

INSPECTION REPORT

**LITTLE DIGMOOR PRIMARY SCHOOL AND
NURSERY**

Skelmersdale

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119297

Headteacher: Mrs Irene Campbell

Reporting inspector: Susan Walker
21045

Dates of inspection: Jan 31 – Feb 4 2000

Inspection number: 190256

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Abbeystead
Skelmersdale
Lancashire

Postcode: WN8 9NF

Telephone number: 01695 724539

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr David Swiffen

Date of previous inspection: November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Susan Walker Registered inspector	English Art History	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed?
Roger Watts Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Alan Keenleyside Team inspector	Mathematics Information technology Design and technology Music Children under five	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Graham Laws Team inspector	Science Religious education Geography Music Special educational needs	How well are pupils taught?

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The Registrar
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is an average sized primary school with 172 pupils aged from three to eleven. It has a nursery class accommodating thirty children who attend part time. A further nine children are taught full time in the reception class. The number of pupils on roll has fallen significantly in the past year, in common with other schools in the area. The number of pupils on roll in the school fluctuates considerably from year to year due to the mobility of pupils and families. In year 1998/9 there were 30 admissions to the school but 47 pupils left or transferred to other schools. The number of admissions in reception has halved in the past two years due to the falling birth rate in the area. This has had a big impact on the budget, resulting in a loss of staff through redundancy and a reduction in class numbers from three to two in Key Stage 1. There is a significant gender imbalance throughout the school, there being far more boys than girls. Testing of pupils when they start school reveals a variable picture, but generally pupils start school with levels of attainment that are lower than average. The school serves the nearby housing estate on the edge of Skelmersdale. There is high unemployment in the area and much social and economic deprivation. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The pupils are all of white ethnic origin. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is in line with national average. None of the pupils has a statement of special educational need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Little Digmoor Primary School provides a satisfactory level of education for its pupils although standards in English in both key stages and in science in Key Stage 1 remain below the national average. The management of the school and teaching and learning are both satisfactory. Despite the very high costs per pupil, when account is taken of the contextual factors the school continues to provide satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The provision for children under the age of five is good.
- Assessment procedures for the under fives are used effectively.
- Standards in physical education in Key Stage 2 are better than those found typically in primary schools.
- There are pockets of excellent and very good teaching in both key stages.

What could be improved

- Standards in English in both key stages and in science in Key Stage 1 are not high enough.
- There is insufficient rigorous monitoring of the work of the school.
- Assessment is not used well enough to help teachers know the capabilities of their pupils and plan for them accordingly.
- Governors are not sufficiently involved with curriculum and development planning.

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 November 1996. Since then satisfactory progress overall has been made in addressing the key issues for action though some areas still need further improvement.

- The provision for religious education has improved well and statutory requirements are now met. Schemes of work have been extended and planning for the subject is better than it was. The provision for pupils' spiritual needs is now satisfactory.
- The school development plan is now more detailed and identifies success criteria, though some of these are imprecise and do not yet provide a framework to support effective monitoring.
- Subject co-ordinators have clear roles defined in job descriptions though some are more effective than others in influencing teaching and learning in their subjects. Time has been allocated for the monitoring of core subjects by co-ordinators. This is done informally with no clear focus and it is insufficiently rigorous to be fully effective.
- Medium term planning has been improved. Policies and schemes of work provide a sound basis for planning to ensure that there is continuity in the curriculum and all elements of the National Curriculum are covered.
- Attainment in science has improved in Key Stage 2 though not in Key Stage 1 where teaching at the end of the key stage is insecure. In mathematics standards have risen slightly, particularly in the application of number.
- There remains insufficient provision for high achievers to enable them to make enough progress.
- The provision for the under fives have been improved significantly and this is now a strength of the school.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	E	C	E	E	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	E	D	E	E	
science	E	D	E	D	

The table shows that results of national tests in 1999 for eleven-year-olds in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science were well below average. When compared to similar schools the results in English and mathematics were well below average. In science they were below average. Results in 1998 were higher than in 1999, being in line with national average in English, but below average in mathematics and science. The results in this key stage fluctuate considerably from year to year, depending on the proportion of pupils with special educational needs. In 1999 no pupils achieved level five in English. In mathematics and science a very small number of pupils reached this level, which is well below average. Nevertheless, the trend in the school's average scores over a four-year period is improving at the same rate as the national trend. Inspection judgements place standards lower than expected in English in both key stages and in science in Key Stage 1; in mathematics in both key stages and in science in Key Stage 2 standards are judged to be typical for the pupils' ages. In religious education and information technology standards in both key stages are in line with expectation. Standards in physical education in Key Stage 2 are better than those found typically in primary schools.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Most pupils are sensible both in class and around the school. Some pupils are inattentive or restless in class when insufficiently motivated.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Many pupils are willing to take on responsibilities and participate in after-school activities. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in the life of the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The school has good measures in place to address the persistent lateness of some pupils.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Of the teaching observed two per cent was excellent, eleven per cent was very good, thirty per cent was good, fifty two per cent was satisfactory and five per cent was unsatisfactory. There is strength in the quality of teaching for children under five, which enables them to make good progress in their first months in school. The teaching of English and mathematics throughout the school is sound. Teachers have secure skills in the teaching of phonics though they do not always promote the skills with pupils to best effect in lessons beyond the literacy hour. In the best lessons teachers provide stimulating activities that challenge pupils and capture their imagination. When teaching is sound rather than good it often lacks pace and imagination. Unsatisfactory teaching is characterised by insecure class control.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good for the under fives. Sound in Key Stages 1 and 2. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. There is a wide range of sporting extra-curricular activities but less provision for pupils with other interests.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good for children under five. Satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils who attend literacy support classes make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. Spiritual development is fostered appropriately through religious education and assemblies, where pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own experiences and feelings. Pupils are effectively encouraged to respect the beliefs and values of others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has an ethos that promotes the care and happiness of the pupils but assessment is not used well enough to track pupils' progress.

There is little parental involvement in the work of the school. Despite the school's efforts to communicate with parents their involvement is not providing sufficient support.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Sound overall. The school is working hard to raise attainment but there is not enough rigorous monitoring. Current systems are too informal and do not have enough impact.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are supportive and contribute to the running of the school but they have little involvement in strategic or curriculum planning and consequently do not have enough knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has recently begun to analyse results of national tests but the information is not used fully to evaluate strengths and weaknesses or to target areas for further development.
The strategic use of resources	Sound. Appropriate priorities for development have been identified and are supported by careful financial planning. The school adopts the principles of best value when making purchases.

The school is generously staffed and classes small, though there is little additional support for the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Resources for learning are generally satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents would feel comfortable to approach the school with any queries or problems. • Parents think the school has high expectations. • Most parents think the teaching is good. • They are happy that pupils enjoy school and make good progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many parents would like to see more homework given. • Some are not happy with the range of after school activities. • Some do not think that the school works closely enough with parents.

Inspection evidence supports parents' positive views regarding teaching and the ethos of the school although expectations of what pupils might achieve are not as high as they should be in some classes. Inspectors endorse some of the parent' concerns. There is considerable inconsistency in the way in which homework is allocated. The range of after-school activities provides mainly for those pupils with sporting interests but makes little provision for creative or cultural pursuits. There is little parental involvement despite the school's efforts to encourage more parents to take part in activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1 Results of national tests in 1999 for eleven-year-olds indicate that attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science was well below average. When compared to similar schools the results in English and mathematics were well below average.

2 The results in Key Stage 2 fluctuate considerably from year to year, depending on the proportion of pupils with special educational needs. In addition, a significant number of pupils join the school midway through the key stage and this can have a detrimental effect on the continuity of their education. Results in 1999 showed a considerable 'dip', attributable to the high number of lower attaining pupils in the year group. None of the pupils achieved level five in English; in mathematics and science only a very small number of pupils reached this level. This is well below average. In contrast, results in 1998 indicated that the school's performance in all core subjects was well above the average for similar schools.

3 The trend over time from 1996 - 1999 shows a steady improvement in mathematics and science, though standards were still lower than the national average. The steady rising trend in mathematics and science was growing closer to the national average year on year, but dropped in 1999. In 1998 results in all three subjects came close to the national average for the first time. English performance remained static between 1996 and 1997, but in 1998 it rose sharply to reach the national average for the first time. In 1999 there was a significant drop to a point lower than in either 1996 or 1997. Despite this, the trend in the school's average scores over a four-year period is broadly in line with the national trend. In other words, the school's performance is improving at the same rate as the national trend.

4 In all three subjects the performance of girls was better than boys, despite there being far more boys in the group. This follows the national trend. In all three subjects twice as many girls than boys reached the average level. The school has begun to tackle the issues of gender variations in test results by analysing the performance of girls and boys to identify any patterns or recurring areas of weakness. This practice is not yet well established and the school has no clear strategy in place to raise the attainment of boys.

5 Results in Key Stage 1 show a steady decline in performance since 1997 in reading, writing and mathematics, following a significant rise in 1997. This is in contrast to the national trend, which is rising. Compared to national averages in 1999, standards were well below average in reading and writing and very low in mathematics. When compared to similar schools the pupils' performance is well below average in reading and mathematics, but average in writing and well above average in science. In the 1999 national tests boys performed better than girls in all three subjects, in direct contrast with the pattern at Key Stage 2.

6 Most children enter the nursery with low attainment in all areas of learning but especially in language and literacy. Despite the good progress they make in the early years standards remain below average in language and literacy. In knowledge and understanding of the world, physical, creative and personal and social development children achieve standards that are typical for their age and meet the nationally agreed desirable learning outcomes by the time they are five. Despite low levels of attainment on entry, by the time they leave the school many pupils achieve well enough in the core subjects to equip them for the next stage of their education.

7 From scrutiny of pupils' current work and lesson observations, standards in English are judged to be below average at the end of both key stages. In mathematics inspection judgement is that standards in both key stages are about average. Pupils' achievements in class are judged

to be better than 1999 test results indicate. This is because teaching at the end of Key Stage 1 is often good when shared with the headteacher, and the numeracy strategy influences teaching and learning in all classes, ensuring that pupils work at appropriate levels. In science at the end of Key Stage 2 inspection judgement is that standards are about average. This variation is directly attributable to the good quality of teaching that has a positive impact on the standards and the group of pupils in the current Year 6 who have fewer learning difficulties than those taking the tests in 1999. Inspection judgement of science in Key Stage 1 places standards below average, in contrast to those in 1999. The reasons for this are the differing levels of prior attainment in the current year group, the variable quality of teaching, which is sometimes unsatisfactory and the insecure procedures for assessment.

