusiasm for the subject because they have been motivated to learn.

87. The coordinator leads the subject well. She has held the position for only a short time but has updated the policy and the scheme of work to ensure breadth and balance across the key stage. Teachers' planning and pupils' work is checked for coverage and it is, wisely, planned to extend this to monitoring pupils' work, focussing on historical skills. Monitoring the effect of the new timetable changes is planned, in order to ensure adequate provision is made for pupils in Year 6 as their learning opportunities are at present occasionally hindered by short lessons. The school is well resourced. Good use is made of the local museum service. The curriculum is enriched with visits, for example to an air raid shelter and Helmshore Mill. The school building is Victorian and this is used to good advantage to motivate pupils when studying this part of history.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

88. At the end of Year 6 the pupils are attaining levels that are in line with national expectations. There has been a good rate of improvement since the last inspection, as attainment was then judged to be unsatisfactory.

89. Pupils' in Year 6 can create multimedia presentations. The most sophisticated of these include sound links of the children's voices and hyper-links to the Internet.

90. There are examples of groups of animated pictures, which have been linked together to create one image. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 create and interpret spreadsheets. There is clear progression between classes through the range of formulae they are expected to input and the amount of information to present. Pupils analyse data and make predictions about changes that would occur if the data were altered. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 input record cards, create a database and present the information as a graph. Clear progression is ensured through the quantity of data used and the number of fields presented when creating a graph. All pupils in Year 3 access their own files, load the information and print the completed task. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. One such boy in Year 3 independently completed the task and was so proud of his work that he asked the inspector to 'come and see!'

91. Teaching is good in all year groups. Teachers' planning is structured to ensure all pupils' understand. The lesson objectives are shared with the pupils using clear, concise explanations, that draw on teachers' good subject knowledge. Carefully planned questions allow consolidation of previous learning and extension of this knowledge. In all lessons immediate checking of pupils' understanding prompts teachers to rephrase their questions or to re-model the use of the computer. Where teaching was very good, use was made of the interactive whiteboard, which both focussed the pupils on the work and compelled their attention. Pupils make good progress because they have sufficient time to work in mixed-ability pairs on the computers. Paired discussion tasks allow pupils to gain from each other's experiences. The teacher and the school's technician support them in their learning through clear direction and intervention. The technician's subject knowledge is used well to enhance the learning of some higher-attaining pupils. Management of pupils is very effective with clear expectations from the outset. In one lesson a task was set in order to prepare for the following week so the time using the technology will not be encroached upon.

92. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour to the subject are very good. They listen carefully and attentively to the teacher. They contribute well in class work. They are well motivated and so learn enthusiastically. They listen to each other when involved in paired discussion and make decisions co-operatively. They speak confidently about the subject and explain accurately why things happen. There is a hive of activity in the I.C.T. suite during sessions.

93. Opportunities to use information and communication technology in other subjects are good. Pupils use the Internet confidently, for example to research life in Victorian times in history and find information that is not available to the rest of the class. Pupils use a computer encyclopaedia skilfully, for example to investigate different religions and are able to read and understand it. Pupils use a mathematical programme to consolidate effectively multiplication facts. Use of a modelling programme has allowed Year 5 pupils to move, re-size rotate and colour objects to re-create art, for example, The Snail by Matisse. Year 4 pupils use the spray tool to create pictures. Many pupils can present their writing in a variety of ways to engage the reader. Year 3 pupils use music box I.C.T. programme to change and record sounds using a tape recorder.

94. The leadership of the subject is good. It has ensured that the staff have sufficient confidence in the subject to teach it well. This is a substantial improvement since the last inspection. She monitors staff planning on a regular basis and analyses the work produced by the children and gives feedback to teachers. The school has good resources which enable all areas of the ICT curriculum to be taught. A good range of software enables productive links to be made to other subjects. The school policy was recently updated and the scheme of work was compiled drawing on local and national guidance; both of these contribute to the school's good provision. Pupils have access to the computer suite in a number of lunchtime and after school clubs and this makes a significant contribution to their levels of motivation and the standards that they reach. The staff assess learning every half term and pupils complete their own self-assessment grids on a weekly basis.

