

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SINGLETON CE (VA) PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Singleton, Poulton-le-Fylde

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119560

Headteacher: Mrs S Foulkes

Reporting inspector: Mr P M Allen  
17531

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> March 2003

Inspection number: 248032

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Church Lane Singleton Poulton-le-Fylde Lancashire
Postcode:	FY6 8LN
Telephone number:	(01253) 882226
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Smith
Date of previous inspection:	9 <sup>th</sup> February 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17531	Mr P M Allen	Registered inspector	Mathematics Music Foundation Stage	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
11474	Mr P Berry	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?
29686	Mr J S Lord	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Art and design Geography Equal opportunities Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
17310	Mrs A McAskie	Team inspector	English Design and technology History Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Singleton CE (Voluntary Aided) School is a small primary school in the village of Singleton near Blackpool serving a wide area of mainly private housing. Around a third of the pupils live in the village, with the rest being drawn from the neighbouring communities. Of the 98 pupils on roll, there are slightly more boys than girls with a gender imbalance in some year groups. Virtually all the pupils are of white UK heritage background. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. There are four classes, one for the reception children, one for pupils in Year 1 and Year 2, one for Years 3 and 4 and one for Years 5 and 6. Nine pupils are identified as having special educational needs, mainly concerned with moderate learning difficulties, this proportion being below the national average; of these, two have a statement of special educational need, this proportion is above the national average. Over recent years the school has benefited from a programme of extension and refurbishment which has involved the building of two extra classrooms and creating a computer suite on a mezzanine floor. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is well below the national average. Virtually all the children have had experience of pre-school education. Attainment on entry to the Reception class varies from year to year, although overall it is slightly above what could be expected.

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

The school is currently becoming more effective, following a period of underachievement at both key stages and particularly at Key Stage 1. The school is making significant steps forward in its aim of raising standards although this is currently more in evidence at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1. Evidence from the inspection indicates that standards at the end of Year 6 in summer 2003 are likely to be above national averages. The quality of teaching is improving overall but it is variable across the school. Teaching observed in the Reception class and in the Years 5 and 6 class was often very good. The school is benefiting from the leadership of its relatively new headteacher, who is providing clear insights into strategies for raising standards and the quality of education. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- The clear, purposeful leadership of the headteacher is helping the school to become more effective.
- The very good teaching in the Reception Year enables the children to make a very good start to their schooling.
- The quality of the teaching and learning for the oldest pupils is having a very positive impact on the standards they are achieving.
- There are very good relationships within the school's caring, Christian ethos which is underpinned by the very good provision for spiritual, moral and social development and the good provision for cultural development.
- There is a very good range of activities provided for pupils outside of lessons.

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

- The quality of teaching and learning and the standards at Key Stage 1 and the lower half of Key Stage 2.
- The planning of lessons, in order to better meet the needs of the pupils' differing abilities.
- The assessment of attainment and progress.
- Self-evaluation of the school's performance to better inform targets for improvement.

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

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

The school was last inspected in February 1998. Since then there has been an overall improvement. Many of the significant improvements have taken place since the appointment of the current headteacher in September 2001. The issues from the previous inspection have been largely addressed. The work and resources in information and communication technology have been significantly improved enabling pupils to

receive their National Curriculum entitlement. The provision of a separate class for the reception children has helped to ensure that they receive an appropriate curriculum. Teaching time has been increased at Key Stage 2. There are now good resources in mathematics, science, geography and design and technology. There remains a need to further develop the assessment of attainment and progress. There is still a need to provide more challenging work for the higher attainers which is one of the reasons for the recent trend of underachievement. The new headteacher is promoting improvement effectively. The accommodation is much better than previously. The staff have a shared will and a capacity to improve the quality of education and to continue the process of raising standards.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

The youngest children achieve very well and virtually all of them are likely to meet the nationally prescribed Early Learning Goals with between a third and a half likely to exceed them. There has been a trend of low results at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 over recent years. At the end of Year 2 in 2003, standards are likely to be below average in English, mathematics and science. Most pupils reach Level 2, the expected level for most seven year olds, but too few reach the higher Level 3. Similarly in recent years most pupils have reached the expected Level 4 at the age of 11, but too few have reached the higher Level 5. Very good teaching together with more focused targets will enable the current Year 6 pupils to reach standards which are above national averages in English, mathematics and science. This means that pupils are achieving well and reversing the previous trend. Children achieve well and make very good progress in the Reception Year, but then progress slows down until Years 5 and 6 when pupils make good or very good progress. There is no significant difference between the attainment of girls and boys. Standards in information and communication technology are improving at a very rapid pace. It is the judgement of the inspection team that, if this continues, standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 will be broadly in line with national expectations. The school is beginning to set clearer and higher targets in order to continue improving its results.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very positive attitudes. They enjoy school and all it has to offer.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good and often very good both in and out of the classrooms.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is good. There are very good relationships between the pupils and staff and between the pupils themselves.
Attendance	Attendance is above the national average. Virtually all the pupils arrive in good time. They are enthusiastic to start the school day, including those who arrive early for the 'Breakfast Club'.

The good personal development and the very good relationships underpin the school's caring Christian ethos.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	very good	satisfactory	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.*

Although the quality of teaching observed during this inspection was good overall, it was variable across the school. Very good teaching was observed in the Reception class and in the Year 5/ 6 class. In the oldest class English and mathematics are taught very well with teachers using effective methods to teach the skills of literacy and numeracy; this enables the pupils to achieve well. Overall the quality of teaching was less effective in the other classes, where it does not always meet the needs of all the pupils, including the higher attainers. In these classes pupils are not always as productive as they could be and this affects their progress and the rate at which they learn. Across the school support staff make a positive contribution to the teaching and learning and this is particularly beneficial to the lower attaining pupils including those with special educational needs. Most pupils are enthusiastic about their learning with a will to achieve well. Reception children show a joy for learning.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Overall the curriculum is broad and balanced, although there are still difficulties in providing an appropriate physical education curriculum due to the lack of a proper hall. The quality and range of experiences are very good in the Reception class. The school recognises the need to further develop information and communication technology as a tool to support work in all curricular areas.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision is good. The co-ordinator is managing the work effectively, well supported by the classroom support assistants. This enables most pupils to make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	The provision for spiritual, moral and social development is very good. The provision for cultural development is good. The pupils respond well in these areas.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is a very good level of care which reflects the way that every child is valued. Although there are satisfactory arrangements for the tracking and monitoring of attainment and progress in English and mathematics, the school recognises the need for the further development of assessment across all curricular areas.

The school benefits from a good partnership with parents who are very supportive. Taking into account the before and after school clubs and the wide range of extra-curricular activities, most pupils benefit significantly from the opportunities provided outside school hours. The level of pastoral care is very high.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The enthusiastic and caring headteacher is providing very good leadership and management and is putting in place effective strategies to eliminate underachievement. The roles of the subject co-ordinators are being developed to increase their contribution to school improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body, well led by its experienced chairman, is very supportive of the school and recognises the need to further develop its role of monitoring the school's work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Although a positive start has been made in the school's self- evaluation of its performance, including the monitoring of teaching and learning, this is an area for further development.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good strategic use of its resources including specific grants and additional funding, linking decisions on spending to educational priorities. The school makes good use of the generous funding provided by parents.

The school improvement plan needs to present a longer term picture of future developments than the current year. There is an adequate level of teaching and support staff. Overall the school is well resourced. Although restricted in size, the accommodation is clean, attractive and well maintained, benefiting from recent improvements including the Reception classroom and the new computer suite. The school's surplus income has been and is being used to fund these recent improvements together with the planned improvements such as that to develop the outdoor area, partly to support the curriculum for the reception children. The school gives appropriate consideration to the principles of best value.

## 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>Children like school and are making good progress.</li> <li>Standards of behaviour.</li> <li>The quality of teaching and the approachability of the school.</li> <li>The leadership and management.</li> <li>The expectation that children will work hard and become responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some parents feel that their children do not receive the right amount of homework.</li> <li>Some feel that they are not sufficiently well informed about their child's progress.</li> <li>Some parents would appreciate more information about the curriculum, including the topics being studied.</li> </ul>

It is the view of the inspection team that the amount of homework set is broadly appropriate for the various ages. Although the school's expectations on homework are clear, there is a need to better communicate these to parents. The inspectors' views are that the staff are very approachable and happy to share information about progress at any time. The school is accepting of the point about providing curricular information, with plans to provide this in future. The vast majority of views expressed were very supportive. Parents value and are valued by the school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. A relatively small number of children start at the school each September. Although attainment on entry to the Reception class varies from year to year, overall it is slightly above what could be expected. A strength of the school is the very good start given to children in the Reception Year. The very good teaching the children receive means that they make very good progress and achieve well relative to their abilities. Virtually all the children in the current Reception Year are likely to meet the nationally prescribed Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage (Reception Year) and between a third and a half are likely to exceed them. The children achieve particularly well in communication, language and literacy, in mathematical development and in the area of personal, social and emotional development. Subsequent to the Reception Year, progress slows down and there is some evidence of underachievement at Key Stage 1 and in the first half of Key Stage 2. At the time of the inspection, pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 were receiving good and very good teaching and were making good progress.
2. Results can and do vary from year to year given the relatively small numbers in each year group. However, it is possible to use national performance data to consider standards over time at the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6. Taking the three years from 2000 to 2002 together, national performance data indicate that the performance of pupils in reading at the end of Year 2 fell below the national average for reading. Although the performance in writing was broadly in line with the national average, the performance in mathematics was well below. In these years most pupils have reached Level 2, the expected level for most seven year olds, although a significant proportion only reached the lowest grade, 2C. In recent years it has been rare for a pupil in Year 2 to achieve a higher Level 3 in writing. In the teacher assessments in science, no pupil has reached a Level 3 since 1998.
3. A larger than usual sized group of pupils took the Year 6 tests in 2002. The results indicated that standards in English were in line with the national average but well below average when compared with schools with a similar intake. Standards in mathematics were in line with the national average but below the average for similar schools. Standards in science were below the national average and well below the average for similar schools. Taking the three years from 2000 to 2002 together, the performance of pupils in English and mathematics exceeded the national average by a small margin and in science the performance fell below the national average by a small margin.
4. Given the attainment of pupils on entry, standards over recent years have not been high enough. They represent a picture of underachievement, most notably at Key Stage 1. The previous report identified the need to provide more challenging work for the higher attainers. This is still an issue for the school so that more pupils are enabled to achieve the higher Levels 3 and 5 at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 respectively.
5. The relatively new headteacher is well aware of this recent underachievement, especially at Key Stage 1. Assessments undertaken just over a year ago indicated that standards in reading across the school were too low for a significant number of pupils. As a consequence, reading was targeted for improvement and a structured reading scheme was put in place for the Key Stage 2 pupils to complement that for Key Stage 1. The indications are that standards are now higher in reading than they were previously; the school plans to build on this improvement.
6. The staff, well led by the headteacher who has a clear agenda for raising standards, are beginning to address underachievement but at the moment this is being addressed more successfully in Years 5 and 6 than it is in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4 where progress is too slow. Notwithstanding the small year group, overall standards at the end of Year 2 in summer 2003 are likely to fit in with the trend of recent years of being below national averages in reading, writing, mathematics and science because too few pupils are likely to reach Level 3.
7. At the end of Year 6 there will be a very different picture. Underachievement is being successfully

eliminated. Standards in summer 2003 are likely to be above the national average in English, mathematics and science with a very creditable number of pupils reaching Level 5 across these subjects. Although this is a more able group than in previous years, the main reason for these standards is the quality of teaching the pupils receive with its high expectations for all pupils, including those who are higher attainers. Across the range of tests undertaken at Year 2 and Year 6 there is no evidence of significant variation in the performance of boys compared with the performance of girls.