8 In English though many pupils start school with limited skills in speaking and listening by the end of Key Stage 2 they are able to join in discussions and present their thoughts and ideas coherently, though their vocabularies are often narrow. Reading standards are below average. Though all pupils are taught letter sounds and how to build up words they do not all apply this knowledge readily when trying to read unfamiliar words. Most pupils master the mechanics of reading but few read aloud with fluency or expression. Pupils' comprehension skills are limited, despite their work in the literacy hour. Older pupils are familiar with how to access information from reference books using indexes and contents and the use of dictionaries is widespread. Few pupils are familiar with a range of authors and many find difficulty in recounting events in books they have read. Many pupils are capable of producing well-formed letters but written work is often untidy and erratic with insecure spelling. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils can write independently, using simple punctuation. Their writing increases in sophistication from simple sentences in Key Stage 1 to interesting poems about wartime and the recording of personal thoughts and ideas in Year 6. Through their work in the literacy hour pupils are improving their spelling and grammar. Higher attaining pupils write direct speech competently but the quality is variable and it is generally not as high as it should be.

9 In mathematics pupils in Key Stage 1 become familiar with number patterns, mental calculations, measures and money. They use their numeracy skills to solve practical problems. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment is average, but there is a considerable variation. Higher attaining pupils solve problems using the skills they have learned and are able to identify which mathematical operation they need to use in order to solve a problem. Through following the numeracy strategy pupils make sound progress in acquiring skills and understanding in mathematics, though data handling remains a weaker area.

10 In science pupils make appropriate gains in knowledge and learn to apply investigative skills in experimental work. In Key Stage 1 there is less opportunity to apply such skills as work often concentrates on the acquisition of facts rather than developing practical skills. In Key Stage 2 pupils develop a sound body of knowledge and higher attainers use correct scientific terms correctly. Pupils record their findings in tables and graphs and pupils know how to plan a fair test, make predictions based on evidence and form conclusions.

11 In art, design and technology, geography, history, information technology and religious education pupils attain standards that are typical for their age and make sound progress. In physical education attainment exceeds the normal expectation in Key Stage 2, though in Key Stage 1 standards are as expected for the pupils' age.

12 The previous inspection reported that attainment in all subjects was in line with expectations and higher than expectation in speaking and listening. Standards in most subjects remain the same but have deteriorated in English and science in Key Stage 1 since then. There were no differences in attainment between boys and girls at that time, but currently there are noticeable differences with boys doing less well than girls in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 2 standards were average in English but below average in mathematics and science. In this inspection the pattern is reversed and standards are better than test results suggest. Religious

Education did not have a high priority in the school, nor did it meet statutory requirements. This was a key issue. Standards have improved significantly since then and are now sound.

13 Pupils in general make satisfactory progress in their learning and achieve appropriately in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs are given extra help with their English. They are set targets each term. These usually include features such as initial letter sounds, correction of letter reversal and learning high frequency words. Although standards are variable, most make satisfactory progress towards their targets. This contrasts unfavourably with the good progress reported in 1996. However, pupils who attend the additional literacy support classes do make particularly good progress. They develop a strong understanding of phonics, benefiting from the enlightened teaching of the nursery nurse attached to the project. All pupils with mathematical targets are improving their knowledge as a result of the structured approaches adopted in the daily numeracy lesson. A small number of pupils, mainly boys, have behavioural targets. These are generally met, but there are occasional lapses. When this happens, progress is adversely affected. The school has not formally identified gifted or talented pupils and targeted them to attain at a higher level than expected for their age.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14 Children under the age of five settle rapidly into classroom routines and quickly learn to listen, share and make choices. They participate in activities with increasing confidence and begin to apply the skills and vocabulary they have learned; for example, one child was able to describe the snail's shell as a 'spiral' after hearing the word used by the teacher. Most are curious and eager to learn, socialising appropriately and learning to take responsibility for their personal hygiene.

15 Overall pupils have satisfactory attitudes towards school. In the opinion of parents, most pupils like school and this is borne out by conversations with pupils. Most pupils are keen to come and enjoy school though a significant minority, often boys, shows inattention and lack of enthusiasm in some lessons. When stimulated by the teaching and tasks, their attitudes improve dramatically. Both boys and girls enjoy participating in extra-curricular activities and competing successfully in sporting events against other schools. When they are appropriately challenged, pupils respond positively. They can usually see links between what they have learned previously and what they are currently studying. They often show great zest in physical activity. A significant number have difficulty in explaining to others what they have learned.

16 Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall but sometimes the lack of self-control exhibited by a small minority affects the learning of other pupils in the class. In some lessons a few pupils misbehave and this often goes uncorrected by teachers and detracts from the learning of the rest of the class. When working unsupervised, for example in the computer suite, most pupils behave responsibly but a few do not. Pupils generally move around the school purposefully but there is sometimes inappropriate boisterousness when they are left to themselves. The pupils are generally polite to adults and in assemblies and in the dining hall they behave well. Pupils treat the resources they work with and the property of others with care. There were no exclusions of pupils from the school last year.

17 The personal development of pupils and the relationships within the school are satisfactory. They are good in the nursery and reception classes. Pupils accept responsibilities offered, for example as 'litter-pickers' or to keep the library tidy, and some volunteer to clear up or help around the school. In many lessons there is a good rapport between adults and pupils, which allows pupils to express themselves with confidence, but in others there is some strain, which inhibits such development. Within lessons, around the school and in the playground pupils generally treat each other well although there are sometimes altercations outside the school gates at home time. Within lessons most pupils work well together and support each other but some have difficulties in collaborating in larger groups to achieve a common purpose. Although

this is an entirely mono-cultural school community, pupils show a good understanding and tolerance of many different ways of life and beliefs. During the inspection there were no incidents of bullying or social exclusion. In discussion pupils showed awareness of what to do if they were bullied and confidence that problems would be resolved.

18 The overall attendance last year was in line with the national average for primary schools and hence satisfactory. Unauthorised absence was below average. A small minority of pupils are late, some of them consistently so, which means that they miss the activity at the start of the day. Registration is sometimes inappropriately delayed at the start in the morning. The school does not operate a first day absence contact system or keep records of pupils who leave the site, contrary to recent national guidance. Parents of pupils who are consistently absent or late are contacted to try to get improvement and the education welfare service is appropriately involved.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19 The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Of the teaching observed two per cent was excellent, eleven per cent was very good, thirty per cent was good, fifty two per cent was satisfactory and five per cent was unsatisfactory.

20 Teaching in the nursery is consistently good. In Key Stage 1 there are significant variations. In the reception/Year 1 class teaching is of high quality. It is very good overall, and one excellent lesson demonstrated teaching of outstanding quality. At the end of the key stage, teaching is rarely better than satisfactory and is sometimes unsatisfactory. Teaching at the beginning and end of Key Stage 2 is effective. In the intervening years, the quality is generally satisfactory, but some unsatisfactory lessons slow down pupils' progress.

21 The children under five years of age are well taught in both the nursery and the reception classes. Teachers organise their lessons well and the support from their assistants is very beneficial, particularly for the many pupils with learning difficulties. Lesson plans ensure a smooth transition from one activity to the next. This gives children confidence as they learn to organise themselves when working with others. Visitors often enliven lessons, and one recent visitor created real excitement when producing a 'bug box' of insects and small animals for children to handle and observe. This encouraged the children to learn by asking questions. When teachers and nursery nurses target individual pupils for additional support, they usually focus on literacy. This is entirely appropriate, since many pupils need to acquire more effective communication skills. In these classes there are warm, approachable relationships with the children, who are encouraged to talk about what they are doing. As a result, children know they are valued and their self-esteem increases.

22 Pupils in Year 1 who work with the reception class children are invariably engrossed in their tasks. The teacher ensures that they work collaboratively, as in role-plays in a 'doctor's surgery', and independently, as in their numeracy lessons. Expectations are high, and the teacher has a confident, calm manner that promotes an atmosphere in which pupils can apply creative effort to their work. At the end of the key stage teaching quality is variable. Lessons are planned conscientiously, but laboured explanations often lead to inattention by the pupils. Whole-class discussions are often marred by frequent admonition of individual pupils. This affects the flow of the lesson. The weak organisation of a practical session in science led to a general hubbub, within which acquisition of new skills was not possible. For this class, objectives are too often unclear, although higher attainers are sometimes extended by open-ended questions. Numeracy is taught well at this stage, as the clear structure of the national framework provides pace and challenge.

23 Teaching is particularly efficient at the beginning and end of Key Stage 2. Teachers plan meticulously and use a range of resources and teaching styles to stimulate interest. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson for example, work was carefully matched to the needs of the individual pupils and this promoted their good progress. Teachers' planning ensures that activities build on pupils'

prior knowledge, as in a very good science lesson about the circulatory system.

24 Teaching in the middle years of Key Stage 2 is less effective, mainly due to problems in engaging pupils' interest during whole-class discussions. Questioning techniques are less well developed, often providing few opportunities for pupils to contribute meaningfully, and explanations lack crispness. Consequently, there is a regular undercurrent of restlessness which teachers sometimes find difficult to redress. When pupils work in groups with the teacher circulating to offer personal advice, the atmosphere is much more purposeful, and children work productively.

25 Where support is available, pupils with special educational needs are well served. The nursery nurses provide high quality back-up for teachers and are often at the forefront of effective group teaching. Work matched to the individual learning targets of the pupils is provided in all core subjects. However, in other subjects these pupils are often set the same work as the rest of the class and sometimes this is too difficult for them to cope with.

26 The school has not formally identified pupils capable of higher attainment. These pupils are not always appropriately challenged. The general concentration on the acquisition of knowledge, and the relatively low priority for higher order skills inhibit their progress. The target of National Curriculum level four for these pupils is too low. The irregular use of homework means that pupils are given few opportunities to get involved in independent research and to reinforce their learning.

27 Teachers' use of assessment is a weakness in the school. No reference is made to levels of the National Curriculum when work is assessed. Strengths and weaknesses are not identified in a systematic manner, and pupils are not encouraged to analyse how well they are doing.

28 All teachers have a high regard for the principles of equal access and equal opportunity. Subject knowledge is sound and the teaching of basic skills such as phonics and word building in the literacy hour is satisfactory, enabling pupils to make progress in their learning. Resources are generally well prepared, and teachers often produce their own which are sometimes of good quality and stimulate pupils' interest. However, computers are not often used as an integral part of teaching, and the library is not used regularly as a source for independent study.

29 Teaching in all subjects is satisfactory; it is good in science, history and physical education in Key Stage 2. Overall however, there are limited opportunities for pupils to use their initiative or to develop their creative potential. This is a major inhibiting factor in learning patterns in the school, where the teaching is usually efficient, but not often inspired.

