

INSPECTION REPORT

ABBAY LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Abbey Lane, Sheffield

LEA: Sheffield

Unique reference number: 106982

Headteacher: Mr. F. Dobson

Reporting inspector: Margaret Britton
17678

Dates of inspection: 7th-11th February 2000

Inspection number: 190720

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Abbey Lane Sheffield
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. R. Pemberton
Date of previous inspection:	November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
M. Britton	Registered inspector	Under fives; music	How well pupils are taught
			How well the school is led and managed
K. Ross	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well the school cares for its pupils
			How well the school works in partnership with parents
F. Clarke	Team inspector	English; geography; religious education; equality of opportunity	The quality of curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
J. Gibson	Team inspector	Art; design and technology; information and communication technology; English as an additional language	
M. Heyes	Team inspector	Special educational needs; science; history; physical education	
L. Parkinson	Team inspector	Mathematics	The school's results and achievements
			The quality of the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a large primary school for boys and girls 4-11 years old. It has 406 full time pupils. Pupils' attainment on entry to the reception classes is above that found nationally. Fifty-two (13%) pupils have special educational needs; a figure lower than that found nationally. Two pupils have English as an additional language.

Twenty nine pupils (seven percent) are eligible for free school meals. This is below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Abbey Lane is an effective school which makes good provision for the pupils. Pupils achieve high standards because the quality of teaching is good and they have very positive attitudes to learning. The headteacher, staff and governors work well together to improve the school and maintain high standards. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English and mathematics are high at both key stages.
- The quality of the provision for children under five is very good and children make good progress.
- The quality of teaching is good and staff work very hard to maintain the high standards.
- Pupils' are keen to learn, put in a lot of effort and work quickly. This makes a very good contribution to the progress they make.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent and they get on well with each other.
- The headteacher, staff and governors provide good leadership for the school. The headteacher has established and maintained good relationships and communications between parents, pupils, staff and governors. This makes a major contribution to the effectiveness of the school.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral development. All the adults provide very positive role models.
- The school has very good links with parents who are very supportive of the school.

What could be improved

- The percentage of pupils reaching higher levels than those expected for seven-year-olds and eleven-year-olds in the national tests.
- Assessment information is not consistently used well by teachers when they plan lessons.
- The school's approach to checking the impact of teaching on pupils' progress is not fully established.
- The school development plan includes too many targets for improvement. Criteria for judging the impact of the development standards and provision are not consistently well focused.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When it was last inspected in November 1996, Abbey Lane Primary School was found to be a good school that served its pupils well. Since then, the school has improved in a number of areas. The results achieved by pupils in the national tests at the age of seven and eleven have risen each year, keeping pace with the national rate improvement in standards. Teaching has improved. The school has placed an increased emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills and information for parents about their children's progress has improved. Most of the action points from the last inspection have been tackled satisfactorily, and improvements in curriculum planning have been well implemented. The role of the senior management team has been developed well and some progress has been made in developing an approach to monitoring the quality of teaching and learning but this is not sufficient. Analysis of the results of end of national end of key stage tests and other assessments is carried out well. Assessment procedures have been reviewed and satisfactorily changed but consistently good use is not made of the range of assessment information available: there is scope for further improvement. The school has chosen to delay the development of opportunities for pupils to develop independent enquiry skills in order to introduce the national strategies for literacy and numeracy.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	D	C	B	D
mathematics	A	B	A	C
science	C	C	C	E

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

When children start school in the reception class, the results of the baseline assessments carried out by the school show that the majority of children achieve levels above those typical of the age group. By the time they are five years old almost all the children reach the levels described by the national desirable learning outcomes for children aged five and many achieve levels within the Key Stage 1 programmes of study of the National Curriculum.

Throughout the school pupils achieve high standards in English and mathematics.

The standards in reading and writing achieved by pupils aged seven are well above average. Standards in mathematics are higher than average. These results match those achieved by pupils in similar schools. The high standards achieved by seven year-olds have been maintained over the last three years.