8. The monitoring of pupils' attainment and progress has improved since the last inspection. As a consequence the school now has much better information to enable it to assess pupils' progress and set targets for the future. The school now needs to make more use of its data to further develop individual target setting with higher and more focused targets. Consistently higher expectations, more challenging work for the higher attainers together with an insistence on more productivity by the pupils can contribute to both raising standards and to enabling pupils to achieve more. During the inspection lessons were observed at Key Stage 1 and the first half of Key Stage 2 where too little was expected of the pupils, too little work was produced and too many pupils did not achieve at levels commensurate with their abilities. A scrutiny of the work done by these pupils over the school year showed too little difference in the standards of pupils with varying abilities.
9. Standards in information and communication technology are improving at a very rapid pace. It is the judgement of the inspection team that, if this continues, standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 will be broadly in line with national expectations. There was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about standards in music and physical education. Across the other subjects standards are broadly in line with what could be expected, except in art where standards are above what could be expected.
10. Overall the school is beginning to become more inclusive in meeting the needs of all the pupils. Pupils with special educational needs usually make good progress, with helpful individual education plans to guide the work as part of the good provision for them. The needs of the higher attainers are less well catered for and their progress is not always as rapid as it should be. The school is making a positive start in eliminating underachievement with success in Years 5 and 6 where challenging, but achievable, targets are being set. This is part of its main priority, that of raising standards, particularly in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4; the targets set for improvement need to reflect higher expectations of the amount and level of work set for the higher attaining pupils.

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

11. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attitudes to learning are usually good. Across the school most pupils respond enthusiastically to the teachers' questions and listen attentively to information. A particular feature is the way the Year 5 and 6 pupils are able to work well independently and to collaborate appropriately when required to work in pairs or in groups. This is also the case in the Reception class where, for example, two boys were observed working very well at the writing table, using the teacher's chart to carefully copy each letter and helping each other to try and form words such as 'grandad'. However, there are occasions in other classes where pupils do not sufficiently stay on task; some of the pupils need to be encouraged to put more effort into their work, so that they can achieve more.
12. The standard of behaviour in and around the school is invariably good and there have been no exclusions. The parents strongly endorsed this point and many parents from outside the school's catchment area said that they had deliberately chosen Singleton school because of the very good reputation for its ethos and friendly, family atmosphere. No instances of oppressive behaviour or bullying of any kind was observed during the inspection.
13. The pupils' movement around school is very orderly, despite the restricted circulation space and the small playground. During the visit to Singleton Parish Church for assembly, the pupils' attitudes and behaviour were exemplary; the pupils made a valuable contribution to the service with their enthusiastic hymn singing of 'All the animals' and with their keen responses to the vicar's questions. All the pupils demonstrated a high degree of reverence. The relationships between pupils and adults and between the pupils themselves are very good. Pupils of all ages integrate harmoniously; the

older pupils help to look after the younger ones during wet lunchtimes. Appropriate respect is shown for property and for the feelings and opinions of others.

14. The level of attendance is good being above the national average for primary schools. There is no unauthorised absence and the school immediately checks up on any missing pupils if the absence has not been notified. Whilst the majority of the pupils arrive promptly for the start of the school day, there is a small number of pupils who regularly arrive late; this can cause unnecessary disruption for the teachers and for other pupils.
15. The pupils' personal development is good. They benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including the before and after school clubs. Pupils participate in a good number of well-organised educational visits and undertake charity work, such as fund-raising for Barnados. The pupils show a high level of maturity and their good manners were evident, typified by the holding of doors open for both adults and for other pupils. Pupils elect two representatives from each year group to the school council, which meets each half-term. Recent initiatives of the council have included suggestions and ways to improve the external environment and on the best use of 'Golden Time' which involves children being rewarded for good behaviour by choosing what to do. There are many other responsibilities taken by the pupils, such as helping in assemblies and at lunchtime.
16. The pupils respond very well to the school's provision of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. An example of the friendship and sense of responsibility which has been developed was demonstrated when pupils explained about the principles of the 'Perpetual Garden', where each Year 6 pupil tends a small individual plot of land which is passed on to a Year 5 pupil at the end of the year. This aspect is one of the strengths of the school and is one of the main reasons that the school is held in such high esteem by the parents and the community. The school has a caring, Christian ethos, where pupils gain in self-confidence and self-discipline. The pupils' good attitudes, behaviour, personal development and attendance have a significant impact on the quality of education provided by the school.

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

17. The quality of teaching observed was good overall, but it was variable across the school. It was very good in a quarter of the lessons observed, good in around three tenths and satisfactory in virtually all the remainder. The quality of teaching by the teacher and the classroom assistant in the Reception class was very good. This teaching is one of the school's main strengths. This very good teaching and learning in the Reception Year enables the children, regardless of ability, to make very good progress, helping them to make a very good start to their schooling.
18. The teaching in the older class at Key Stage 2 is of a consistently high standard with good and very good teaching. The quality of teaching in the Key Stage 1 class and the other Key Stage 2 class, although satisfactory overall, is not as effective and this affects the progress pupils make. The skills of literacy and numeracy are better taught in the oldest class where pupils' needs are more successfully met; expectations are high and the pupils are very productive. Across the school the teaching caters well for the lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs and these pupils are well supported by the teaching assistants. The higher attaining pupils are not always given sufficiently challenging work. This was mentioned in the previous report and still needs addressing. In the less effective lessons observed more could have been expected of these pupils and in the most effective lessons these pupils were successfully challenged to reach higher levels.
19. The quality of planning is variable. There is a link between the most effective teaching and the best planning. Where planning is most effective, teachers show good understanding of subjects and provide challenging activities which help all pupils to make progress. Sometimes planning fails to take sufficient account of the pupils' various stages of learning. In these instances, there is too little difference in the level of challenge of work set for the various abilities and this leads to underachievement on the part of the higher attainers. In the work scrutiny undertaken, there were examples of pupils of varying abilities producing the same work, where more could have been expected of the higher attainers.
20. Where teaching is most effective, teachers manage the pupils well, insisting on high standards of

behaviour. They challenge and inspire pupils, expecting the most of them so as to deepen their knowledge and understanding. This was the case in several lessons observed in Year 5 and Year 6, including one for the numeracy hour. A quick-fire mental arithmetic session moved at a good pace, engaging all the pupils; the teacher set the question and then called, 'Show me!' which inspired the pupils to calculate quickly. 'I want you to work neatly, with a pride in your work,' signalled the teacher's high expectations at the start of the group work where all pupils were enabled to achieve well, including those with special educational needs who were well supported by the classroom assistant. In lessons such as this, time at the end of the session is used well as a means of assessing pupils' learning in the lesson; these assessments inform the planning for the subsequent lessons.

21. In lessons such as these, all pupils are helped to learn effectively as a result of the very good teaching which has a strong influence on the pupils' enthusiasm towards work: they show interest in their work, are able to sustain concentration and think and learn for themselves. Where teaching is less effective, pupils do not always listen sufficiently well, sometimes being allowed to stray off task. Some pupils do not work as productively as they could and this can lead to a level of noise which has an adverse effect on the quality of their learning.
22. In each class, teachers carefully group pupils according to their abilities. In most lessons instruction is effective. Teachers generally use questions effectively and give instructions clearly. In most lessons, teachers ensure that pupils understand what they have to do and good routines help them to gain independence in their learning. Classrooms are usually well organised and resources readily available. Teachers and classroom assistants provide very good support for children with special educational needs, so that they make good progress towards the targets in their clear individual education plans. Good use is made of the support staff. The previous report was critical of the information and communication technology provision; this is much improved and so too is confidence amongst the staff. Increasingly the staff are making good use of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning across all curricular areas, partly through effective use of the new computer suite. Very good examples were seen of information and communication technology effectively supporting the work in English and mathematics.
23. In most lessons teachers effectively manage the behaviour of pupils, who generally respond with good co-operation and enthusiasm. Relationships between teachers and pupils and between the pupils themselves are very good and this underpins much of the teaching and the learning. This is a caring school where the classroom behaviour of the youngest and also the oldest pupils is very good and sometimes exemplary and this reflects the quality of teaching. The very good relationships are a strength of the school and contribute significantly to the pupils' learning. Teachers create a climate where pupils are confident in answering questions or offering opinions knowing that whatever their reply it will be accepted with encouragement. This is especially important for the lower attaining pupils. The teaching promotes the self-esteem of the pupils who know that they are valued. Pupils speak highly of the staff.
24. Work is marked regularly and teachers' comments are usually helpful in giving pupils encouragement and guidance on how they can improve. Teachers make useful formal and informal day-to-day evaluations of lessons which guide future plans. Homework is often used well to extend learning, although the school recognises that there is need to better communicate expectations on homework. Additionally there are firm plans to give parents more information about the curriculum, including the topics being studied. The school has a clear commitment to continue to eliminate underachievement, to raise standards and to improving the quality of teaching and learning so that all pupils are able to achieve as best they can and a good start has been made.