## **MUSIC**

95. Standards are below nationally expected levels largely because the subject has until recently been a low priority at Barden. While the focus on making improvements to major areas of weakness, such as literacy and numeracy, has been productive, the lower level of concern regarding music has resulted in the development of limited levels of teacher expertise, resources becoming barely adequate and, until recently, the curriculum not being sufficiently imaginative to ensure that pupils worked with enthusiasm. In addition, the great majority of music lessons are timetabled to last thirty minutes and take place just before or after literacy or numeracy sessions; pupils have to move to different groups for these subjects, so time is lost, and music sessions are often only between 20 and 25 minutes long. Some of these weaknesses are now being remedied. A new and more stimulating curriculum has been chosen and is being taught in Years 3 and 4; firm plans are in place to extend this to Years 5 and 6 over the next school year. This carries with it a need for more and better instruments, especially tuned and un-tuned percussion, as at present these are not of good quality. The school's involvement with a local enrichment programme in the arts is allowing pupils, particularly in Year 5, to experience high quality music and this has a positive effect both on attitudes and standards. For example, adults and pupils praise a project that lasted for a day during which pupils from Barden joined with those from many other local schools and several artists and musicians. A two-day project on Asian music and dance led to much appreciated concerts in which pupils performed their own work. However, pupils' day-by-day experience of music is less stimulating.

96. Pupils' singing is usually unenthusiastic and lacks tunefulness and rhythm. Teaching is inexpert, and there is too little work on basic techniques such as posture, opening the mouth widely enough for sound to be of good quality, and breathing. There are notable

exceptions to this, which suggest that improvements could be fostered even before the new music curriculum is operating fully. In one lesson, that was otherwise uninspiring, pupils passed a rhythm and tune around the class to variations on 'Boom-chick-boom'. This was done with great verve and accuracy, with rhythm and tune being far better than at other times even in the same lesson. In another lesson the music co-ordinator demonstrated a good level of expertise and enthusiasm as she worked on poetry to aid pupils' subsequent musical compositions. The only extra-curricular music activity provided is a choir; the better singing encouraged helps to ensure that singing in assemblies is reasonable and sets a standard in singing for music lessons to rise to. At present its effect is limited as experiences are not built on systematically.

97. This picture is not very different from that reported at earlier inspections, although there are improvements beginning to take place. Teaching has improved to become satisfactory; the curriculum is better and improving; the co-ordinator is more experienced, aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and with the support of senior managers and governors is well placed to lead the way to better music provision and standards.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

98. Pupils' standards in games match those expected nationally at age eleven. Due to timetabling arrangements, there was no opportunity to observe Year 6 lessons focusing on dance, gymnastics and athletics, and there are no records to indicate how well pupils attain in these aspects. This absence of records limits the school's ability to build on earlier work. Pupils at the end of Year 3 and early Year 4 have weekly swimming lessons. Almost half of the pupils can swim 25 metres by the end of these sessions and are well on their way to reach the nationally expected level by the age of eleven.

99. There are several reasons for pupils achieving satisfactory standards in games. Teachers ensure that pupils are taught the right techniques. For example, when dribbling a football, pupils are taught to use different parts of the foot, maintaining eye contact; when receiving a tennis ball, to grip the racquet correctly and to move when catching or striking. This means that when they begin to play team games, pupils have practised the skills necessary to help them succeed. Teachers give good opportunities for pupils to evaluate the work of others and to adapt and improve on their individual performance.

100. In a Year 3 gymnastics lesson, pupils had a sound understanding of curling and stretching movements, combining these appropriately within a sequence. Most performed a controlled forward roll. Because teaching did not challenge pupils to practise movements towards a polished performance, they did not consistently think about the overall quality of the sequence. Discussions with pupils revealed a limited understanding about the effects of exercise; for example, heart rate and pulse. The good amount of lesson time enabled the teacher to plan a systematic development of new skills, with a good element of practice so that pupils made satisfactory progress overall.