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

30 The school has responded positively to the key issues, which were raised in the previous inspection in relation to the curriculum. Statutory requirements for religious education, based on the locally agreed syllabus, collective worship and the pupils' spiritual development, have all been met. The processes of curriculum planning and co-ordination are satisfactory. They effectively ensure that the detailed medium-term plans cover all elements of the National Curriculum and that learning takes place in an appropriate sequence. All children under five now have the same educational experience in the literacy and mathematical areas of learning. The school has been successful in raising levels of attainment in mathematics and science at Key Stage 2, so that pupils' use and apply their skills more successfully.

31 There are appropriately defined procedures for planning the curriculum for the under fives. This is undertaken on a collaborative basis and involves teachers and nursery nurses in the

regular discussion and sharing of expertise. Curriculum planning is thorough and effectively promotes all the areas of learning for the under fives. There is a suitable balance between practical activity and purposeful play and the children benefit from carefully organised and focused teaching that provides good adult support for all the children and in particular, those pupils with special educational needs. Long-term planning consists of a programme of suitable topics, which are carefully expanded into medium and short-term plans. These include details of the activities the children are to experience, and are clearly linked to learning outcomes and assessment.

32 In Key Stages 1 and 2 the curriculum is broad and in line with the school's aims and values. It appropriately promotes the personal and social development of its pupils. All subjects meet the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. In Key Stage 2 provision for health, drugs and sex education is satisfactorily incorporated into the science scheme of work. The school has identified the need to have a separate drugs education policy. The school has responded positively to the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. The literacy hour has been successfully introduced to all classes though the impact of this has yet to have a significant influence on standards in literacy. Inspection evidence shows that pupils' reading and writing lack range and that too little attention is given to the planned development of reading, speaking and listening. Curriculum planning in mathematics is thorough and work is well structured, and generally based on the format suggested by the National Numeracy Strategy, which the school has successfully implemented. This subject receives an appropriate amount of time each day and a great deal of attention is paid to ensuring that pupils of all abilities make the best progress they can.

33 The school has a policy for special educational needs, which meets the national Code of Practice. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs are supported in lessons and withdrawal groups to receive additional teaching in literacy. The curriculum in the core subjects has been carefully planned to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are catered for effectively. However, the same level of precision is less evident in foundation subjects, where all pupils are often set the same work. In these subjects, work adapted to meet individual needs is not often provided.

34 Sometimes the individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are too narrow and do not cover the full range of pupils' needs. For example, one individual education plan had no mention of targets for behaviour, when this aspect of the pupil's development clearly impinged upon the rate of learning. The levels of pupils' emotional, behavioural and learning difficulty are not adequately reflected in the number of pupils at the higher stages of the national Code of Practice. Only four per cent (nine) of the pupils are recorded on Stages 3 to 5 though many pupils have special educational needs and the high level of mobility within the population causes additional difficulties.

35 The policies and schemes of work developed in the wake of the last inspection provide a sound basis for planning and a clear picture of the school's approach to teaching each subject. Medium-term plans are satisfactorily derived from the schemes and show how units link one to another and pupils' learning builds on previous experiences. Weekly plans show satisfactory detail of what is to be taught and with what methods and resources, but they often give insufficient detail of assessment. Plans for individual lessons often borrow broad objectives from medium-term plans without specifying precisely what is to be achieved in the particular lesson.

36 The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, but mostly within sports and games. At different times of the year the school makes after-school provision for football, netball, cross-country, athletics and swimming. Pupils have an opportunity to help with the garden later in the year. A satisfactory range of visitors and visits further enriches the curriculum.

37 Relationships with partner institutions are satisfactory. Sports teams compete against other local schools in football, netball and cross-country. The school has been particularly

successful in cross-country, winning the cross-country championship two years running as well as the indoor netball and athletics leagues. The school has constructive links with the secondary school to which most pupils transfer at eleven. Partnership with the local community is satisfactory. The local vicar takes assemblies from time to time and harvest and Christmas are marked by appropriate community celebrations involving the parents.

38 Since the previous inspection the school has improved its provision for the pupils' spiritual development which is now satisfactory. Provision for the moral, social and cultural development of the pupils continues to be satisfactory as reported at the last inspection.

39 Pupils' spiritual development is fostered principally through religious education and daily acts of collective worship. In assemblies pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own experiences and feelings, and to relate them to the experiences of others, as, for instance, when they were asked to consider the relationship between Jesus and Mary and draw comparisons with their own mothers. In a Key Stage 2 assembly pupils were asked to think about the trials and tribulations of John Bunyan in the story *Pilgrim's Progress* and relate it to their experiences. Collective worship is based firmly on Christian principles, but in religious education lessons pupils are encouraged to consider and respect the beliefs and values of other major world faiths, such as Judaism.

40 Pupils' moral development is satisfactory. At play and in lessons, pupils are encouraged to be aware of the difference between right and wrong. Good behaviour and positive attitudes towards school are encouraged through the school's reward system. Values such as fair play, tolerance and appreciation of the efforts of others are promoted appropriately in lessons.

41 The provision for pupils' social development is satisfactory. Most pupils start school with little social experience and with limited concentration skills. Their confidence is carefully fostered. All pupils are expected to take turns at a very early age, and are encouraged to take pleasure in recognising the achievements of others. This is less well developed as the pupils grow older. Speaking skills are developed effectively in class discussions, when most pupils take turns, share their ideas and listen to the views of others. Consideration for others is encouraged throughout the school day; girls and boys work and play amicably together. The routines for going out to play and eating the mid-day meal provide opportunities for pupils to develop friendship skills, self-discipline and appropriate manners. Pupils in Year 6 are encouraged to be responsible for their lesson materials.

42 The cultural development of the pupils is satisfactory. In art lessons pupils study the work of artists such as Picasso and Monet. Although the school has no pupils with backgrounds from other cultures, the school has an appropriate stock of multi-cultural materials. Other faiths are explored as part of the religious education programme and an Indian visitor has spoken to pupils of her culture. The school participates in a broad range of educational visits including a residential experience to enhance the pupils' cultural and social development. Older pupils have taken part in a local project where they painted subways to improve their environment. Although music by famous composers is played during assemblies, this is not used to best advantage for contributing to the spiritual tone of the occasion. No drama lessons were seen during the inspection and the school does little to promote the performing arts.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43 The school is a place in which an ethos of safety and happiness is promoted. Child Protection procedures, which meet local guidelines, are in place. Staff have been trained in their responsibilities and understand them. The education welfare service provides good support. The school took over responsibility for health and safety from the local education authority last year but the governors have not yet put in place a policy to guide the management of this important aspect of the school. Systematic health and safety risk assessments are not carried out although

arrangements are in hand for contracting regular safety checks on equipment. There are regular fire drills. Appropriately trained staff care for pupils who are ill or who have accidents at school. Any bullying which occurs is satisfactorily dealt with and, pupils agree that such problems are quickly solved. Staff react swiftly to deal with any disputes that arise.

44 Overall the monitoring of pupils' academic and personal development is unsatisfactory. The assessment of children under five is good. It is well done by staff who know the children well. It is informative and effective in allowing staff to modify their planning in order to get the most out of groups and individuals. At the start of compulsory education pupils are assessed using standardised tests, which are repeated at the end of the reception year. This allows staff to evaluate learning in that year. In the rest of the school, however, there is insufficient accurate assessment to give teachers good information about the stage pupils have reached and what they need to learn to make good progress throughout each subject. For example, although reading is a weakness across the school, not all teachers keep detailed records to which show the continuing development of reading skills and identify weaknesses which need to be tackled. Assessment of pupils' progress against levels of the National Curriculum is hampered by the lack of portfolios of moderated work, against which staff may judge levels of attainment. Where assessment at the end of each year is based on standardised tests in English and mathematics it is satisfactory. The school has recently introduced appropriate record sheets for each pupil, which have the potential to provide important information needed to track progress, though they are not yet fully established in all classes. There is a similar but well-established system, which effectively records pupils' personal development, behaviour and attitudes to work. Attendance registers are not always completed at the start of the session, thus understating the extent of lateness, and reasons for absence are not always recorded correctly.

45 The school does not provide effective support and guidance in raising pupils' achievement. The analysis of end of key stage test results is not well used to identify weaknesses in areas of knowledge. Neither is it used sufficiently to modify teaching practices or change the emphasis within the curriculum. There is no clear view of how to bring together the results of the various tests throughout a pupil's school life into a manageable system for tracking and predicting performance. This potentially valuable tool in highlighting underachievement is not yet effective. In some classes pupils are asked to set targets for themselves, often for personal development and the education welfare service provides good support in improving attendance. Data produced by the school indicates that in years when attainment of 11-year-old pupils was well below national averages, the attainment of boys was particularly poor. Lesson observations during the inspection showed that often the pupils who have attitude or behaviour problems are boys. However the school has no consistently applied, effective strategy for raising the personal development of such pupils which might, in turn, raise their academic performance. There is no coherent strategy for identifying how individual's and groups of pupils' attainment can be raised, particularly for the more able pupils.

46 There is a particularly strong liaison between the nursery and the speech therapy unit. This is particularly helpful in the good, early identification of the large number of children with speech and communication problems. Thereafter, there is a heavy reliance on the judgements of class teachers. There are no clear criteria to guide teachers, and movement between the stages in the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs is slow. Documentary evidence is collated regularly but too often lacks specific detail. Standardised test results are not used until pupils are referred for external assessment, usually by the educational psychologist. Despite the profound difficulties encountered by some, there are no pupils with statements of special educational need in the school. The school uses a helpful self-assessment pro-forma that pupils complete when they are involved in external assessments.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47 Parents are generally satisfied with the school. Only a small number of parents attended

the meeting before the inspection and just under half returned questionnaires seeking their views. Parents indicate that their children are happy to come to school and they are pleased with the attitudes that the school promotes. They believe they make good progress and feel comfortable about raising questions or problems. A significant minority expressed concerns about too little or inconsistent homework. Inspection judgements support parents' views about homework. Whilst some homework is set, its use is inconsistent and awaits a clear policy. A few parents were unhappy with the range of activities outside school. Inspection findings confirm that there are plenty of sporting activities but the range of cultural and creative pursuits is limited. A minority of parents were concerned about the lack of liaison with parents. Inspection findings do not support these concerns.

48 The school's communication with parents is satisfactory but, despite this, parents' involvement with the work of the school is not providing sufficient support. Parents are not well involved in the life of the school, although the school does encourage this. School newsletters are comprehensive and contain much useful information about school life. The prospectus, which gives a clear guide to the curriculum, is issued to all parents each year. It gives helpful information, for example, about the literacy strategy. Parents of children starting in the reception classes are given a good introduction to the school and useful information on helping their child at home. Each year group has a letter from the class teacher describing the work to be taught each term with requests for parents to help pupils at home, particularly with reading. The school consulted parents extensively about the home-school agreement, which has now been issued, though the school has not yet produced a homework policy.