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

25. The curriculum of the school is satisfactory overall and is consistently very good for the youngest pupils in the school. The curriculum meets legal requirements for all subjects. The previous inspection noted shortcomings in the provision for the reception children, for information and communication technology and for physical education. These have been fully addressed for the Foundation Stage (Reception Year) and for information and communication technology; the school

has done all it can to overcome the limitations the accommodation creates for physical education. However, there are aspects of the curriculum which require sharper focus so that all pupils, especially potentially higher attainers, are enabled to maximise their achievements during their time at the school. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the previous inspection and is a strength of the school.

26. The curriculum provision for the Foundation Stage is very good; it takes account of the national guidance and covers all six areas of learning well through carefully planned, stimulating activities that provide a very good base for the pupils' work in the National Curriculum. In Years 1 to 6 the basic skills and knowledge in literacy and numeracy are developed through the national strategies. National guidance is used for all other National Curriculum subjects thus providing for the progressive development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in each subject. However, in teachers' lesson planning there are inconsistencies in the level of detail given and in the precision with which activities are set for different pupils. This variability has an impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' work. There is a need to further develop teachers' lesson planning to ensure that the needs of all the pupils, particularly those of the higher attainers, are fully addressed in each lesson.
27. Pupils with special educational needs have access to the same curriculum as all other pupils. Individual education plans have measurable, achievable targets which are regularly reviewed to assess progress and to ensure that they remain suitable for the pupils. The school is considering the provision for pupils who are gifted and talented; at the present time, one pupil is taught alongside older pupils so that he is effectively challenged and enabled to reach the higher standards of which he is capable. Good attention is paid to ensuring equality of opportunity for pupils and staff. Governors are committed to ensuring that no pupil is denied a place at the school because of race, gender or disability as demonstrated by the inclusion of a small number of pupils who have experienced behavioural difficulties in other schools.
28. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory and there is good practice that emphasises self-esteem and confidence. There are also satisfactory policies concerning sex education and drugs misuse which support the effective provision for the oldest pupils. The school provides a very good range of activities for pupils both in and out of the normal school day, which make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and personal development. These include a breakfast club, after school club, football and netball coaching, cross country running, keyboard and guitar tuition, hand chimes, choir, art club and science club. The school successfully participates in competitive sporting events with other schools and is presently top of the cross-country league.
29. A range of educational visits is organised each year to enhance learning and broaden the curriculum. These have included visits to art galleries, museums, farms and other places of interest. There are good links with the local community; this includes inviting local artists and local people with specific knowledge and experience into school who make an effective contribution to the quality of education provided. Good links with the local high school are successfully improving pupils' learning in, for example, science and information and communication technology.
30. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good and a strength of the school. This is an improvement on the good provision seen at the last inspection. The school has a strong commitment to developing pupils in all aspects of their lives and the school's work in this area contributes very well to the pupils' personal development.
31. Subjects such as religious education and art and design together with assembly times, make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Opportunities are provided within lessons and assemblies for pupils to reflect on, share and respect different values and beliefs. In one session, for example, a group of pupils had the opportunity to draw on their own experiences to help them reflect on what influences the way they behaved towards one another. Daily acts of collective worship provide pupils with very good opportunities for quiet reflection. During the inspection, the theme of Lent permeated all of these and discussions opened pupils' minds to what it is like to give up certain aspects of life. The school's excellent link with the local church results in the local clergy taking assembly in the church on a weekly basis. Through art and design, the pupils' minds are opened to the beauty of the world around them; for example, through the observational drawings of flowers done by the oldest pupils.

32. Provision for moral and social development is very good. Pupils learn to tell right from wrong. From the time they start school, pupils are successfully taught to realise what constitutes acceptable behaviour. Alongside the necessity of taking responsibility for their actions, they realise the impact of them on other people. The school celebrates the achievements of all pupils and pupils are expected to show respect and concern for one another. Teachers encourage pupils to work and play together amicably and to talk about their feelings. The school council makes a very good contribution to pupils' social development. Through the council, pupils learn to make well considered and shared decisions and to take responsibility for carrying ideas forward into practice, such as improving the school gardens and introducing 'circle time' to classes. It is enabling the pupils to become more involved in the day to day running of the school and to have a say in matters of importance to them.
33. Provision for cultural development is good. The local culture is actively promoted through the pupils' involvement in school productions, in sporting and arts activities and through their studies of the local environment. The school organises a range of events including trips to different museums to increase the pupils' appreciation of culture and heighten their aesthetic awareness. There is good provision for preparing the pupils for life in multicultural Britain. Through religious education lessons the pupils are taught to respect other faiths and beliefs. A very effective display based on the theme of 'Masks' provides a good introduction to the richness and diversity of the cultures found in different parts of the world.

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

34. The school has a strong commitment to raising standards and recognises the importance of good assessment and recording procedures to monitor improvement. Assessment procedures have improved since the previous inspection, when they were judged to be in need of better organisation in order to make them more manageable and consistent. Attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science is now systematically recorded but there are still no formal whole school procedures for assessing in other subjects. The school acknowledges that this is an area for further development.
35. Assessments are made on entry and at the end of the Reception Year using baseline assessment materials. These provide useful information and are used to ensure that pupils receive any necessary extra support at an early stage. Good procedures are in place for monitoring children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals through their time in the Reception class.
36. Formal assessments are made of English and mathematics annually using national tests and, in addition, standardised tests are set regularly in reading, spelling and mental mathematics. The achievement of each pupil is tracked and records show progress through each key stage. A member of the classroom support staff helps to maintain records of formal tests. At the beginning of the year teachers are provided with a file containing appropriate data on each pupil which is used to set appropriate targets for the class. There are, as yet, no individual targets for pupils. Day to day assessments are not always used as effectively as they could be to plan appropriate future work which caters closely for individual needs.
37. The school is beginning to focus on the collection of data and to analyse and interpret the results of pupils' attainment in national tests. Underachievement in reading was identified as a result of such analysis; this has resulted in the putting in place of a useful programme of improvement. A school review of pupils' written work revealed an inconsistency in the quality of presentation, which is also being addressed by the school. Standards of marking are now more consistent. The oldest pupils are given good guidance on how they can improve their work. Arrangements for reporting to parents are satisfactory, although the annual reports could benefit from significant development in order to provide more information.
38. The school provides a happy, family environment for its pupils. Many parents commented on the warmth of the school, the friendly staff and the way that the younger children settle very quickly into the routines of the Reception class. The staff know the pupils well and provide good practical support; this ensures that pastoral matters are dealt with promptly with pupils' individual needs being well met. This is a socially inclusive school where equal opportunities are provided for all pupils.

39. The school has many good policies and procedures for the support and guidance of the pupils. These procedures are well known to the staff, but there is a lack of formality in that most policies have not been signed or dated and there is little evidence of formal adoption by the governing body. There are very good policies on behaviour and anti-bullying, including clear arrangements for sanctions and rewards. 'Golden Time' is a reward system which the pupils appreciate and works well. The school has good procedures for the monitoring and improvement of attendance. It has been successful in eliminating the problem of holidays taken in term time, which was noted as a concern in the previous report.
40. Pupils' well being is important to the school. First aid provision is good and the accident records are well maintained. Personal, social and health education is currently satisfactory, but there are firm plans to improve the delivery through the use of additional external expertise. Citizenship is being introduced to the curriculum and a Years 3/4 lesson was observed where the class were being introduced to the subject of debating. Environmental issues are given appropriate coverage and the school is fortunate to have its own environmental area, which it is developing for curricular usage. The school promotes healthy lifestyles and this is aided by the school's own provision of nutritious lunches for the pupils.
41. The school makes good use of external agencies, including the provision of specific safety education from the emergency services personnel. Whilst the school has a suitable child protection policy, the designated teacher has not received the appropriate training. Health and safety inspections are undertaken regularly; however there is a need to continue risk assessments, particularly with regard to the recent and planned changes to the buildings and grounds.
42. Overall, there are good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. Celebration of achievement is given a high profile. There are several initiatives to promote pupils' academic progress; for example, a Year 5 boy proudly showed his medal and explained that it was awarded for improvements in his handwriting. The school is successful in meeting its aims and fulfilling its mission statement. Effective support and guidance is given to all pupils, including those with special educational needs. This support and guidance underpins the school's caring, Christian ethos.

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

43. The school has a good partnership with its parents. Parents feel welcomed and their participation is encouraged and valued. The school operates an 'open-door' policy whereby parents have very good access to teachers, should they have any queries or concerns. Several parents were observed during the inspection, entering the classrooms and speaking to the staff. There are several parents who help in school on a regular basis and during the inspection this assistance was observed to be of a very high calibre. Many other parents volunteer their help for specific occasions, such as the educational visits. The 'Friends of Singleton School' have made excellent contributions in recent years, including very good fund-raising, which has played a significant part in the building improvements, such as the new computer suite.
44. The school produces good newsletters for parents and has a useful, attractive prospectus. The information boards and work displays throughout the school give parents a good perspective of pupils' work. Information on curricular matters, such as numeracy and literacy work, is enhanced by presentation events for parents, but these are not particularly well supported. Some parents indicated that they would appreciate more direct advance information on the curriculum, including the topics being studied. The school has firm plans to address this matter and it is hoped that parents will be able to make further contributions to their children's education; for example, by researching topics on the Internet or providing artefacts. Most of the parents are satisfied with the amount of homework given to their children, but some parents feel that the school's requirements are not clear. The inspection judged that the school has a very good, clear policy on homework, although its content could be better communicated to parents.
45. The school currently has an open evening for all parents during the Spring term and also invites parents into school to discuss the end-of-year pupil reports if they wish to do so. Some parents indicated that they would prefer an additional open evening, perhaps in the autumn term. Whilst one



formal evening may be less than most other schools provide, the provision of the school's spring open evening is excellent. The school allows parents to attend at their convenience and meetings between parents and teachers can last for an extended time, which compares favourably with the short duration formal appointment evenings in most schools. The arrangements allow parents to benefit from the opportunity to gain a comprehensive insight into their children's progress and attainment. The school takes positive steps to ensure that all pupils' parents attend to see the appropriate teacher. By contrast the pupils' summer term reports are just satisfactory, giving minimal comment on progress or targets for improvement, particularly with regard to the core subjects.

46. The results of the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated strong parental agreement to the majority of statements. Discussions with many parents confirmed that they are unanimous in their praise for the school. The inspection concurs with these positive views. Overall, the school has an effective partnership with its parents. This enhances the quality of education provided.