The standards achieved by eleven-year-olds have steadily improved over the last three years. They achieve very high standards in mathematics and higher than average standards in English. Standards in science are average. Results in mathematics match those achieved by pupils in similar schools. However, results in English are below average and results in science are well below average when compared to similar schools. The 'below average' comparisons are because relatively few pupils achieve levels above those expected nationally for eleven-year-olds. A reduction of 2 percent of pupils entitled to free school meals has taken the school into the top group for comparison with other schools. Pupils achieve standards which are in line with those achieved by pupils in similar schools in Sheffield.

The percentage of pupils reaching higher levels in science in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 is below the national average. Given that pupils achieve high standards on entry to school and in the other subjects, insufficient pupils achieve the higher levels in science.

The school has set realistic targets for improvement in the standards pupils attain. The targets are based on the teachers' knowledge of the pupils' prior attainment and are appropriately ambitious.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic, enjoy learning and sustain their concentration well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. Pupils have a well developed sense of self-discipline.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils show respect for the feelings, beliefs and values of others. Relationships are very good and there is a sense of mutual respect.
Attendance	Good. Levels of attendance are above the national average.

This is a very civilised community. Pupils are courteous to each other and to adults. They make visitors feel very welcome. Their positive attitudes and behaviour allow everyone to learn and No time is wasted in lessons. This makes a very strong contribution to the rate of pupils progress.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Inspectors evaluated 80 lessons or parts of lessons. The quality of teaching ranged from excellent to poor. In six percent of lessons the quality of teaching is excellent. It is very good in 14 percent and good in 42 percent. In 34 percent of lessons, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the remaining four percent of lessons, the quality of teaching was less than satisfactory. These lessons were in mathematics at Key Stage 1 and mathematics and art at Key Stage 2. The quality of teaching in information and communications technology at Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory because of some teachers' lack of subject knowledge and skills and the shortage of computers. The excellent teaching was in mathematics and art at Key Stage 1 and science and art at Key Stage 2. Teaching generally meets the needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language.

Particular strengths in the teaching for children under five are the quality of the teachers' planning and their knowledge and understanding of the needs of the age group and how they learn. Because of the very good quality of the teaching, children make good progress and many work at a level well above that expected for the age group. The quality of teaching in the literacy hour and other English lessons is good at both key stages and, as a result, pupils make at least satisfactory and often good and better progress. In mathematics, the quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Where there are shortcomings in teaching, these are frequently because the guided and group tasks are not sufficiently well matched to the needs of the pupils. Teachers do not consistently use assessment information as a guide for planning the pupils' tasks. As a result, pupils' progress is sometimes limited. The whole class teaching is particularly effective and teachers make good use of challenging questions to probe pupils' understanding and this enables them to make good progress in the lessons. Teachers manage pupils very well, give clear instructions and explanations and these positive features of the teaching make a strong contribution to the progress pupils make. The support staff make a good contribution to the rate of pupils' learning.

Pupils make good and better progress in almost 60 percent of lessons and satisfactory progress in a further 36 percent of lessons. When the quality of teaching is less than satisfactory they do not make sufficient progress.

Teaching is not rigorously monitored throughout the school. Consequently, teachers are not fully aware of how their practice impacts on pupils' learning, and elements of very good practice are not shared among the staff.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall and meets statutory requirements for the National Curriculum and religious education. Very good curriculum for the under-fives.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is made for individuals and small groups. The special needs co-ordinator and support staff work well together and provide purposeful tasks for the pupils. Individual education plans are well written.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good provision is made. The pupils are making good progress as a result of the extra support provided by the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development is well promoted.
How well the school cares for its pupils	A good level of care is provided. There are good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare. Monitoring of the personal and intellectual development of children under five is good. In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 there are satisfactory arrangements for monitoring pupils' progress. There are good procedures for promoting good behaviour throughout the school. Although the school satisfactorily assesses pupils' attainment and progress, the use of this information to guide teaching is unsatisfactory.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented satisfactorily. Equality of opportunity is satisfactorily promoted except that members of the choir and those learning to play musical instruments miss important parts of literacy and mathematics lessons and are not always helped to catch up with the work they have missed. A satisfactory range of good quality extra-curricular activities is provided for pupils in Key Stage 2. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

An outstanding feature of the school is the strength of the partnership the school has developed with parents. Parents find the staff approachable and hold the school in high regard. The school provides a good range of information for parents including letters, booklets and meetings. A number of parents provide valuable help for the school in fundraising and practical help in the classrooms.