49 The reports that pupils receive at the end of each year are satisfactory and meet statutory requirements. They give brief details of what the pupils can do in English, mathematics and science but give few targets for development, which might assist parents in supporting their children. Details of attainment in other subjects are satisfactory, as are the comments on the pupil's personal development. The school arranges an evening for parents to discuss the report in detail and parents find this helpful.

50 Parents and carers do not as yet make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning. Many parents take time to hear their child read at home but this is not consistent or frequent enough in many cases. This lack of support contributes to pupils' underachievement in reading. The reading record has the potential to be an effective means of assisting parents to help their children but in most cases is little used for constructive dialogue. It is too soon after its introduction to evaluate the impact of the home-school agreement. Although encouraged to do so, very few parents help in school on a regular basis. A parents' group has recently been formed, which raised at the Christmas fair a commendable amount of money to benefit pupils.

51 Parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited appropriately to review meetings. The pattern of attendance is sometimes irregular, although some parents never miss a meeting. These pupils usually make the best progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52 The management of the school by the governors and headteacher is satisfactory overall though there are some weaknesses. The headteacher provides effective support for staff and, with their contributions, has identified appropriate priorities for the school's future development. The governing body is supportive and works hard on behalf of the school. For example governors have been successful in bringing about improvements to the school's grounds and accommodation.

53 The school development plan identifies appropriate priorities for the current year and beyond. It is rightly concerned with raising attainment. There are clear targets to develop several subjects

and aspects of the school, together with an analysis of what has been already achieved. Governors have a sound overview of the school's work through the headteacher's regular reports and their informal visits but this is not enough to give them a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses or of the standards for which they are accountable. Though they have recently become more proactive in managing the school their involvement in curriculum and development planning to shape the school for the future is minimal. As a consequence, all parties do not share the headteacher's vision for the school's development.

54 Though all members of staff have detailed job descriptions the influence of the deputy headteacher and senior management team is not seen in practice and consequently there is insufficient support for the headteacher. At the time of the inspection, in the absence of the Year 6 teacher the headteacher assumed responsibility for several key areas of the curriculum as well as maintaining a regular teaching commitment and managing the school. The result of this is that insufficient time is made available to ensure that teaching and learning are monitored rigorously.

55 At the time of the previous inspection it was reported that subject co-ordinators lacked the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning or carry out the responsibilities in their job descriptions. Since then, time has been allocated to co-ordinators in English, mathematics and science to oversee their subjects. This they do through classroom support and the scrutiny of teachers' plans. Monitoring is supportive rather than evaluative and the focus of the observations is not made explicit to staff beforehand. As a result, co-ordinators do not influence teaching and learning as effectively as they might, nor do they all have a clear knowledge of standards within their subjects.

56 The management and monitoring of teaching and the curriculum is insufficiently rigorous. Although the role of subject leaders and senior managers has been more clearly defined since the previous inspection, these improvements have not so far brought about the desired improvement in evaluation and monitoring procedures to fully support curriculum development. The existing monitoring systems have not been rigorously implemented to ensure consistency of approach so that there is a direct impact on standards.

57 The headteacher is currently the co-ordinator for special educational needs and this aspect of the curriculum is treated as a priority. However, attention to detail is lacking. There are regular meetings with class teachers who maintain all their own records. The lack of a unified assessment system leads to inconsistencies. All teachers use the same forms, but completion is variable, and monitoring systems lack the rigour to ensure a coherent system throughout the school. The governing body is updated about special educational needs issues at every meeting and the link governor has useful meetings with teaching staff. The funds allocated to special educational needs have been used for the purpose intended; however, there is no systematic breakdown of all costs associated with provision. The level of classroom support is low; there is little in-class support in Key Stage 2, where boys with short attention spans would benefit from greater individual attention.

58 The school budget is managed efficiently by the headteacher and governors. The commitment to maintaining small class sizes and the falling roll means that there is little room for manoeuvre within the budget. Financial planning is sound. Spending is linked appropriately to the school development plan and specific grants are used for their designated purpose. Governors are appropriately involved in long term financial planning though there are no strategies for monitoring and evaluating spending decisions in relation to their impact upon attainment and pupils' achievement. Governors do give careful consideration to the principles of best value when making spending decisions by first obtaining estimates before making purchases. Administration of the school is smooth and efficient making appropriate use of new technology.

59 The school is staffed with a generous number of teachers to teach the subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and the areas of learning for the under-fives. There is a

limited number of non-teaching staff to support the large number of pupils with special educational needs. Teaching staff are suitably qualified by training and experience. There are informal induction procedures for new members of staff to acquaint them with the everyday routines of the school supported by a comprehensive staff handbook. All members of staff benefit from staff development interviews with the headteacher to appraise their performance. All members of staff attend training for their subjects and benefit from training events provided by the local education authority and the school. Where there has been significant training, for example in numeracy, it is evident in the enhanced expertise of the teachers.

60 The school has very spacious accommodation in two separate buildings, much of it unused because of the reduction in the number of classes. Two spare classrooms are designated for use as a resource area and a computer room in the Key Stage 2 building, while each class in the Key Stage 1 building has the use of two teaching areas. The nursery class was until recently accommodated in another separate building, but this was closed due to the falling roll. A decision has yet to be made as to how the building should be used. Governors have yet to consider ways to maximise the use of the buildings to increase efficiency and reduce the running costs.

61 The school is appropriately resourced for all subjects. Information technology resources are developing well with computers, CD-ROM and software but the information technology suite is under-used. The library is stocked with a suitable range of fiction and non-fiction books but it is not used to best advantage. Resources for the nursery are sound for all areas of learning. Resources earmarked for pupils with special educational needs are good in the core subjects and satisfactory overall. The potential of computer-related programs for such pupils has not been seriously explored.

62 The school has a caring and positive ethos and relationships are good. There is a commitment to the provision of equality of opportunity for all pupils. Unit costs per pupil are very high in this school. However, when set against the quality of teaching, the pupils' attitudes and behaviour and the low levels of attainment, with which many children start school, satisfactory value for money continues to be provided.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

63 In order to raise standards and improve the quality of education for all pupils the school should address the following issues.

- (1) Raise standards in English by:
 - (a) providing more varied opportunities for speaking and listening;
 - (b) ensuring that phonic skills are promoted more consistently;
 - (c) ensuring that reading and literature are given a higher profile in the curriculum;
 - (d) monitoring and recording pupils' progress in reading more thoroughly;
 - (e) adopting higher expectations for the presentation of work;
 - (f) developing strategies to raise the achievement of boys.

(See paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 32, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 82, 84)
- (2) Raise standards in science in Key Stage 1 by improving the teaching at the end of the key stage. (See paragraphs 10,12, 22, 96, 101)
- (3) Improve the current systems for monitoring of teaching, standards and the curriculum by:
 - (a) sharing current good practice in the school;
 - (b) rigorously evaluating teaching and learning;
 - (c) ensuring appropriate challenge for higher attaining pupils and underachieving boys;
 - (d) methodically analysing test results to identify weaknesses and areas for development.

(See paragraphs 45, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 85, 86, 94, 102, 114)
- (4) Devise and implement an effective system for assessing pupils so that teachers have a clear understanding of the levels of attainment of each pupil in the core subjects and are able to track their progress.

(See paragraphs 27, 35, 44, 85, 94, 102, 125, 130)

In addition to the key issues governors may wish to consider the following minor point for inclusion in the action plan.

- Involve governors more in the management of the school and the improvement of standards. (See paragraphs 53, 58)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	55
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2%	11%	31%	51%	5%	0%	0%

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	17	172
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	68

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	7	58

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	30
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	47

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	93.8	School data	0.1
National comparative data	94.1	National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	16	11	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	12	12
	Girls	7	8	5
	Total	17	20	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	63 (68)	74 (73)	63 (77)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	12	15
	Girls	7	8	11
	Total	17	20	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	63 (76)	74 (81)	96 (81)
	National	82 (80)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	9	11	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	3	4
	Girls	6	8	9
	Total	9	11	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	45 (72)	55 (60)	65 (68)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	2	1	3
	Girls	5	4	7
	Total	7	5	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	35 (60)	35 (52)	50 (60)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	140
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.5
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	62

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25

Financial information

Financial year	1998
	£
Total income	414,333
Total expenditure	415,775
Expenditure per pupil	1,943
Balance brought forward from previous year	13,732
Balance carried forward to next year	12,290

Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.5
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	183
Number of questionnaires returned	85

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	36	1	7	1
My child is making good progress in school.	44	46	1	7	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	48	2	6	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	40	5	30	7
The teaching is good.	48	45	1	5	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	48	0	13	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	31	0	5	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	40	2	2	1
The school works closely with parents.	36	41	0	19	4
The school is well led and managed.	39	42	5	13	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	40	5	10	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	32	11	17	15

Inspection evidence supports parents' positive views regarding teaching and the ethos of the school. Expectations of what pupils might achieve are not as high as they should be in some classes. Inspectors endorse some of the parents' concerns. There is considerable inconsistency in the way in which homework is allocated. The range of after-school activities provides mainly for those pupils with sporting interests but makes little provision for creative or cultural pursuits. There is little parental involvement despite the school's efforts to encourage more parents to take part in activities.

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

64 The school has a nursery class accommodating thirty children who attend part time. A further nine children are taught full time in the reception class. Children who are under five follow a broad and appropriate curriculum with six areas of learning; language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, personal and social development, creative and physical development. Most children enter the nursery with levels of attainment which are below those normally found at this age, particularly in language, mathematics and social skills. This is borne out by the results of tests made on children when they start in the nursery and exacerbated by the high proportion of children who require outside help to improve their speech. Further testing at the end of the reception year reveals that pupils make good progress during this period. Children make good progress in all the areas of learning. By the time they are five almost all children achieve the expected level for their age in all areas of learning with the exception of language and literacy and mathematics. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they have equal access to all activities and are well supported. Individual needs are targeted and children make good progress in their learning.

Personal and social development

65 Progress in learning in personal and social education is good and children develop good attitudes. They work and play with enthusiasm and enjoyment and use resources carefully. They learn to share and take turns, and begin to work co-operatively. Independence is promoted in the nursery through carefully planned activities that encourage children to use their initiative when making choices. Most listen carefully and often levels of concentration are good. The children respond well to teachers and other adults and they are keen to share their ideas, as, for example, when arranging insects they have made on a large class frieze. Behaviour is usually good; children are well mannered and take care of each other, their spacious environment and the resources provided for them. This has a positive impact on the quality of learning. From the beginning, children are encouraged to show initiative and take responsibility, for example, when getting ready for snack time or encountering a problem with the computer. By the time they enter Key Stage 1 they have developed a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong.