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

47. The headteacher's very good leadership is providing clear direction for the school. Since she took up post 18 months ago she has moved the school forward considerably, building on previous strengths but identifying weaknesses and putting into practice appropriate measures for improvement. She is well supported by her staff with whom she has developed a good working relationship. She manages her teaching and administrative duties well and acts as an effective role model in the classroom. The teachers are supported by a committed team of teaching assistants who make a good contribution to the progress made by the children.
48. The school has made a satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. The issues have been largely addressed. Considerable improvements have been made to the building. Storage space has been increased. The work and resources in information and communication technology have been significantly improved enabling pupils to receive their full curriculum entitlement. The provision of a separate classroom for the Reception Year, together with planning which reflects the Early Learning Goals, has helped to ensure that pupils receive an appropriate curriculum. Teaching time at Key Stage 2 has been increased. There are now good resources in mathematics, science, geography and design and technology. There remains a need to further develop assessment procedures. The provision of more challenging work for higher attainers is still an issue and is one of the reasons for the recent trend of underachievement. Facilities for indoor physical education are still limited, although the school now uses the village hall for some indoor activities. A multi-use outside games area is soon to be provided and an improved play area for the Reception Year is also planned. The current organisation and commitment of the staff give the school a good capacity for further improvement.
49. There is a commitment to the development of self-evaluation of the school's performance with clear recognition of the role it plays in school improvement. The headteacher is well placed to lead this work, benefiting from skills she has developed through her own personal training in educational management. A positive start has been made. Assessment data is used effectively to identify areas for improvement. The role of the co-ordinator has been developed to include regular monitoring of planning, scrutiny of pupils' work, analysis of test results and some classroom observations, although most classroom monitoring has been carried out by the headteacher and the local education authority adviser. The monitoring of teaching and learning is an area for further development to ensure that there is a whole school shared perception of high standards. The school is committed to supporting initial teacher training which the headteacher considers will help the school to appraise its own teaching practice.
50. The school improvement plan needs to present a longer term view of developments; currently it covers only one year. The plan has appropriate objectives and is updated each term. All staff and governors contribute to school improvement planning which is seen as providing an agenda for improvement which includes the raising of standards.
51. The governing body is very supportive of the school. The experienced chairman provides consistently loyal and effective support and visits the school weekly. He attends all sub-committee meetings in order to keep himself fully informed of all aspects of the school's work and the progress being made.

He has an in depth knowledge of the running of the school and is a good 'critical friend'. He assumes the responsibility for producing the annual report to parents which is then approved by the full governing body. Other members of the governing body now feel more involved in the work of the school; they attend training sessions and are fully involved in development planning. The governors for literacy and numeracy observe lessons once a term. The vicar leads a church service for pupils each week. One governor teaches pupils to play hand chimes. Courses have helped to highlight the governors' role and members work well together. They rely on the headteacher and chair to keep them informed about test results and the analysis of data and recognise that they need to further develop their monitoring role. Through this, their understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development will be enhanced and they can take a more effective role in shaping the way the school develops. The good working relationships between the headteacher, staff and governors make a very positive contribution to the quality of education in school. There is evidence of a shared determination to succeed and move forward.

52. The school manages its finances and resources efficiently. The budget reflects the educational priorities. Strategic use of resources is good. Money is well used and resources deployed effectively. There is efficient monitoring of finance by the governing body. Surplus income has been and is being used to fund the recent and planned improvements to the building and in providing new furnishings. The money from specific grants is used satisfactorily for its designated purpose. The headteacher and governors work hard to ensure that the school gets the best possible value from its budget. The school has recently set up its own catering service which is proving to be very popular and is making a profit. The secretary gives very good, efficient support, dealing with routine administration and contributing well to the smooth running of the school.
53. The school is adequately staffed. The increase in pupil numbers has enabled better class organisation than at the previous inspection. This is beneficial in planning appropriate work for all pupils. Although clean, bright and well cared for, the accommodation is still only adequate. Library facilities for pupils are inadequate, although the school is very well stocked with books. The library area is very small and is sometimes used by staff working with small groups and therefore not available to other pupils. Resources are good for all areas of learning. They are generally of good quality and well maintained. They reflect the interests of children and present gender and cultural diversity in a positive way.
54. The caring ethos of the school reflects the community it serves. Staff aim to work together to provide pupils with a feeling of belonging to a happy Christian family. There are good communications between staff, children, governing body, and parents and all enjoy being part of the school. Staff are mindful of the need to treat and provide for everyone equally.
55. Effective procedures are in place for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs. An appropriate policy is in place which reflects the new Code of Practice. The relative attainment of boys and girls is considered. The small size of the school and the quality of care ensure that all pupils are treated as individuals and this enriches the quality of provision for them. This is a school which cares for its children in a supportive family atmosphere and which is rapidly becoming more effective.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

56. The governors' action plan will set out how the areas for improvement identified during the inspection are to be addressed. In order to further raise standards and the quality of education provided, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:
  - i. improve the quality of teaching and learning and standards at Key Stage 1 and the first half of Key Stage 2 by:
    - raising expectations of what higher attainers can achieve;
    - setting clearer targets for improvement, especially in reading, writing and numeracy;
    - increasing pupils' productivity in their work;
    - further developing the monitoring of teaching and learning and the role of the subject co-ordinators;

- continuing to develop the special needs support; and
- the further development of writing across the curriculum.

*(Paragraphs 4,6,8,10,18,20,79,85,86,88,94,96,98,102,117,124)*

- ii. review and improve the planning of lessons so that planning takes account of previous learning and consistently makes clear how the needs of groups of varying abilities, such as the higher attainers, are going to be met.

*(Paragraphs 20,26,88,92,98 107,120)*

- iii. further develop the assessing of attainment and progress by:

- reviewing and developing current practices in English, mathematics and science;
- creating clear systems for assessment of information and communication technology and the foundation subjects;
- creating a new policy which identifies the details, including the timescale, for assessing; and
- using the resulting data to inform the school's work in raising standards.

*(Paragraphs 34,36,92,102,107,134)*

- iv. Improve the school's self-evaluation of its own performance by:

- comparing its performance with schools nationally and with similar schools in order to set challenging targets for improvement;
- the monitoring of all aspects of provision, including standards, resources and planning;
- developing a systematic approach to subject evaluation; and
- the continuation of structured monitoring of teaching and learning which includes target setting and review.

*(Paragraphs 8,36,37,49,92)*

In addition to the above areas, the following less critical areas should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- extending the timescale and scope of the school development plan; and
- improving communication with parents in respect of homework, information about the curriculum and improving the quality of the annual reports.

*(Paragraphs 37,44,45,50,92)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

24

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

92

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	0	6	7	10	1	0	0
Percentage	0	25	29	42	4	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	98
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	9

#### English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
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#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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



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

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In accordance with statutory requirements, the results of National Curriculum assessments at Key Stage 1 are not reported as the number of pupils in Year 2 was less than 11.

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	8	13	21

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Total	17	16	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (77)	76 (85)	95 (77)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Total	18	17	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (85)	81 (85)	81 (85)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

In accordance with statutory requirements, the results of National Curriculum assessments at Key Stage 2 are reported in total and not by gender as the number of boys in Year 6 was less than 11.



### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
96	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0

*The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.5
Average class size	24.5

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

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	101

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001 - 2002
	£
Total income	304,690
Total expenditure	319,429
Expenditure per pupil	3,259
Balance brought forward from previous year	51,458
Balance carried forward to next year	36,719



### ***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 (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	98
Number of questionnaires returned	34

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	24	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	44	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	56	0	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	26	18	9	0
The teaching is good.	68	29	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	44	12	9	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	15	6	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	29	6	3	0
The school works closely with parents.	44	41	9	6	0
The school is well led and managed.	65	24	0	3	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	44	0	3	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	53	35	9	3	0

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

57. One of the school's strengths is the very good teaching in the Foundation Stage (Reception class) which ensures that the children make a very positive start to school life. The provision has improved since the previous inspection when a main issue was to ensure that the curriculum for Reception children took more account of the six areas of learning for young children. This issue has been successfully addressed with a consequent significant improvement in resources. Children are now making better progress. Although levels of attainment vary from year to year, assessments undertaken soon after the start of the Reception Year indicate that standards are slightly above what could be expected. The majority of children have had experience of pre-school education.
58. The quality of education in Reception is very good but lacks the provision of an outdoor play area; this disadvantages children in the physical area of learning. The Reception class benefits from having a relatively small number of children and the very good support of the classroom assistant who works in the Reception classroom each morning. A feature of the teaching is the very good partnership between the teacher and the classroom assistant who provide opportunities for children to learn well with high expectations, thus enabling them to achieve well relative to their abilities. The two adults provide a consistent, very supportive approach.
59. A lot of care, thought and co-operation goes into the teacher's planning of the work, which makes good use of the good range of resources which support most of the areas of learning. The school has firm plans to develop a secure outdoor environment with a range of large toys and equipment. This should enable the children to enjoy experiences across the areas of experience within an outdoor play setting. Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from the hard work and sensitivity of the adults. The supportive relationships, where every child is valued as an individual, enable the children to feel happy during their introduction to school. The parents spoken to were very appreciative of this. Self-esteem is promoted all the time and words of reassurance are heard throughout the sessions. This has a strong impact on the children's attitudes to learning. A lot of informal assessments are undertaken and there is a useful, manageable system for recording individual children's progress as they move towards and beyond the national Early Learning Goals.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

60. The vast majority of the children are in line to meet the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning and between a third and a half are likely to exceed them. Success in this area is due to the excellent level of care and the very good teaching the children receive.
61. The area of personal and social development is seen as a vital thread which underpins all the teaching and learning. Children progress very well in this area. They have gained confidence in a range of familiar and new situations; they establish very effective relationships with the adults. They learn to select and use activities and resources independently; for example, when making choices from a wide range of activities such as water and sand play, role play in the 'Vet's Clinic', playing animal dominoes, playdough, creating an animal collage and writing (a card for a class member in hospital). They understand and conform to the system which limits the number of children allowed at some activities. Children learn to share and take turns such as when mixing the ingredients for making pancakes.
62. They learn to share equipment without difficulty, are kind to one another and learn to co-operate well; for example, in throwing and catching activities in the playground. The staff's expectations are high. The children are enthusiastic about their learning and become well engaged. They learn to listen attentively to stories such as favourite ones like 'Preston Pig' and 'Old Bear'. The adults encourage the children to become independent so that they become confident in making choices and making decisions. The excellent relationships reflect the ethos of care and the value of every individual. The adults provide very good role models and treat the children with respect and friendliness.