101. Teachers give clear instructions and effective demonstrations so that pupils know what to do and so they respond appropriately. Teachers manage learning and pupils' behaviour well; pupils enjoy lessons, listen attentively and behave sensibly in exciting situations. Pupils work very well in pairs without the direct supervision of the teacher. Teachers set good examples for pupils, stressing health and safety aspects and dressing in appropriate kit. Hence all pupils change into suitable clothing and are mindful of their actions. Teachers use correct terminology, explaining meanings well, for example, *dribble*, *backhand* and *stance*. This gives pupils new specialist words with which to describe their work. A weakness in teaching was observed when the flow and pace of one gymnastics lesson was hindered because groups of pupils were limited to one piece of apparatus. Valuable time was wasted as pupils were stopped and moved to the next apparatus.

102. Teachers have to work hard to achieve effective lessons in the 30 minutes allocated to one of their two weekly P.E. sessions. Pupils' progress is sometimes limited because there is insufficient time to apply new skills, for example, by playing a competitive game.

103. An experienced teacher manages the subject effectively. Since the last inspection there has been satisfactory improvement. A comprehensive plan of work has been developed. This now supports teachers well, enabling pupils to develop new skills in a consistent way. There has been no direct systematic observation of teaching and learning. Links with the local high school are good so that Barden pupils extend their learning when using the cricket nets, playing field and sports hall. Physical education makes a strong contribution to pupils' social development. There is a host of after school sports activities that are very popular. Older pupils take part in a good range of competitive sporting fixtures in the local community. By providing planned activities at playtimes, for example, using balls and hoops, staff give good opportunities for pupils to play together and develop small apparatus skills.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

104. The good standards reached by Year 6 draw on good teaching throughout the school of a well-planned and resourced curriculum. The result is that the great majority of pupils have a good understanding of a number of world religions (especially Christianity, Islam and Sikhism) but also a good deal of understanding of the similarities between them and a knowledgeable respect for each other's beliefs and views.

105. Year 6 pupils have a wide vocabulary to support their study of religions and they debate perceptively issues such as pilgrimage, entry into a religion and key features and beliefs. Many pupils, of all levels of attainment, have well-justified confidence that their views will be respected by adults and other pupils. They therefore discuss in relatively sophisticated ways issues such as fairness and unfairness, and the importance of religion helping to make us better people. A good illustration of this was in a Year 5 lesson about the meaning for individuals of stories from books that carry meaning: the Bible and the Qu'ran were drawn on sensitively by the class teacher. Succinctly expressed accounts of stories from the life of Mohammed (pbuh) were used to initiate pupils' thinking and communication. The lesson progressed at a good and enjoyable pace because both the teacher and the teaching assistant pitched their comments in ways that extended pupils' thinking. Written questions encouraged healthy debate between pupils that helped to develop well their respect for others and for other living creatures. The pupils' writing that followed conveyed perceptive meanings well, although the mechanics such as handwriting, and the use of capital letters and full stops were erratic.

106. Many lessons have positive qualities. They are planned well because teachers are supported by a well-designed learning programme that is a thoughtful combination of local advice and the school's own thinking. Relationships between all in the lessons are friendly and ensure that discussion takes place in a warm and supportive atmosphere, thus getting the best from pupils. Often at the end of lessons the teacher draws out the main features of the learning that has taken place, referring back to the learning objectives that were shared with pupils at the beginning of the lesson. This celebrates and consolidates learning very well. This good teaching not only ensures that all pupils learn at a good rate throughout the school, but it also makes a powerful contribution to the school's positive atmosphere; pupils are not merely tolerant of a wide range of views but they value and respect the views of their friends from other religious backgrounds.

107. Since the inspection of 1999, pupils' standards have improved considerably because the high quality support given by a talented co-ordinator has enriched the curriculum and enhanced teaching. The school is well-placed to maintain these good standards in the subject and the strong contribution it makes to the life and atmosphere of then school.