Language and literacy

66 Skills are effectively developed through many activities such as purposeful and imaginative play, singing rhymes and role-play in the doctor's surgery. In relation to their prior attainment most children make good progress in their learning. The children broaden their vocabulary and acquire greater fluency in their speech by talking about their activities, such as when a visitor brought a range of insects for them to see and handle, or when they listen to stories. Children develop pre-writing skills, becoming aware of some of the different purposes of writing and making marks on paper. Most children know that print is different from pictures, carries meaning and that it is read from left to write. Many children in the nursery recognise their name and higher attaining children recognise some letters of the alphabet. Almost all children are beginning to read by the time they are five and higher attaining children in the reception class are beginning to read confidently and use sensible strategies to help them to read unfamiliar words.

Mathematics

67 Children play number games and learn number rhymes such as "six little rabbits" to develop skills in counting. During daily routines, such as snack time, they reinforce their

understanding of number, for example by talking about the triangular shape of their sandwiches. Most children count up to five; some are able to count to ten. They experience many practical activities that extend their understanding of mathematics. For example, through work in sand and water they develop simple ideas of capacity. In their observations of insects they are able to make close mathematical links and use appropriate vocabulary such as 'more than' or 'less than' in relation to size. The children recognise a range of two-dimensional shapes such as circle, square and triangle. Children in the reception class count to twenty as a group. They identify which number comes next in a sequence, and are able to recognise and continue patterns. When they use coins in shopping activities they can record the required number of pennies accurately in their workbooks. They make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

68 Children talk with developing confidence about pets and how to care for them in the home. They reinforce their learning by expressing their likes and dislikes about a variety of insects. They select sensibly from a range of materials when creating their own picture of a millipede and they work at the computer at an appropriate level to "dress" a teddy. Their observations of stick insects, millipedes and snails in the nursery increases their understanding of living things. They cut around shapes with improving levels of accuracy and know how to join materials in different ways. The children learn to select materials and equipment for their own models and work for example, when making insects.

Physical development

69 Children manipulate small tools and equipment such as pencils, crayons brushes and scissors with increasing skills. Good use is made of the outdoor area in the nursery and large infant hall where children enjoy games in a ring and learn to move safely in a space without bumping into others. They develop physical control, balancing, running and stopping, changing direction or moving slowly. Through the use of small and large equipment, children develop greater physical co-ordination, such as catching and throwing beanbags.

Creative development

70 The provision of an appropriate range of activities including art, music and imaginative play contributes well to the children's creative development. They explore colour and shape and express their ideas in drawing, painting and modelling. They handle small tools with increasing dexterity for example, to create snails made from dough. They sing and play percussion instruments enthusiastically.

71 Teaching of children under five is good overall. In both the nursery and reception class teaching was never less than satisfactory and mostly good. When teaching is good tasks are given which secure and maintain interest. There is good use of praise and expressive voice and actions motivate children and ensure their continued participation. Activities are well prepared and carefully organised. Teachers and non-teaching staff work well together and are committed to raising standards. Non-teaching staff make a positive impact on the quality of education although, on occasion the pupils in the reception class missed key teaching opportunities when they were working on shape with the nursery nurse in an adjoining room away from the rest of the class and the teacher. All staff know the children well and are aware of the needs of the under-fives and this has a very positive impact on the progress made by the children. Resources are carefully selected and well organised ensuring that free-choice play activities prompt progress. For example, children in the nursery explore pattern using spiral snail shells. Teachers skilful questioning encourages children to think about what they have learned and to develop new ideas. The reception day is well structured, lessons proceed at a brisk pace, and changes in activity take account of children's concentration span. Voluntary helpers who are carefully briefed and effectively deployed support lessons in the nursery.

72 Assessments are made on children when they enter the nursery and reception classes. These are used effectively to inform the planning of an appropriate curriculum for the under-fives. There is no co-ordinator with specific responsibility for the education of the children under the age of five. The nursery and reception teachers jointly assume this role. They and the non-teaching staff collaborate well to make an effective team. Joint planning is thorough and effective; day-to-day assessment is used well to inform planning and children benefit from work that is well suited to their needs .

73 The early year's curriculum is broad, balanced, well planned and taught effectively. This enables the children to make good progress. The six areas of learning are appropriately taught and link well to the Key Stage 1 curriculum. The level of early years staffing is good. Accommodation for the children under-five is very good. In the last inspection a key issue was to review the arrangements for the under fives, in order that that they all have the same educational experience in the literacy and mathematical areas of learning. This has been fully met and the provision for the under fives is now a strength of the school.

ENGLISH

74 In national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 was well below the national average in English, with no pupils reaching Level 5. Although results in 1998 reached the national average for the only time within a four-year period, they dropped again in 1999 to a point well below average. Indeed, fewer than half the pupils reached Level 4. When compared to the results in similar schools attainment was well below average. The performance of girls was considerably better than that of boys. The school has begun to address this issue but has no clear strategy in place to raise the attainment of boys.

76 In the tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 pupils attained standards that were well below the national average in reading and writing. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 3 was very low in reading, though close to the national average in writing. In comparison with similar schools the attainment of the pupils was well below average in reading and below average in writing. Teacher assessments placed speaking and listening at well below average. Results in the years 1996 to 1999 show considerable fluctuation but have remained below the national average throughout that time. In 1997 the standards in the key stage rose, coming closer to the national average in writing, but have followed a downward trend since then. In reading, though there was a rise in attainment in 1997 and 1998, there has been a down turn in 1999.

77 Inspection judgement concurs with test results, contrasting with the previous inspection, which reported standards to be in line with national expectation. Children under the age of five make good progress in the acquisition of speaking and listening skills in the nursery and reception classes. Despite the low base-line from which many of them start school, but their achievements are not built upon consistently in subsequent classes to sustain the rate of progress.

78 Many pupils enter the school with limited communication skills and a narrow vocabulary. Throughout the school a significant number of pupils have limited concentration spans and find difficulty in listening for sustained periods, some remaining passive throughout class discussions. Most pupils however, are willing to join in with oral activities and to contribute to question and answer sessions but the opportunities for them to do this are sometimes limited. At the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils are able to participate appropriately in discussion and present their points of view in coherent sentences. For example, when debating the controversial issue of whether mining should be allowed in the Antarctic, pupils were able to articulate their opinions and ideas well. Generally, however, throughout the school pupils' vocabularies are too narrow and responses brief.

79 Reading standards are below average. The youngest pupils are taught letter sounds and

how to build up words using them. As they progress through the school they are introduced to a further range of strategies to enable them to read unfamiliar words. Through their work in the literacy hour they are able to read a text together, recognising specific features such as rhyming words or groups of words with the same strings of letters. However when reading independently pupils do not, as a matter of course, use the skills they have been taught. As a consequence many pupils lack fluency and confidence with their reading and often rely on adult prompting when confronted with unknown words instead of attempting to sound them out. Although a minority of pupils read with relative fluency and accuracy, many are hesitant and lack expression when reading aloud. Only rarely do they recognise and correct their own errors. Higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 can recall the story and characters they have read about, but in general pupils show little interest in reading. Most pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have mastered the mechanics of reading but their comprehension skills are more limited. Older pupils are familiar with how to access information from reference books using indexes and contents though lower attaining pupils find difficulty in doing this. When discussing books pupils are very limited in their knowledge of a range of authors and they cannot talk about a book they had read recently with any conviction.

80 In writing pupils establish skills in letter formation from an early age and these become increasingly secure as they move through the key stage. By Year 2 the pupils are beginning to join their writing. In handwriting books in Key Stage 2 most pupils produce neat, legible and well formed letters of uniform size, but the neat presentation seen in handwriting books is not always transferred to work in other subjects. Pupils frequently revert to printing and the formation of their letters becomes more erratic. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils can write independently, using simple punctuation. They use their writing for an appropriate range of purposes such as to re-tell stories, to record personal events in diaries, to compose rhyming couplets and to record work in other subjects. Through their work in the literacy hour pupils become more familiar with spelling patterns, but generally, throughout the school spelling is erratic, largely because of insecure phonics skills. This is something the school has tried hard to improve in the past year. In order to address this matter the school has introduced 'spelling logs' and individual spelling targets for each pupil and this is impacting well on their learning. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils use their writing skills for a more demanding range of purposes, including some imaginative poetry, persuasive writing, sports reports and biographies. Higher attaining pupils write direct speech competently and organise their writing so it has a clearly defined beginning, middle and ending. The quality is variable but is generally not as high as it should be. In general there is not enough extended writing. In most classes the use of dictionaries as spelling aids is promoted well but there is no common approach to drafting work throughout the school.

81 The quality of teaching and learning is sound overall. Of the lessons observed 57 per cent were judged to be satisfactory, and 29 per cent were good; one lesson in the reception/Y1 class was excellent. Features that contributed to the success of the best lesson were very secure skills in the teaching of phonics and reading, excellent class management and challenging tasks pitched at each pupil's level of ability. Pupils were thus well motivated and enjoyed their work, making good progress. Throughout the school where the teacher has good knowledge of reading strategies they are reinforced at every opportunity to emphasise the importance of word building and recognition of initial sounds. At best this is done in an entertaining way that sustains the interest of pupils with limited concentration spans and enables them to make good progress. A common feature in the best lessons is the teacher's firm control of the pupils arising from high expectations of behaviour. When the boundaries are made clear to the pupils and the teacher has effective strategies to deal with challenging behaviour pupils settle well in class and concentrate on their work. When teaching is good the teacher has a clear knowledge of the relative levels of attainment of the pupils, informed by careful assessment and plans suitable work for each level. This has a positive impact on learning because pupils are given tasks that meet their individual needs, provide plenty of challenge for the higher attainers and support for those with special educational needs.

82 Throughout the school there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their speaking

skills in a variety of ways, for example through role-play, drama, puppetry, debate and group work. Teachers who are most successful in encouraging speaking and listening provide interesting activities that promote discussion and ask open-ended questions that allow pupils freedom to share ideas and thoughts in more sustained responses. Where teaching is less stimulating questions are closely controlled providing little scope for pupils to contribute other than single word responses. In a few classes teachers do not promote phonic skills sufficiently well and often miss opportunities to do so and thus improve reading. Where teaching is less successful restless behaviour is often ignored and the pace of the lesson too slow to maintain the interest of the pupils. Information technology is used well to present pupils' writing in attractive formats.

83 Pupils attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory overall and good in lessons where there is good teaching. When well motivated pupils concentrate and listen attentively and when pursuing written tasks that are interesting they work sensibly with a minimum of fuss. Older pupils are keen to share their personal thoughts in discussion and listen to the contributions of others maturely.