63. Most are happy to work both with or without adult supervision and are willing to join in with adult initiated activities. The children have a positive approach to all the new experiences on offer. Their enthusiasm is clear to see such as when they are accessing new images by clicking the computer mouse. Their enthusiasm is also clear to see in the photographs which have been taken to record many of the children's activities, such as when they visit the theatre and go to a teddy bears' picnic, when they bake sugar pigs and make vegetable soup. The quality of learning is very good and children make very good progress.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

64. In this area of learning the vast majority of children will meet the Early Learning Goals, although a small number may not meet the higher level competencies such as those concerned with writing. Around a third are likely to exceed the goals. A strong emphasis is placed on early reading skills and most children make very good progress in this area which is given a very high profile. Appropriately, the teacher consistently writes down the words to describe what the class is doing; for example, in writing details of the pancake making activities for Shrove Tuesday. There is a daily sentence for the children to consider. The children are encouraged to cut and stick words as a sequence; for example, using the text from 'The Tiger who came to Tea'. The promotion of speaking skills is a high priority and virtually all the children speak with very good confidence.
65. The children listen very attentively in a large group showing good understanding, 'There are some lovely words in this story', explains the teacher. They enjoy familiar stories such as 'Suddenly' and 'Percy's Hut'. They are learning to follow instructions; for example, when playing letter recognition games. They have a growing vocabulary which shows very good progress over time. They take part in imaginative play in very good provision for role play in different situations such as an igloo, a doctor's surgery, Father Christmas' grotto, 'Under the Sea', Percy's Hut' and the home area for domestic play. They enjoy sharing and choosing books from the very good selection and benefit from very good opportunities to take books home.
66. The children listen attentively in assemblies and show good understanding of what is said to them in response to the teacher's questions and explanations. They begin to write independently and are given very good opportunities for writing; for example, writing prescriptions, invitations, postcards, letters to Father Christmas and lists of what is needed for a trip to the zoo. They enjoy books and develop word recognition skills. The vast majority are making very good progress in early reading skills. During the inspection one child told the story of 'Tree House', showing the illustrations to the class who listened very carefully. 'That's fantastic', said the teacher in the approval which typifies the approach to developing self-worth. A sound range of information and communication technology software helps the children to reinforce and practise their skills. There are plans to further develop the amount of software. The quality of teaching in this area is very good.

## **Mathematical development**

67. In this area of learning, the vast majority of children are likely to meet the Early Learning Goals and around a third will exceed them. The children work well across the various aspects of mathematical development. The children show confidence in counting and at the time of the inspection, all children knew and recognised numbers one to ten. They join in the good range of number rhymes and counting games and learn to write numbers. They learn to sequence events such as the times of the day and are beginning to sequence days of the week.
68. Children enjoy games which involve matching, sorting and sequencing. Many opportunities are taken for counting and practical activities which promote number recognition. Children are encouraged to recognise and use mathematical and positional language confidently; for example, words like 'bigger', 'smaller', 'above', 'below' and 'behind'. Most can work out one more or one less than a number from one to ten and, in practical activities and discussion, they begin to use the vocabulary involved in adding and subtracting. They are given a range of mathematical experiences and opportunities to practise these skills, including through creative work when they are encouraged to count and group objects. Very good teaching was observed in this area of development, resulting in the very good progress made in this area of learning.

## **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

69. Virtually all the children are likely to meet the goals and around a half will exceed them. The children are given a good range of experiences to help them to find out about the world and they make good progress working towards the required competencies. There are good opportunities to go out of school to learn about the local area through visits to the local woods, the church, a farm and a garage. Visits further afield include ones to a zoo, a hospital, a toy and teddy bear museum and to an aquarium in the Lake District. They learn about their own history in the family, making use of photographs. They look at old teddy bears and study Victorian toys and games. They enjoy using construction kits to make models and make pancakes to celebrate Shrove Tuesday.
70. They children plant seeds and bulbs and measure their growth. They learn about the seasons of the year and the characteristics of each one. They undertake simple experiments; as part of a topic on the Arctic they freeze and melt blocks of ice. They design and make cards and invitations, such as for the Teddy Bears' Picnic.
71. The children enjoy using the computer independently and show appropriate levels of skill in controlling the mouse to play various games; there is recognition of the need to further develop software to better support this aspect of the work. The teacher is beginning to make good use of the interactive whiteboard to teach word building. The children begin to learn about their own and other cultures and heritages partly through learning more about festivals such as Diwali and Christmas. All the indications are that the quality of the teaching in this area is good.

## **Physical development**

72. Children attain well in gross motor skills and in fine motor skills such as when they draw and write. Virtually all are all likely to attain the goals for this area of learning, with at least half likely to exceed them. The opportunities for development are affected by the lack of a designated outdoor activity area for children in the Foundation Stage. Children can only engage in energetic physical activity during their physical education lessons and at playtime. There are no opportunities for children to choose to work out of doors or to develop their skills of co-ordination and balance through using wheeled toys and large equipment, although there are some scooters.
73. There are firm plans for an outdoor play area to be created and for the development of appropriate resources, as the school is aware of this gap in its provision. Children learn to hold a pencil appropriately, control a paintbrush effectively and join pieces of construction kits. Fine motor skills are developed through a range of activities such as cutting, sticking, threading beads, modelling and manipulating mouldable materials and, as a result, most control their fingers and hands well. They handle tools, objects and materials safely. Children use the computer mouse with increasing control. The quality of teaching observed in this area of learning, such as that seen in outside work with balls, hoops and skipping ropes, was good.

## **Creative development**

74. Virtually all the children are likely to achieve the goals and between a third and a half are likely to exceed them. Children enjoy the creative area of learning which is very well taught and well provided for in the classroom. They paint and experiment with a good range of resources. They can recognise the primary colours of red, blue and yellow and they use crayons and felt tips to create increasingly colourful drawings sometimes based on the topic being studied. They paint birds, animals and snakes with great confidence; they experiment with colours and printing techniques. They make imaginative models using materials and construction kits.
75. Children are given good opportunities to use their imagination in art, dance, imaginative play and role play. They sing simple songs from memory such as 'The Pirate Song' and 'The Wheels on the Bus'. Twice a week they access the full range of musical instruments when they create sounds to accompany their stories. They are able to recognise repeated sounds and sound patterns and match movements to music. They sing a very good range of number rhymes, action songs and nursery

rhymes. The quality of imaginative play is good and children enjoy playing in the role play area.

76. The teacher and the classroom assistant are very committed to the children. The very good relationships underpin the teaching and the learning. The children respond well to the high expectations made of them, enabling them to make good progress. The parents are very appreciative of the quality of education provided, including the good level of information such as the half-termly newsletter which includes information about planned trips. The teaching and learning in the Reception class appropriately provides a very good foundation for future learning.

## ENGLISH

77. At the time of the previous inspection, standards in speaking and listening were judged to be good, a judgement upheld by this inspection. Standards in reading and writing were judged to be in line with national averages at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6. Since then there are indications of underachievement in English at both key stages; this underachievement is being tackled, most successfully in Years 5 and 6.
78. Results can and do vary from year to year given the relatively small numbers in each year group. However, it is possible to use national performance data to consider standards over time at the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6. Taking the three years from 2000 to 2002 together, national performance data indicate that the performance of pupils at the end of Year 2 in reading fell below the national average for reading. The performance in writing was broadly in line with the national average. Over these years most pupils have reached Level 2, the expected level for most seven year olds, although a significant proportion have reached the lowest grade 2C. In recent years it has been rare for a pupil in Year 2 to achieve a higher Level 3 in writing. A larger than usual size of group took the Year 6 tests in 2002. The results indicated that standards in English were in line with the national average but well below average when compared with schools with a similar intake. Taking the three years from 2000 to 2002 together, the performance of pupils in English exceeded the national average by a small margin.
79. Given the attainment of pupils on entry, standards in English over recent years have not been high enough. They represent a picture of underachievement, most notably at Key Stage 1. The previous report identified the need to provide more challenging work for the higher attainers. This is still an issue for the school so that more pupils are enabled to achieve the higher Levels 3 and 5 at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 respectively.
80. Notwithstanding the small year group, overall standards at the end of Year 2 in summer 2003 are likely to fit in with the trend of recent years of being below national averages in reading and writing because too few pupils are likely to reach Level 3. However, standards at the end of Year 6 in summer 2003 are likely to be above the national average in English with a very creditable number of pupils reaching Level 5. Although this is a more able group than in previous years, the main reason for these standards is the quality of teaching the pupils receive with its high expectations for all pupils, including those who are higher attainers. Across the range of tests undertaken at Year 2 and Year 6 there is no evidence of significant variation in the performance of boys compared with the performance of girls.
81. The school recognises the need to raise standards in English and reading in particular and has introduced useful strategies to improve the teaching and learning. Assessments undertaken over a year ago indicated that standards in reading were lower than they should be for a significant number of pupils. Targets set for development in reading are reflected in the school development plan. A whole school structured reading scheme has been introduced, aiming to improve progression and continuity through the school. In addition to guided reading during the literacy hour there are two short silent reading sessions each day. The main focus has been to improve reading standards by ensuring that reading books are well matched to ability and that pupils have sufficient time to practise their skills. Pupils now enjoy a wide range of attractive books. The variety of reading and reference books has been increased and the school is now well resourced with appropriate texts. Further initiatives such as the structured approach to spelling and the home school reading programme are helping to reinforce learning. Progress is carefully monitored and results are very encouraging, indicating that significant improvements have already been made.

82. In Years 1 and 2, the teacher promotes a love of books. Pupils are taught to find information from pictures and text. Together teacher and pupils examine books to find the title, author and illustrator and they learn about the contents page and index. They begin to distinguish between books which tell them stories and those where they can find information. Young pupils enjoy reading in the teacher directed groups and class reading sessions or when reading to an adult. Systematic teaching of basic skills is enabling them to learn their letter sounds and develop a sight vocabulary of key words. When reading individually, pupils use their phonic knowledge to build simple words.
83. A significant number of older pupils read regularly for pleasure at school and at home. During the inspection they talked enthusiastically about their books and how authors and illustrators can influence their choices. Books by Jacqueline Wilson proved to be very popular; three Year 4 pupils commented that 'she knows what children think' and 'she remembers what it was like to be a child'.
84. The school ensures that pupils read a good range of texts in literacy lessons including stories, poems, plays and factual information. The opportunities for independent library study are limited by the accommodation. Resources are supplemented by loans from the local education authority library. Very few pupils visit a public library. Although the skills being developed through the structured approach to reading now in place are very apparent, throughout the school it is still the case that too few pupils read independently with sufficient fluency and confidence.
85. There is a clear agenda to raise standards of written work, especially those of the higher attainers, in order that more pupils reach the higher Levels 3 and 5. The recent introduction of a handwriting scheme together with the school's aim that pupils should be proud of their work is beginning to have a positive impact on standards of presentation, especially at Key Stage 2.
86. At Key Stage 1 pupils write for a range of purposes; for example, retelling fairy stories such as Red Riding Hood, writing prayers and poems. Non-fiction writing includes recipes; for example, for Damson Crumble. Pupils are beginning to understand that a story has a beginning, a middle and an end. They use the structures of poems and stories which they have read, to produce their own writing. During the inspection week, poetry was a focus and pupils became competent in identifying and using rhyming words. A scrutiny of work and lesson plans indicates that there is a clear need to raise the expectations of standards of writing, especially those of the lower attaining pupils and the higher attainers. Too little progress is being made during the year because the tasks given are not always appropriate and the teacher expectations of what pupils should achieve are not sufficiently high. Too often teachers accept what the pupil offers and this often results in too little work being produced. Praise is sometimes inappropriately given for work of a poor standard. Although initially attention is paid to correctly formed letters and high standards of presentation, this is not maintained. By the end of Year 2 standards of writing and presentation are not sufficiently high.
87. At Key Stage 2, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to write for a variety of purposes and audience, such as character studies, book reviews and newspaper reports following the guidance given in the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils are beginning to understand the difference between fact and opinion and to express points of view.
88. Insufficient progress is made in writing in Years 3 and 4. Scrutiny of their work indicates that these pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write at length. Much work is done on reinforcement exercises and writing short extracts at the expense of longer personal responses. Often all abilities from both years are given virtually the same task and consequently older and higher attaining pupils make insufficient progress. These pupils can benefit from more opportunities to make a personal response in writing in subjects such as history, geography and science. Planning does not always identify clear learning objectives and appropriate expectations of what the pupils should achieve. Expectations of amount and level of work are insufficiently high and praise is sometimes inappropriately used to reward unsatisfactory work. Teacher expectations are reflected in the pupils' written work. There is a need to systematically give pupils targets for the amount and quality of work expected.
89. The quality of teaching in the Key Stage 1 class and the early Key Stage 2 class is satisfactory. In Years 5 and 6 learning objectives are more focused and the teachers' expectations of amount and

quality of work are high. Pupils are given the opportunity to write on a variety of fiction and non-fiction subjects, including science fiction and legends, autobiographies and newspaper reports. In lessons on the use of formal language, pupils use a wide range of pamphlets and evaluate the quality of information using such criteria as 'user friendliness' and 'visual appeal'. In the oldest class the quality of teaching, which is good and sometimes very good, is having a very positive impact on standards which are likely to be higher at the end of the current year than previously.

90. Across the school, speaking and listening skills are good overall. Pupils speak clearly and express themselves well. Most pupils listen carefully to teachers and other adults in the classroom. They follow instructions carefully and listen politely to the contributions of other pupils. Much work is being done, especially with the oldest pupils, to encourage them to participate more fully in class discussions. Elsewhere, skills could be better developed in introductions to English lessons when sometimes teachers accept answers from volunteers and fail to encourage the more reluctant pupils to take part.
91. Good links are made with religious education and physical education to provide opportunities to develop drama. Pupils are usually given good opportunities to express their feelings both orally and in writing. Information and communication technology is being used to support written work and there is some evidence of the development of writing through other subjects such as religious instruction and history, especially by the older pupils, but this is generally an area for further development. Work is enhanced by visits to the theatre. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported through the various initiatives aimed to boost performance and this helps them to make good progress.
92. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. A range of standardised assessments are analysed carefully and provide useful information on progress made and future priorities. Day by day assessments by teachers of pupils' performance are not always used sufficiently well in lesson planning. The language co-ordinator now plays a more active role in monitoring teaching and learning through scrutiny of planning and pupils' work. Termly audits are used to establish milestones and an annual action plan for literacy is produced. Regular homework is set although there is a need to clarify arrangements with parents. The English policy needs review in light of recent developments made. The school has appreciated the guidance it has received from the local education authority support team in helping to raise standards. A very positive start has been made, but more remains to be done, most notably in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4.

## **MATHEMATICS**

93. At the time of the previous inspection, standards in mathematics at the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6 were judged to be broadly in line with the national averages and there were high hopes of improvement. An issue of the report was to ensure that the tasks given to pupils, including those who are higher attainers, were more consistently matched with their capabilities. This issue has not been fully addressed. Since that time, the indications are that standards have risen at Key Stage 2 but not at Key Stage 1. Given the relatively small number of pupils in each group, standards can and do vary from year to year. Nevertheless national performance data make it possible to consider standards over a period of time. Taking the three years from 2000 to 2002 together, the performance of pupils at the end of Year 2 in mathematics fell significantly below the national average. In 2002, standards at the end of Year 6 were in line with the national average, although the performance over three years between 2000 and 2002 was slightly above the national average.
94. Over this period of time, most Key Stage 1 pupils reached Level 2 in mathematics, the expected level for most seven year olds, but too few have reached the higher Level 3. Similarly in recent years, most pupils have reached the expected Level 4 at the age of 11, but too few have reached the higher Level 5. This indicates that the issue of providing challenging work for the higher attainers has not been fully addressed. The overall results suggest that there has been some underachievement, especially at Key Stage 1.
95. The headteacher is putting strategies in place to eliminate the underachievement of the recent past, although currently this is being addressed much more successfully with the Year 5 and Year 6 pupils. In Years 1, 2, 3, and 4 progress is too slow. Although the current Year 2 is a relatively small group, the likelihood is that overall standards in mathematics at the end of Year 2 in summer 2003 will fit in



with the recent trend of being below the national average because too few pupils reach Level 3. Standards are rising amongst the oldest pupils where underachievement is being successfully eliminated. Standards in the summer 2003 are likely to be above the national average. The main reason for these standards is the high quality of teaching the pupils are receiving which is enabling all pupils to achieve well. A significant proportion of the pupils will reach the higher Level 5.

96. At Key Stage 1 and also the first half of Key Stage 2, the targets set for improvement need to reflect higher expectations of the amount and level of work set for higher attaining pupils. In Years 1 and 2, pupils develop a sound grasp of number. They learn to use mental strategies to solve simple problems using counting, addition, subtraction, doubling and halving. They are able to use the mathematical names for common two and three-dimensional shapes; they can sort shapes and describe some of their features. By the end of Year 2, whilst most pupils use mental recall of addition and subtraction facts to 20 in order to solve problems, more could be expected of the higher attainers.
97. By the end of Year 6, the majority of pupils are able to manipulate large numbers with ease. They are developing their own methods of solving problems and applying them in practical tasks. They use decimals, vulgar fractions and percentages in a variety of contexts, accurately and confidently. They understand negative numbers and can work out complex number patterns and use this knowledge to make predictions. The attainment of the higher attainers in using and applying mathematics is good; they are developing a good logical approach to solving complicated questions. They are able to talk confidently about their mathematics; they give clear explanations of their methods and reasoning, using appropriate mathematical language.
98. Teaching in the Key Stage 1 class and early Key Stage 2 class is satisfactory overall. In the oldest class it is good and sometimes very good and the teaching impacts on the rate of progress made by the pupils. Where teaching is most effective there are very high expectations of the amount, quality and level of work produced, lessons move at a brisk pace and the discussion at the end of the session is used very effectively to move pupils on to the next stage of learning. All pupils are enabled to achieve well relative to their abilities. In some lessons observed the pace of work was too slow. The quality of the planning is variable. Although work is planned for differing abilities, there is sometimes insufficient difference in the level of work set for the pupils. It can be too easy for the higher attainers who could tackle more challenging activities. A scrutiny of work showed that there are times when pupils of varying abilities produce the same work. In the lessons observed there was good support by the classroom support assistants in helping the lower attainers, including those with special educational needs.
99. In the best lessons, effective whole class instruction and skilful questioning help to raise the quality of pupils' thinking. Work is marked regularly and usually includes helpful comments. Opportunities are provided to use mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum such as science and geography, for example, in work on co-ordinates. Pupils use information and communication technology to support their learning; for example, in problem solving in numeracy in Years 3 and 4. Work in mathematics is reinforced by regular homework, although parents need to be helped to have a clearer understanding of the school's expectations.
100. Standards are beginning to rise, most notably in Years 5 and 6 and there is a commitment to increase the number of pupils reaching the higher levels. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator. Procedures for assessing pupils' work are satisfactory. Good use is now being made of the optional National Curriculum tests and there are regular assessments of mental arithmetic. The school has a good range of resources and materials with firm plans to increase the amount of computer software to support the teaching and learning and to further develop the use of the interactive whiteboard.

## **SCIENCE**

101. Standards at the end of Year 6 in summer 2003 are likely to be above the national average. This represents a positive judgement compared with the previous inspection when standards were judged to be in line with those seen nationally. It also reflects a very good improvement on the results of the Key Stage 2 test results in 2002 where the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was below average. Although this is a higher attaining year group, standards are directly affected by the good

quality teaching in Years 5 and 6 which enables pupils of all abilities to achieve well and make good progress. This teaching which enables all pupils to achieve the best they can is not sufficiently widespread throughout the school. Overall, teaching needs to be improved further in order to raise attainment and to present opportunities for higher attaining pupils to extend their learning. Teachers' planning does not always go far enough in identifying suitably challenging activities for the higher attainers.