84 The literacy hour is satisfactorily established in the school though its effects are more evident in some classes than others. Staff have attended training events that have enhanced the quality of teaching in the subject. However, not all teachers adhere closely to the literacy hour format and occasionally the timing of lessons lacks precision, resulting in insufficient time for the plenary or for pupils to complete their written work. Throughout the school not enough is done to promote a love of reading or the status of books. The attractive library is underused with no clear time-tabled sessions for every class and in general there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their research skills. Class libraries are uninviting and do little to tempt reluctant readers. For example, few of the classrooms use display as a means to promote vocabulary, authors and the richness of language that is so important for pupils who start school with limited skills. There is insufficient recognition of literature and the promotion of a range of authors although the school holds an annual book fair which pupils enjoy. Literacy is promoted well in other subjects such as history, for example pupils write moving poems about the role of women during the war years or describe their interpretation of Egyptian wall paintings.

85 There are weaknesses in the school's systems for monitoring the progress of pupils in English. Although the school maintains records of pupils' attainments and results in national tests over time teachers do not make best use of the information. For example, few teachers refer to the National Curriculum levels of the pupils when planning work for them. A recent development has been the introduction of pupils' profiles, which provide helpful information in a simple and accessible format. These are not yet used by all staff but have potential to be effective when fully implemented. The school has no common approach to recording pupils' progress in reading, although each teacher has their own individual system. Home and school reading diaries provide a useful link with parents and are an effective means of encouraging pupils to read aloud to adults, but they are not supplemented with a more rigorous record that tracks progress and diagnoses where a pupil needs support.

86 The co-ordinator has made a start in monitoring the subject though this is currently done informally and does not always have a clear focus that is shared with staff. Useful evaluations are made retrospectively but teachers do not get enough feedback about their teaching or the implementation of the curriculum, particularly the National Literacy Strategy. The recently introduced exemplar file is at an early stage of development but it has the potential when fully established to provide teachers with clear examples of work at each level to aid accurate assessment. At the time of the last inspection standards in English were judged to be in line with national expectations, although there was some fluctuation from year to year. In particular, speaking and listening skills were used well, in contrast to the findings in this inspection. There was no scheme for the subject at that time, but this has been remedied, partly by the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and partly by the introduction of the school's own scheme. There was a need for a more structured approach to the monitoring of the subject and this has

yet to be addressed satisfactorily.

MATHEMATICS

87 The 1999 National Curriculum test results for eleven-year-olds show that the performance of pupils in mathematics was well below the national average and broadly in line with similar schools when taking average points scores. Results by the end of Key Stage 2 over the four year period 1996 - 1999 are consistently below average but show an increase in 1998, followed by a dip in 1999. In the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in 1999 the performance of the pupils in mathematics was well below the national average and well below the national average for similar schools.

88 The findings of the inspection show that by the age of eleven the performance of the pupils is broadly in line with the national average. By the age of seven the performance of pupils is also broadly in line with the national average. The discrepancy between inspection findings and 1999 test results at the end of both key stages is due to an untypical and relatively small cohort, especially in Year 6, where there were a greater number of boys in the year group who significantly underachieved. No differences in the performances of boys and girls were observed during the inspection. Standards of attainment at the time of the previous inspection were judged to be average in Key Stage 1 and below average in Key Stage 2, particularly in handling data. While improvements have been made in Key Stage 2, handling data is still an area of weakness.

89 By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils count in twos, fives and tens, and they readily identify patterns within numbers. They are familiar with numbers up to 100 and they use their numeracy skills to solve practical problems, for example, with money and measures. Higher attaining pupils show good levels of competence in their use of addition, subtraction and multiplication though they are less confident with division. Pupils in the Year 1 class make satisfactory progress in their acquisition of numeracy skills, gradually building knowledge and understanding of numbers to five and then 20 respectively, and learning to add, subtract and multiply. In Year 2, the pupils confidently recognise and use standard units of measurement.

90 By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment is average. Pupils develop a sound grasp of numeracy and mathematics in general though there is a wide variation in attainment. Higher attaining pupils work confidently with mathematical ideas, solving problems using their numeracy skills. They can identify which mathematical operation is relevant to the problem and apply this confidently and usually accurately. Middle attaining pupils work at a level consistent with the national average. They add, subtract, multiply and divide numbers accurately. They work with whole numbers and apply the skills they have learned when working with numbers to the second or third decimal place. Lower attaining pupils are generally competent with numbers of all sizes, though they do not always understand the value of each separate figure within a large number and require a length of time and some help before answering a question relating to this concept. From a scrutiny of pupils' work over the year, pupils appear to make better progress now than previously, as the work planned becomes more appropriate and moves away from a concentration on formal arithmetic to more challenging activities. The presentation of work in mathematics varies in quality and neatness. In most classes, pupils and teachers appreciate the need to set work out carefully as an aid to working out correct answers. However in Years 4 and 5 this is more variable.

91 Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are satisfactory. Most pupils are keen to answer questions. Sometimes the less enthusiastic lower attainers take the lion's share of the teacher's time, leaving little time for the teacher to determine the level of understanding of higher attaining pupils. Teachers sometimes prepared work that required pupils to work together. When this was planned, as in a Year 3 investigation into the properties of shape, pupils co-operated sensibly and effectively. In the occasional lesson where behaviour is inappropriate it

has a detrimental effect on the standards achieved and the quality of education.

92 The quality of teaching and learning in both key stages is satisfactory. In Key Stage 1 one third of the lessons were satisfactory and two thirds good. The teaching in Key Stage 2 is more variable, ranging from very good to unsatisfactory. One sixth of the lessons were unsatisfactory and five sixths were satisfactory or better. One sixth of the lessons were very good. Planning is thorough and work is well structured. It is generally based on the format recommended in the National Numeracy Strategy, consisting of introductory oral work, group work and a final, summary session. Teachers are becoming increasingly confident in setting challenges to which pupils respond appropriately. Introductory sessions are generally effective and have a good pace, which holds the pupils' attention. Carefully worded questioning by teachers often elicits good answers from pupils and in the best lessons teachers use pupils' answers as the basis for their teaching. Planning clearly shows what the teachers want pupils to achieve, though some times these learning objectives are too broad, more suited to medium than short-term plans. Occasionally, teaching loses its effectiveness because learning objectives are not specific to the lesson and the final, plenary sessions sometimes lack focus. Learning objectives are rarely shared with the pupils so that they do not always have a clear idea of what it is they are to learn. Pupils make the best progress when teachers concentrate on developing pupils' understanding in the introduction to the lesson and then provide exercises closely tailored to the particular needs of the pupils. Insufficient use is made of information communication technology to support pupils' learning in mathematics for areas such as data handling. Homework is not used effectively in most years to support schoolwork. Parents' views of patchy and inconsistent homework in mathematics are supported by inspection findings.

93 Consideration is given to the pupils with special educational needs in most lessons. Work is carefully matched to their ability and as a result these pupils make satisfactory progress and build up their self-esteem. Teachers are careful to include the pupils with special educational needs in the "whole-class" sessions of the National Numeracy Strategy. There are occasions when pupils with specific difficulties are left unsupervised for too long and this limits the progress they make.

94 There is a policy of satisfactory quality and a scheme of work that provides continuity from one-year group to the next. A little monitoring of the teaching of mathematics has taken place and staff have analysed the 1999 Key Stage 2 national test results, but this has had a minimal influence on the way in which staff evaluate and improve their teaching strategies. Monitoring in the subject tends to be reflective rather than evaluative. With the exception of Year 1 there has been little attempt to assess and monitor the progress made by pupils. The quality of marking of pupils' work is variable, with little dialogue between the teacher and pupils that is aimed at improvement. Resources are generally adequate to teach the subject, but limited use is made of the information technology suite to support the teaching and understanding of mathematical ideas.

SCIENCE

95 In the national tests for eleven-year-olds, results improved steadily from 1996 until 1998, when they were close to the national average. They dropped slightly in 1999, whereas national standards improved. However, results remain broadly in line with those of similar schools, although the average points score is below average. Inspection judgement places pupils' attainment in line with national averages. The strong teaching at the end of Key Stage 2, the differing groups of pupils and the size of the groups account for the difference between inspection judgements and national test results. In this school, four pupils can account for 20 per cent of the total.

96 In the statutory teacher assessment for seven-year-olds in 1999, the proportion of pupils attaining Level 2 was above the national average. By contrast, the proportion attaining Level 3

was below the national average. Inspection judgement places pupils' attainment below average. The insecure assessment procedures used in 1999 and the weak teaching currently account for the difference evident at the end of Key Stage 1.

97 A persistent feature of performance in science has been the underachievement of boys. They have not matched the average standards of boys nationally since 1996, and in 1999 their results were very low in comparison. However, in 1998, girls' attainments were higher than the average for girls nationally, and were close to that level in 1999. Inspection judgements for this small group do not refer to variations by gender, due to the small number of pupils involved. However, the performance of boys is judged to be higher than in 1999.

98 Seven-year-olds can group materials according to texture and can differentiate between natural and man-made fibres. They recognise that pushing and pulling are examples of forces. Higher attainers are able to provide keen observations on melting rates in different environments and use block graphs to record their findings. They recognise the need for heat to produce bread and cakes. However, their learning is based on knowing facts rather than understanding principles. The recording process is frequently a case of copying down results, rather than recording their own findings. This lack of opportunity for independent prediction and observations is hampering their progress in experimental work.

99 Eleven-year-olds have a good understanding of the circulatory system. Higher attainers use terms such as oxygenation when explaining why we breathe more rapidly during exercise. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, can describe the life cycle of flowering plants. They use microscopes confidently when examining and identifying features such as the stamen and ovary. Systematic methods are used to tabulate their results, a skill first acquired in Year 3. Good practice is learned earlier in the key stage when pupils devise their own electrical circuits using switches. Science lessons in Key Stage 2 often contain a sense of discovery. Pupils in Year 5 learned the principles of gravity and air resistance when planning a fair test involving parachutes of different sizes. Prediction is firmly based on evidence. For example, after an investigation into the absorption of water by rocks, a group of pupils concluded that they would use granite to build a house. This emphasis on experimental methods encourages pupils to draw conclusions independently. However, although they can usually describe phenomena, there is less confidence when required to recognise abstract concepts.

100 Pupils' response is variable. In Key Stage 1, some of the older pupils openly show a lack of interest when the teaching fails to inspire them. However, in Key Stage 2, they respond positively to the teaching styles adopted. They are keen and interested, enjoy taking part in experiments and display a sense of wonder when they learn, for example, about electricity or the human body. They often ask searching and pertinent questions.