102. At the last inspection standards were judged to be in line at the end of Year 2. Currently, notwithstanding the relatively small year group, standards at the end of Year 2 are below the national average. This is because although most pupils reach Level 2, the expected level for most seven year olds, too few will reach the higher Level 3. The results of the teacher assessments for the end of Key Stage 1 in 2002 confirm this picture; no pupils achieved the higher Level 3 as none have since 1998. A detailed scrutiny of pupils' work at Key Stage 1 together with discussions with pupils showed that the curriculum for science is fully in place but the higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged and they underachieve. Assessment needs to be more focused to secure the teacher's understanding of how much progress is being made.
103. Pupils in Year 2 have sound scientific knowledge. They talk about their work on electricity and describe how a simple circuit works. They know the main parts of a flower and the conditions plants require for healthy growth. Scrutiny of pupils' workbooks indicates that investigative work is limited so they find it difficult to make predictions about possible outcomes and are not familiar with what makes tests fair. Although their work shows a satisfactory coverage of the curriculum, teacher expectation of what pupils can do is not high enough. This limits the progress which pupils make and this is especially so for the potentially higher attainers.
104. In Years 3 and 4, the teacher places an emphasis on the basic skills of investigation and the different ways in which pupils can record their results. The teacher's good subject knowledge has an impact on the pupils' learning and the sound progress they make. Effective questioning successfully explores and develops pupils' knowledge and understanding. This was seen in a lesson where pupils used a classification key to investigate the properties of different rock samples to find out whether they were igneous, sedimentary or metamorphic. The activity built on previous work and the pupils drew effectively on their prior scientific knowledge to support their learning. Pupils were encouraged to discuss their findings and work collaboratively. They made effective progress in their investigative skills through a well-structured approach. For example, they were given a scaffold to work from which included such headings as, 'What are we trying to find out?', 'How are we going to do it?', 'What will we need?', 'Is it a fair test?' and 'What is the result?' This effectively developed pupils' understanding of fair testing.
105. The higher attaining Year 4 pupils can give sound reasons in drawing conclusions as could be seen in their investigation into the characteristics of materials. The good quality teaching in Years 5 and 6 enables pupils to make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of science and in their investigative skills. From scrutiny of workbooks and discussions with the pupils it is evident that they have a good grasp of life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. For example, one pupil explained, 'When chocolate melts it is a temporary physical change and as it cools it will begin to change back into a solid. It's also possible to freeze water and change it into a solid'. Investigative skills are effectively developed through, for example, separating mixtures of materials. Pupils show appropriate ability to identify the need for a fair test and to be able to plan and carry one out independent of the teacher. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for and make good progress throughout the school and there is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls in science tests or in the work observed.
106. Throughout the school, there is some use of information and communication technology to enhance pupils' scientific learning but this is an area in need of further development. By the time that they are in Year 6, most pupils communicate their findings clearly, using correct scientific vocabulary but need to develop ways of recording their ideas in a variety of formats. They make effective use of literacy skills in their investigative report writing and their labelled scientific diagrams.
107. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The very enthusiastic co-ordinator is having a positive impact on the way scientific skills are taught in Key Stage 2 and this is beginning to

be seen in the pupils' improved standards and progress. Lesson planning needs to have a sharper focus, especially in Key Stage 1 and the first half of Key Stage 2, so that all pupils, especially potentially higher attainers, are enabled to maximise their potential and make better progress. Assessment needs to be more focused also, to secure teachers' understanding of how much progress is being achieved and to target individual and groups of pupils as a vehicle for driving up standards. The co-ordinator runs an after school science club which raises the profile of the subject in the school and enhances the learning of the pupils. The school is well placed to continue to improve.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

108. Because of the organisation of the school's timetable, it was only possible to observe one art and design lesson during the inspection. The quality of the teaching in this Key Stage 1 lesson was good and resulted in the pupils making good progress. Evidence from work on display, discussions with pupils, an examination of a portfolio of pupils' past work and photographic evidence indicate that standards are above national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards have improved since the last inspection when they were judged to be satisfactory. Throughout the school all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.
109. At Key Stage 1, pupils practise their drawing skills by using pencils, crayons, wax and pastels. They are effectively taught to closely observe the detail they see in the objects presented to them. This was seen in the good Year 1 and Year 2 lesson observed where the pupils studied 'portraits'. They carefully looked at the work of the famous artists Renoir and Van Gogh, which enabled them to reflect on the work of different artists. Looking closely at a partner's face they described what they saw, with particular attention to hair, eyes, eyebrows, ears, nose and mouth. They also looked in a mirror to check out their own facial features and then sketched the face they could see to create a self-portrait. The increasing pencil control of the Year 2 pupils resulted in good use of line and detail to make the portraits life-like. The teacher had good subject knowledge and assessed pupils' knowledge and understanding through good questioning skills. Her instructions and explanations were clear and this engaged the pupils' attention. The pupils listened well and asked questions and expressed opinions when looking at the work of other artists. This good teaching enables the pupils to make good progress in their art and design work.
110. At Key Stage 2, pupils learn to work with a wider range of art materials and the teachers plan activities to include opportunities for pupils to learn about the work of famous artists and artists from other cultures. In Years 3 and 4, the pupils study the traditions of the North American Indian and create attractive 'dream catchers' through the effective use of card, coloured threads, string, beads and feathers. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils study the work of David Hockney and compose effective expanding images using film negatives and unwanted prints. This work calls for the pupils to reflect on their own responses to what they see and gives them opportunities to express themselves in different ways. A very effective display of Year 5 and Year 6 work, based on a study of feelings, shows how masks can express, for example, anger, shock, humour and fear. This helps the pupils to achieve a good understanding of how art and life are interrelated.
111. Pupils are encouraged to explore new techniques and to refine their skills in drawing, painting and making. For example, in Years 3 and 4, the pupils investigate pattern by tying and dyeing small pieces of fabric. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils' use of acrylic paint, water colour, inks and pastels is effectively developed through observing and painting images of flowers. A very striking display of Years 5 and 6 pencil drawings depicting the 'Hands of the Apostle' encourages pupils to be reflective. Alongside one pair of praying hands a pupil wrote, 'Help me with all my fears'. Art and design makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal, spiritual, moral and cultural development. Pupils are successfully taught to appreciate the wonders of nature and the displays provide good opportunities for reflection. Information and communication technology is used effectively in art and design, including digital photography to examine facial features.
112. The art curriculum is enhanced by an after school art club which is run by a classroom support assistant. At the time of the inspection, the group was busy making human sculptures from wire, paper and a modelling medium. The subject is well led and well resourced with plans to develop simple assessments.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

113. Standards of attainment in design and technology overall are satisfactory with some good elements. They were satisfactory at the previous inspection. Only one lesson was seen during this inspection, but the scrutiny of work, teachers' planning and photographic evidence indicate that pupils are receiving a relevant curriculum covering the required programmes of study and are generally making appropriate progress.
114. Design and technology is linked well to other areas of the curriculum and teachers provide a range of interesting projects. Young pupils use construction kits, textiles and recycled materials to make models. They undertake simple sewing projects. They recently made designs for a climbing frame to be built in their new play area; they examined an existing frame measuring different components and looking at safety aspects. Years 3 and 4 pupils designed healthy sandwiches as part of a science project. They set up a shop to sell their products and the money earned was used to buy resources for the classroom. They also designed and built a model village using timber-framed constructions which varied in complexity according to the age and ability of the pupils.
115. The oldest pupils made a Victorian theatre and puppets to support work in literacy. They took apart old shoes or slippers and used the pieces as a basis for their designs when making slippers. Masks were created from photographs using a digital camera and then adapted to make them appear more sinister. Pupils observed making amulets as part of an African project worked with care and talked enthusiastically about the background to their work. The designs they produced needed further refinement as they did not identify clearly the way components would be joined.
116. The evidence shows that pupils are given the opportunity to work with a wide range of materials. The extra help they get from classroom assistants and volunteers helps them to improve their skills. Visits to museums such as Magna and the studio of a local glass blower enhance the work. The oldest pupils spend a very valuable day each year at a local college of further education where they have the opportunity to sample a number of adult skills; for example, plumbing, decorating and carpentry. Year 5 pupils made clocks, now proudly displayed in the school hall, using the special facilities of a local public school. Pupils have the opportunity to further develop food technology skills in 'Golden Hour'. The subject is soundly led and the school now has a good range of resources. Simple assessments are undertaken. The policy for design and technology has recently been updated and the school makes use of nationally prescribed guidelines to plan the work.

## GEOGRAPHY

117. Although just one lesson was observed, a scrutiny of the pupils' work indicates that standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 reach those expected nationally and pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards remain the same as seen at the last inspection. Interesting lessons are provided, but the work is not always challenging enough for the potentially higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 and the first half of Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for and make good progress throughout the school.
118. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 can describe features of the school local environment and the characteristics of the different seasons. They develop appropriate mapping skills by planning a route to school. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 develop their mapping skills further by drawing a map of Singleton and successfully locate for example, the school, post office, village hall, fire station and housing. Pupils' understanding of the local environment is effectively developed. They draw plans of the school and adjacent areas and make suggestions for improvement; one pupil wrote, 'There ought to be a fence where the road is' and another commented, 'I think we should have some more play areas because there'll be more to do and it will look better.' Pupils in Years 5 and 6 develop their knowledge and understanding of rivers by studying the journey of a river. They can identify such features as source, tributary, rapid, valley, flood plain and estuary and use their literacy skills well to make good quality labelled diagrams. They show a sound knowledge and understanding of the relationship between people and rivers; for example, they can describe how rivers provide water for drinking, irrigation and transport.

119. In a well-prepared, well taught lesson, the pupils in Years 5 and 6 examine the responses to a questionnaire given to local inhabitants. They show interest in their work and effectively develop a good understanding of how the features of a place can change and how such changes affect the activities and lives of the inhabitants. They make good use of their literacy skills to write an evaluation of the responses to each question. There are good links to information and communication technology; for example, older pupils carry out a traffic survey and produce a spreadsheet of the results and the higher attaining pupils successfully create a pie chart using a software program.
120. There is satisfactory curricular provision. The school makes effective use of the immediate environment and visits to places such as the Lake District to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject further. The enthusiastic co-ordinator has ensured that the resources are well matched to the demands of the geography curriculum and this is an improvement since the last inspection. In teachers' planning there is a need to identify much more specifically what is expected of the higher attaining pupils. Such pupils are not always provided with work that is sufficiently demanding because the tasks for them are the same as for all pupils.

## HISTORY

121. No lessons were observed in history during the inspection. However, evidence from discussions with pupils, a scrutiny of their work, teachers' planning and displays, suggest that pupils are receiving a relevant curriculum covering the required programmes of study and that standards are broadly in line with those expected. This upholds the judgement of the previous inspection. The history policy has recently been updated and the introduction of nationally prescribed guidelines is helping to ensure adequate coverage of topics.
122. At Key Stage 1, pupils are introduced to the idea of change and the passing of time. By studying pictures, photographs and artefacts they make comparisons between olden days and the present. They learn about the differences in styles of clothes and homes; for example, those of the Victorians. They learn about the lives of children, their games and their visits to the seaside. They are introduced to important figures in history such as Guy Fawkes. By the end of Year 2, pupils have examined a range of evidence and are beginning to notice similarities and differences between periods in history.
123. At Key Stage 2, pupils begin to understand the reasons for changes that have taken place in history. They develop their research skills, using books, pictures, videos and artefacts as sources of information. Through a study of the ancient Greeks and Egyptians, they learn about different lifestyles and how different beliefs affect people's lives. They look at the differences between the lives of the rich and poor in Tudor times. They learn about the effect of power by studying the life of Henry VIII and how he changed the rules to suit his own purposes. The contrast between rich and poor is explored through further study of the Victorians. The oldest pupils study World War II and learn that the experiences of children who were evacuees depended on how the families they lived with treated them. In well written booklets, Years 5 and 6 pupils have expressed their feelings in diaries and letters home to parents. The study of post war Britain included the life of the Beatles.
124. Only a limited amount of written work was seen but indications are that this is an area for further development. Some written assignments given were the same for all pupils in the class regardless of age and ability and provided little challenge for the higher attainers who produced the same level of work as the other pupils.
125. School artefacts are well organised and the co-ordinator keeps an inventory and makes notes of any future needs as the curriculum is developed. The subject is soundly led. Simple assessments are undertaken. The school resources are supplemented by loans borrowed from other sources. A member of the local community talks to the pupils about life in the village and supplies some resources for these sessions. The school is planning to set up its own loan service in conjunction with one of the local museums. Pupils visit places of historical interest such as castles and museums including the Judge's Lodging House in Lancaster. The further development of history has recently been delayed because of the appropriate focus on literacy and numeracy. However, developments, including a review of staff development needs, the use of the local community, the co-ordination of visits and the use of information and communication technology to support history are to be addressed in the near future.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

126. Information and communication technology was an issue in the previous report which identified insufficient resources and the fact that pupils were not receiving their National Curriculum entitlement. Since then resources have been improved significantly, staff confidence is much higher and the pupils are now receiving their entitlement.
127. Standards in information and communication technology are improving at a rapid pace. It is the judgement of the inspection team that, if this continues, standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 will be broadly in line with national expectations. At the time of the inspection the school had recently set up a brand new information and communication technology suite in a mezzanine area above the school hall. This has been achieved through a tremendous amount of fund raising by the headteacher, staff, governors, parents and local community and is to be commended. The suite, of 13 computers, is a vast improvement on the previous provision and is having a significant impact on the pupils' progress. The suite benefits greatly from an interactive whiteboard which is beginning to significantly enhance the teaching and learning of information and communication technology in the school.
128. Teachers also have the opportunity to develop information and communication technology skills and support pupils learning in other areas of the curriculum in classrooms as each room has at least one computer. An effective scheme of work is in place based on national guidelines which enables teachers across the school to plan teaching and learning with clear progression of skills and understanding which will enable pupils to sustain better progress. As a result, early indications are that standards are improving rapidly because of the introduction of the new resources which allows all pupils enough access to computers for them to reach the standards they are capable of achieving.
129. At Key Stage 1, Year 2 pupils were observed making good progress using the computers in the suite. The good teaching used an appropriate combination of demonstration, questioning and pupil participation. The teacher's expectation of what pupils were able to achieve was well matched to their abilities and her effective use of the interactive whiteboard enhanced the teaching and learning. Using the software program 'Dazzle Plus' pupils selected icons to draw lines to create pictures. As the pupils were given time to practise these new skills their confidence grew and the progress they made in the lesson was rapid. All pupils experienced success and showed the appropriate skills of moving the cursor through the mouse as they picked and dragged simple mark making tools successfully. Higher attaining pupils successfully selected colour from a colour palette and used the flood fill tool to create highlights of colour between the lines they had drawn. Most pupils can save their work to a floppy disk. Through the good teaching, excellent resources and focused support the pupils are making rapid progress and will soon reach the standards expected for their age.
130. At Key Stage 2, the teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. In some lessons there is a lack of pace and expectation of what pupils can achieve and this impacts on the progress pupils could make, especially the potentially higher attainers. Teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboard; for example, in demonstrating how to add graphics to the text by importing images from a picture bank.
131. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils made good progress in interrogating a CD-ROM in preparation for written work in religious education. The teacher gave clear instructions on how to use the program with an emphasis on note-taking skills and this impacted on pupils' understanding of what is expected and the progress they made. The intervention and guidance ensured all pupils were focused on their work and experienced success and made good progress. The grouping of the pupils allowed nearly every pupil to have a computer which also enhanced progress. Discussion with the older pupils showed that they have a sound understanding of information and communication technology and its application to a range of word processing and graphics tasks. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for and make good progress throughout the school.
132. Pupils support one another in their learning by offering advice and demonstrating their successes. They are patient when waiting for assistance from an adult and their behaviour is usually very good. The teachers are establishing good working routines; for example, the way in which pupils regularly

save their work and shut down the systems so that they are ready for the next session.

133. There is good evidence across the school to show that the use of information and communication technology is being incorporated in a range of subjects. For example, Years 1 and 2 pupils program a robotic vehicle in mathematics and pupils in Years 5 and 6 use mathematics programs to develop knowledge and understanding of two and three dimensional shapes. Pupils experience word processing to enhance their work in English as seen in Years 3 and 4 where they plan a story. They also use a digital camera and download images of their faces and add text to create a wanted poster. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 create spreadsheets and use graphical representation in geography. They successfully interrogate CD-ROMs and Internet sites to carry out independent research about other faiths. They have experience of a multimedia presentation using a video camera and tape recorder and there are plans to purchase appropriate computer software to extend the scope of this work and develop pupils' skills further.
134. The current co-ordinator has been in post for a relatively short time and is knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subject. Resources are now very good and well matched to the capabilities of the pupils as well as to the demands of the information and communication technology curriculum. Staff have received training to enable them to use the new resources effectively in their teaching. This has ensured that spending on new resources is efficient and improves standards. There is clear recognition of the need to develop whole school assessment practices to monitor the pupils' attainment and progress. The school has improved standards since the last inspection and has improved the quality of teaching and the breadth of the information and communication technology curriculum. The subject is very well placed for further development and for pupils to make more rapid progress.

## **MUSIC**

135. The planning for music indicates that the appropriate strands of learning are covered, guided by the use of the nationally prescribed scheme of work and supported by the materials from a commercial scheme of work. During the inspection just one lesson was seen which included some singing and simple percussion playing. During the assemblies seen, pupils sang tunefully and enthusiastically. There is little or no evidence of music work in books or on display and during the inspection no work was seen on listening and appraising of music or on composition. Because of these factors, there was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements on standards in music.
136. In the lesson observed in Years 1 and 2 pupils very much enjoyed singing; they derived pleasure from making music in a class group. They learned to adapt their voices to singing different songs such as an adapted one called 'Singleton School has an infant band'. The pupils responded well to signals from the teacher to sing loudly and softly, quickly and slowly. They were able to clap to the beat of 'Pass the box around' and played simple percussion accompaniment. When the teacher tapped the rhythm of their own names they were able to recognise that as a signal. By the end of Year 2, pupils are beginning to develop good listening and recall skills and some pupils show good musical ability.
137. Although no lessons were seen at Key Stage 2, planning indicates that pupils are given opportunities to build on previous experiences and further develop their musical skills. They learn to sing traditional songs such as 'John Brown's Body' and 'Green Grow the Rushes O!'. In identifying and practising rhythm patterns, they understand the differences between minims, quavers and crotchets.
138. The quality of teaching in the one lesson observed was satisfactory with some good features; there was a good emphasis on encouraging pupils to improve their work and the teaching and learning was underpinned by the very good relationships. Pupils enjoy all aspects of music and participate with enthusiasm. Pupils of all ages enjoy singing and recall the words and music of hymns and songs in the daily acts of collective worship, including the two weekly visits to the nearby church.
139. The indications are that the school is meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum even though there is no teacher with specialist knowledge. A good number of pupils benefit from peripatetic teaching in the keyboard and guitar and there are firm plans to introduce recorder groups for Key Stage 2 pupils. One of the governors teaches hand chimes to a group of pupils, enabling

them to play in church. Around 25 pupils sing in the choir which performs locally at an old folks' home. All pupils are involved in singing and performing in the annual Christmas performance such as ones of 'It's a Baby', and 'Follow that Star' and in the annual summer concert such as the previous year's 'Across the Decades'.

140. The newly designated co-ordinator is only just beginning to have an impact on the work which is well resourced with a good selection of tuned and untuned percussion instruments. There are plans to develop simple assessments. There are plans to introduce the use of information and communication technology to support the work, for example, in composition. Pupils could benefit from more opportunities to keep a record of their work in music, an aspect of the work which is currently underdeveloped.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

141. No lessons were observed in physical education during the inspection and so no judgements can be made on standards or the quality of teaching. At the time of the previous inspection standards were judged to be satisfactory.
142. The school follows nationally prescribed guidelines and planning shows that most areas of the curriculum are taught. As at the previous inspection, some aspects of gymnastic work using large apparatus cannot be taught because of the constraints of the school hall. However, provision has been enhanced by using the village hall where each class has one lesson per week of gymnastics or dance. Some dance activities take place in classrooms as part of drama lessons. The school makes very good use of the outdoor area for lessons whenever possible to compensate for the inadequate indoor facilities. At present, Year 3 pupils benefit from regular swimming lessons at a local pool.
143. The school provides a good range of games including hockey, football, rounders and netball. The school playing field has appropriate markings for all these activities and also has a running track. It is used whenever possible. The forthcoming provision of an all weather multi-purpose pitch will enable pupils to practise their skills on a more regular basis. The subject is adequately resourced. There are plans to develop simple assessments.
144. A substantial number of older pupils benefit from a good range of extra-curricular activities. Football, netball and rounders teams play matches against other schools. Cross-country running is organised at lunchtime by the enthusiastic co-ordinator. The pupils regularly join pupils from other schools for cross-country events and they achieve well against pupils from larger schools. The school takes part in an annual swimming gala. A student from a local school assists with football coaching. Providing the range of activities is a heavy commitment for such a small staff, this being particularly so for the enthusiastic co-ordinator.