101 The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1. Explanations are ponderous and management of behaviour is weak. As a result, practical sessions are noisy and disorganised. Pupils fail to pay attention and little learning takes place. Pupils copy down information, but do not understand the content. Throughout Key Stage 2, teaching is always at least satisfactory, is sometimes good, and is very good at the beginning and end of the key stage. In these lessons teachers use imaginative methods to inspire pupils and encourage them to think for themselves. Pupils in Year 4 enjoyed devising circuits, and benefited from the careful preparation of resources, including a well-chosen video, to support their experiments. Very good teaching in Year 6 demonstrated the value of a challenging mixture of quick, short and extended questions. This helped pupils to consolidate prior learning and to apply it in this new context. Pupils were fascinated when viewing a pig's heart, and establishing the weight of their own heart. In these lessons teachers ensured that work matched the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. A strength throughout the school is the emphasis on subject related vocabulary, with the result that pupils use scientific terminology quite naturally.

102 The co-ordinator has produced a series of comprehensive resource packs for each

module. The schemes of work are well planned, and there is a suitable emphasis on experimentation. There is much good teaching in the subject, but this is not disseminated sufficiently. Monitoring is too informal, and the use of assessment to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching is underdeveloped. The co-ordinator is wisely considering the compilation of moderated portfolios of work to support more accurate teacher assessment of levels of the National Curriculum. The contribution of information and control technology to the science curriculum is inadequate.

103 Since the last inspection, attainment has improved. This is corroborated by results in national tests, apart from the decline in 1999. Recording techniques of older pupils have improved significantly. Teacher assessments are still variable, and formal monitoring systems have not been introduced.

ART

104 No lessons in art were observed during the inspection, however, from scrutiny of pupils' work on display and teachers' plans progress is judged to be satisfactory and pupils acquire a range of skills typical for their age. There is insufficient evidence to judge the quality of teaching or pupils' response.

105 In Key Stage 1 pupils begin to build up a repertoire of skills such as colour mixing and applying paint, using a narrow range of media. They use printing and painting techniques to make effective animal masks. Younger children in the key stage paint colourful and bold self-portraits with recognisable facial features placed correctly. At times the work is too teacher directed with adults creating outlines for pupils to fill or cutting paper to the required size for the pupils instead of letting them do it themselves. This practice limits the creativity of pupils and reduces the art lesson to a mechanical 'cutting and sticking' activity. By the end of the key stage pupils make drawings of fruit and vegetables from close observation and make comparisons between their own pictures and photographs.

106 In Key Stage 2 pupils learn to paint a wash of colour as a background for their silhouette pictures. They begin to evaluate their work and to articulate which features of a picture they like. For example one pupil wrote '—'s silhouette is really good. The birds in the sky look real and the house is neatly cut'. Pupils experiment successfully with shades of a particular colour making it increasingly lighter by adding white. When making designs with bubbles they begin to evaluate tone and shade. As one pupil observed 'the blue and green really suit each other and look nice together'. By the end of Year 3 pupils have developed skills in observation, for example to draw well observed pencil pictures of miners' lamps. Literacy is effectively linked to art and pupils are encouraged to express their thoughts about their own art and that of famous artists such as Picasso.

107 Art does not have high status in the curriculum and in general teachers feel that they lack confidence in the subject and the specific subject knowledge to enable them to advise pupils how they can improve the quality of the work. As pupils progress through the school they experiment with an appropriate range of techniques but the work does not always increase in refinement and sophistication. Consequently, by the end of Key Stage 2, though some pupils produce pleasing, well observed work much of it lacks the detail and refinement normally associated with older pupils. Skills are not taught systematically and much of the artwork is produced to illustrate topics rather than being art for its own sake. Since the last inspection a policy for the subject has been produced which provides adequate support for non-specialist teachers but there are no portfolios of pupils' work to enable staff to track pupils' progress in the subject. Standards at the time of the previous inspection were judged to be in line with national expectations and these have been maintained.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

108 Inspection evidence is based upon observation of a small number of lessons, examination of pupils' written work and their models, photographic evidence and teacher's planning across both key stages. In the previous inspection attainment was found to be average at Key Stage 1 and below average at Key Stage 2. There has been an improvement at Key Stage 2 where pupils now attain standards that are typical for their age.

109 By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils work from simple designs and use tools appropriately and safely. They talk about what they are doing and use simple technological vocabulary. This was evident in one lesson where pupils discussed how they could modify their plans to improve the wheels on their vehicle. The pupils knew the parts of a vehicle and experimented successfully with construction equipment to make a chassis, axles and wheels.

110 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are aware of design constraints and can evaluate the finished product. For example, the pupils in Year 3 know about packaging and investigate how boxes are constructed. They articulate what it is about packages that would tempt them to buy a product, giving valid and sensible reasons. They use information technology appropriately to design Christmas cards and calendars. In Year 4 pupils' designs for moving characters involve levers with split pins used as pivots.

111 In both key stages teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the one lesson observed in Key Stage 2 teaching and learning were good. Planning was thorough and good classroom management gave rise to motivation and concentration. The learning objectives were clear, pupils were given encouragement to succeed and they responded positively and enthusiastically. By the end of Key Stage 1 the pupils have progressed from making simple initial designs to more detailed labelled drawings. In Key Stage 2 pupils make satisfactory progress in the evaluation of their products. For example in a discussion with Year 3 pupils they identified how they could improve the "shaduf" they had made as part of an Egyptian display to make it stronger. Year 6 pupils explained satisfactorily how they could improve their models of bodies to have better movable joints. Pupils with special educational needs are appropriately supported and make satisfactory progress at both key stages.

112 Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are sound, resulting in satisfactory gains in learning. They work co-operatively, allow others to express an opinion and listen to their advice. They concentrate appropriately, share resources willingly and respect equipment and the need for safety.

113 At the time of the last inspection the scheme of work needed to be developed to ensure that pupils at Key Stage 2 were sufficiently challenged. The policy and scheme of work have now been revised to ensure that this is now true.

114 The policy is of a satisfactory quality, giving appropriate guidance to teachers. The school has adopted the scheme of work published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The scheme of work provides for coverage of all aspects of the subject but there has been no effective attempt to assess and monitor the pupils' learning and what is going on in the classrooms.

GEOGRAPHY

115 It was only possible to observe one lesson of geography in each key stage. Judgements are based on two lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work, planning and discussions with pupils and teachers. Pupils in both key stages make sound progress in the subject.

116 The work samples produced in Key Stage 1 are of variable quality, but satisfactory overall. Pupils can identify features in their own environment such as road signs and major buildings. They make simple attempts at mapping the route to school, including pictures and symbols. By the end of Year 2, higher attainers can plot buildings on an aerial plan, converting information from a side-on view. Pupils are familiar with the four main points of the compass.

117 By the age of 11, pupils have acquired a satisfactory range of geographical skills. Their mapwork skills have matured significantly. They produce detailed work on co-ordinates and research information independently to plot important places and features. Their knowledge extends beyond their own locality and country. In the lesson observed, pupils could identify the main rivers and mountains of India. This learning was supported by the teacher's imaginative use of resources. Early in the key stage, pupils demonstrate appropriate knowledge and understanding of earthquakes and volcanic activity. An impressive project on Lancashire in Year 6 demonstrates an appreciation of the importance of location and systems of communication.

118 Much of the work is derived from examples provided by the teacher. As a result, pupils acquire a sound body of knowledge but there is insufficient emphasis on personal interpretation of data. However, pupils tackle their work seriously and it is generally well organised and neatly presented. In the lesson seen in Key Stage 2 resources were well prepared so that pupils' understanding of a range of maps were extended. In a very good lesson in Key Stage 1 the brisk pace and engaging explanation held pupils' interest well. Pupils were given ample opportunities to contribute to the discussion and to make their own observations. Pupils with special educational needs are catered for efficiently and they make satisfactory progress. Teachers mark the work diligently, although comments encourage pupils rather than point them in directions that will improve their standards.

119 The schemes of work have been updated recently. The present priority is to include greater detail in the Key Stage 1 course. This is entirely appropriate. Currently, topic activities are not pitched at different levels of difficulty. This will be needed so that all pupils can be suitably challenged. Resources are adequate although the potential of new technology has not been addressed in sufficient depth. These judgements match those reported in the last inspection. The most significant change is the reduction in time allocated to geography, but teachers' planning ensures that the full programme of study is covered.

HISTORY

120 Only two lessons were seen during the inspection, but from these, the scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' plans pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in the subject are judged to be typical for their age. Pupils have appropriate experience of the programmes of study of the National Curriculum and make sound progress in their learning.

121 By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are beginning to develop elementary skills of enquiry. Through the study of old photographs and artefacts such as souvenirs of seaside visits they understand some of the differences between the past and present. They look closely at old objects and speculate about their purpose. They look for clues in old photographs to further their investigation.

122 Pupils in Key Stage 2 broaden their knowledge of past events. Higher attaining pupils know simple facts about life in Tudor times and can suggest reasons why events such as the Armada took place. Through studying the Ancient Egyptians pupils in Year 3 learn to interpret evidence, for example by speculating about the meaning of hieroglyphics. By the end of their time in the school pupils have developed an appropriate range of skills for their age. They use artefacts and old documents well to gain an insight into the past. In their study of the Second World War for example, pupils in Year 6 were able to demonstrate a sound understanding of the

era and some of the hardships and emotions experienced by children who were evacuees. Through interviewing senior citizens pupils further their knowledge of everyday life in the past and how it was different to the present.

123 In the lesson observed in Key Stage 1 teaching and learning were sound; they were good in the lesson in Key Stage 2. In both lessons the teachers' questions provided some opportunity for pupils to contribute their own ideas and perceptions. In the good lesson in Year 6 the teacher selected an interesting range of resources to fire the imagination of the pupils and to challenge and motivate them. For example pupils studying the Second World War used facsimiles of old documents well to deepen their knowledge of past events and to draw conclusions and make hypotheses. Pupils responded to the high expectation with mature responses and observations. Through lively and clear teaching pupils were introduced to a range of appropriate vocabulary which they subsequently used to good effect in their own written work. Pupils with special educational needs were well supported by the teacher who sat with the group and enabled them to make progress in their learning through encouragement and skilful questioning. Higher attaining pupils also made good progress through the apt choice of task that made them think. In the satisfactory lesson in Key Stage 1 the practical task was well chosen to promote learning and to develop skills but the management of the class was much less secure and time was lost in settling pupils to work. The choice of artefacts for pupils to study did not promote their historical understanding because the items were insufficiently old and did not provide enough distinguishing features or contrasts for young pupils to make meaningful observations. Throughout the school samples of pupils' work indicate a variety of teaching approaches, the best of which promote historical knowledge and understanding through an interesting range of activities rather than the mere acquisition and re-telling of factual knowledge.

124 Pupils attitudes to the subject are satisfactory; indeed, several older pupils cite history as a favourite subject. When teaching is challenging and interesting pupils are well motivated and responsive. They give thoughtful, sometimes sensitive suggestions, for example, as to how evacuees might have felt when leaving their families. When teaching is less stimulating and the pace too slow they rapidly become restless and lose interest in their work.

125 The subject is managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. In response to the previous inspection medium-term plans have been updated to identify clearly what must be taught in each year group to ensure that learning builds on what has gone before. A newly introduced assessment system for pupils to evaluate what they have learned in each topic has the potential to be effective when fully implemented, but there is currently no formal means for staff to record each pupil's progress in the subject. History is an effective vehicle to promote other subjects such as information technology, when pupils design covers for their topic books, or design technology when they make a model 'shaduf'. Literacy is promoted well for example, as pupils record their factual information and write from the point of view of historical characters.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

126 By the end of both key stages levels of attainment are as expected for their age. Pupils, including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in their learning. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know how to load and save work, and can change the size and style of letters effectively. The pupils use the mouse and keyboard confidently and can store information on the computer in a range of forms such as text and tables. In the reception/Year 1 class pupils have limited opportunity to learn how computers can be used to control devices and as a result make limited progress in this area.

127 Pupils in Key Stage 2 use art programs and word processors to enhance their work in other subjects, for example, when Year 6 pupils recorded the daily temperature as part of a science investigation. They draft and re-draft stories. Simple text is enhanced with attractive borders and colourful graphics, for example, when Year 3 pupils designed a border for their

Egyptian project book. Pupils use their skills of selecting letter size, colour and shape to produce satisfactory labelling for their wall display. However, pupils have insufficient opportunity to use computer simulations and consequently achieve unsatisfactorily in the areas of controlling and modelling.

128 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in both key stages. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of information technology, and lessons are appropriately planned. Higher attaining pupils are appropriately challenged by open-ended tasks while lower attaining pupils complete work satisfactorily. Adult support is organised effectively; ensuring that help and guidance is always available when a whole class visits the computer suite or when lessons take place in the classroom. This makes an important contribution to the pupils' learning.

129 Pupils' attitudes to information technology are satisfactory. From an early age pupils work independently and persevere to complete their work. Pupils relate well to adults and use equipment with care. Most pupils show a great deal of interest in their work and are keen to take part in lessons. Pupils sharing a computer take turns with the mouse, and show an awareness of others by being patient and encouraging each other.

130 The school has recently adopted the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's scheme of work and this has helped to increase the teachers' confidence in the subject. The co-ordinator has monitored the teachers' planning but there is no formal procedure for the monitoring of teaching or assessing the progress of pupils. The school is aware of the need to develop the skills of pupils in control and modelling.

131 This is a subject that is developing well. The previous inspection report identified a paucity of resources. As part of the school's drive to improve provision in information technology funding has been provided for a suite of four computers to be established in a designated area of the school. At present however, the area is not used to best effect in maximising the learning experiences for all pupils. Additional hardware has been located in each classroom, and as a result of this satisfactory progress is made in pupils' learning.

MUSIC

132 During the inspection very few opportunities were available to observe music lessons in Key Stage 1 and so no judgement could be made. However, pupils reach standards typical of eleven-year olds by the time leave school. This reflects a similar picture to the last inspection.

133 In the reception/Year 1 class pupils sing nursery rhymes or songs from memory and successfully accompany their own tentative singing with untuned percussion. They show a developing awareness that music can create different moods when listening and appraising "echo" music. In Key Stage 2 most pupils sing with obvious pleasure, for example when rendering songs from World War 1. They identify patterns of high and low sounds when using a variety of untuned percussion instruments to accompany their singing. They know the names of instruments and use them to explore and select sounds to create musical effects.

134 Pupils in both key stages make satisfactory progress in their learning. They sing with an awareness of the musical elements of pitch, of dynamics, loud and quiet sounds and of tempo. They are keen to stand in front of others and demonstrate actions. Younger pupils listen to music carefully and their response is satisfactory. Most pupils in both key stages talk about how music makes them feel and are sensitive to such responses from others. Pupils listen to music and are helped to develop an understanding of different types of music from other countries and cultures. Singing in assemblies is tuneful and rhythmic. However, the playing of recorded music in assemblies is not used to best advantage to develop musical knowledge and enjoyment or for contributing to the spiritual tone of the occasion. Pupils with special educational needs are appropriately supported and make satisfactory progress in their learning at both key stages.

135 Teaching was good in the one lesson observed at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in the lessons observed at Key Stage 2. The quality of direct teaching is the key factor in the most successful lesson. When the teacher is confident, pupils enter into the spirit of the lesson. Younger pupils are encouraged to listen carefully and copy simple rhythmic patterns and as a result pupils begin to distinguish between fast and slow pieces and develop a sense of pulse. When subject knowledge is less confident, teachers restrict pupils to a narrow musical experience. Since no teacher has musical qualifications this leads to a restricted range of musical opportunities for some pupils.

136 At the time of the inspection, the subject co-ordinator was absent from school. The subject is satisfactorily managed by the headteacher in the interim period. Following budgetary constraints the school has drastically cut back on its provision for the teaching of instruments and as a result of this there is no provision for this, nor are there any extra-curricular activities, such as choir or recorders. The policy for the subject is of a satisfactory quality, giving appropriate guidance to teachers. The school has adopted the scheme of work published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. However, although the scheme of work ensures that all elements of the National Curriculum are taught there has been no attempt to assess and monitor the progress of the pupils' learning and what is going on in the classrooms.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

137 Standards achieved at the age of seven are satisfactory, and good at the age of eleven. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. Almost all of the lessons observed concentrated on gymnastics or dance.

138 In Key Stage 1, pupils work safely in their own space. They can interpret music through expressive movement, and in team activities they practise individual ball skills in competitive situations. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils' natural ability is harnessed to produce some good levels of performance in gymnastics. Although there is a need for greater control and poise, both boys and girls create imaginative sequences. They effectively combine rolls, jumps and gymnastic movements such as cartwheels and Arab springs. Safety rules are observed at all times. Although no outdoor games lessons were observed, older girls displayed high levels of competence at the netball club. Attainment in swimming is good, with four out of every five pupils able to swim at least 25 metres by the time they leave the school, and many pupils achieving considerably more than this. Pupils with special educational needs often make good progress.

139 The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. The organisation and planning of lessons is generally sound. However, a preoccupation with the inattentiveness of individual pupils sometimes impedes the flow of the lesson, and diverts attention from the main learning objectives. Standards throughout Key Stage 2 are raised by the strong teaching skills at the beginning and end of the key stage. In these classes, the teachers maintain a calm overview and organise activities effectively. Instructions include useful tips for the improvement of performance, and planning ensures a structured progression in skill levels. When pupils are devising sequences, these teachers insist on control and style, although there is a tendency to accept a series of disconnected movements as good practice. In the middle years of the key stage, teachers plan varied activities and ensure that pupils are active throughout. Insecure knowledge of the finer points of gymnastic performance sometimes results in higher attainers working at levels below their potential.

140 Pupils are always enthusiastic in lessons. They co-operate well with one another in partner work and in team activities. They try to analyse their own techniques when required to do so, and younger pupils quickly learn to take turns. Demonstrations for the rest of the class are undertaken willingly. Concentration sometimes wavers when slow, controlled movement is

expected, and noise levels in some classes are too high.

141 The school provides a broad range of sporting activities in its extra-curricular programme, including soccer, netball and badminton. All practices are open to both boys and girls. Orienteering and archery are among the activities experienced when Year 6 pupils spend a residential weekend at Kingswood. The last report indicated a need for medium-term plans. These are now in place, although monitoring and assessment strategies have yet to be addressed.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

142 At the time of the last inspection, religious education was a key issue. Much work has been undertaken to ensure that this is no longer the case. The schemes of work now comply fully with the statutory requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils make sound progress. The schemes cover six major religions and there are planned opportunities for pupils to explore religious ideas.

143 Early in Key Stage 1, pupils learn about topics such as Creation. They discuss and write about them sensitively. Towards the end of the key stage they can relate the Christmas story and know about Christian festivals. Most pupils understand the difference between right and wrong as they learn about the Christian code of conduct.

144 Pupils learn to form views on a wide range of issues throughout Key Stage 2. In Year 3 they consider founders and leaders and one group concludes that "Good leaders bring out the best in others." They are able to relate leadership to modern day situations, such as being the captain of a football team. Year 4 pupils know the tenets of Buddhism and can relate the story of Prince Siddhartha. They also respond to the challenge of presenting personal commentaries on a range of Bible stories. In Year 5, the values of parenthood and family life are covered comprehensively, although there are limited opportunities for extended writing. Year 6 pupils are producing sensitive accounts on the theme of "Life is a journey" and contribute fully to discussion comparing Hindu and Christian ceremonies. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from sound lesson planning in most classes. They make satisfactory progress throughout the school.

145 The quality of teaching is variable. Overall, it is satisfactory and it is sometimes very good. This is particularly evident when teachers do not become immersed with too much detail and encourage pupils to express opinions and to draw conclusions from a range of sources. In a lesson with the reception/Year 1 class the children knew that the teacher valued their contributions and her serene demeanour ensured that the principles of 'sharing' were embraced by all. A lesson with Year 6 pupils developed into a two-way learning experience as the teacher and pupils exchanged thoughts about Hindu ceremonies. By the end of the lesson, there was a deeper understanding of Samskaras. When teaching is unsatisfactory, teachers are unable to orchestrate whole-class discussions successfully. The lesson becomes fragmented and low-level work ensues that neither challenges nor stimulates the pupils sufficiently. In these lessons teachers concentrate heavily on control mechanisms and there is an excessive emphasis on written work. All teachers take advantage of current events and important dates, such as children's birthdays, to provide stimuli within their lesson plans.

146 Pupils' attitudes in lessons are frequently very positive. They contribute willingly to discussions and are prepared to share their ideas and experiences with the rest of the class. Older pupils show a mature appreciation of the variety of religions throughout the world. They draw on the knowledge they have acquired to make valid judgements and comparisons. However, some boys in one class do not approach issues with an open mind, and they ruin the atmosphere with their thoughtless behaviour, thus affecting adversely the learning of others in the class.

147 The subject content is now planned effectively. However, monitoring systems have yet to be established, and assessment opportunities have not been fully explored. The limited amount of self-assessment provides a useful basis for further developments. The co-ordinator is actively promoting teaching styles that provide opportunities for pupils to interpret stories and events.