Pastoral care is good and all staff know the pupils well. Parents believe that the school helps their children to develop mature and responsible attitudes. The school monitors pupils' academic progress satisfactorily. Teachers do not consistently use their knowledge of pupils' attainment levels to guide the planning of subsequent lessons. This is a shortcoming in the care of the pupils' intellectual development and progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good leadership overall. The headteacher provides committed and sensitive leadership and is well supported by the deputy headteacher and senior staff. The management structures are appropriate and enable staff to carry out their roles effectively. Teachers with responsibility for the leadership of subjects or aspects provide at least satisfactory leadership. Some provide good leadership.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its statutory roles and responsibilities well but is over-reliant on the headteacher and staff in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The headteacher and senior management team are well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school but have not fully established an approach to checking the quality of teaching and learning and using this information to identify specific priorities for improvement. Good use is made of the results of national and other assessments to identify areas of weakness in the curriculum.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The governing body takes a sufficiently long-term view of financial planning and supports educational priorities well.

There are sufficient teachers and support staff who are appropriately trained and experienced to meet the needs of the curriculum. There are sufficient classrooms but most of these are rather small and cramped. Good use is made of additional rooms for food technology, music and special educational needs. The fabric of the building was in poor condition when responsibility was delegated to the governing body and it is in need of considerable expenditure. The governors have established a rolling programme of internal decoration and improvement but funds are limited and progress is slow. Cloakroom space is very limited. The school has a good supply of books, materials and equipment of good quality. There are insufficient resources for information and communications technology.

The particular strength of the headteacher's leadership and management, is his success in promoting good communications and positive relationships with staff, parents and pupils. This is evident in the very good links with parents, high expectations for pupils and strong professional support for staff. The major shortcoming in the leadership and management of the school is the absence of a comprehensive approach to monitoring and evaluating the quality of the curriculum, teaching and learning. Too many priorities in the school development plan spread the time, effort and energy of the staff too thinly to have a significant impact.

The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily. Financial systems are very secure.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects the children to work hard. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with suggestions or complaints. • The good leadership and management of the school. • The good teaching. • The children's good behaviour in school. • The progress their children make • The positive way in which the school works with parents. • The way in which their children are encouraged to develop mature and positive attitudes. • Their children like going to school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wider range of activities (including extra curricular activities) for the children. • Some parents would like more information about their children's progress. • Some parents are not sure that their child gets the right work. • Some would like the school to work more closely with parents.

The inspectors agree with the parents' positive views of the school. The children do benefit from an interesting range of activities in lessons but the inspectors agree that the school could provide a wider range of after school activities. Parents are provided with a good range of information and teachers are approachable and willing to provide information for parents on occasions other than the formal meetings arranged by the school. Children are given appropriate work most of the time but there are occasions when children could be better challenged by the tasks. The inspectors judge that the school works very closely with parents and provides very good links for them.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 When children start school in the reception class, the results of the baseline assessments show that the majority achieve levels higher than those typical of the age group in all areas of learning. By the time they are five years old, almost all the children reach the levels described by the national desirable learning outcomes for children aged five. Many children achieve levels within the National Curriculum programmes of study for pupils in Key Stage 1.
- 2 The results of the national end of Key Stage 1 tests for 1999 show that the number of pupils attaining the expected level (Level 2) and above in reading was well above the national average. Although pupils attained levels well above the national average in writing and mathematics, the number of pupils gaining the higher level (Level 3) was below the national average. When pupils' achievements in the end of Key Stage 1 tests in reading, writing and mathematics are compared overall to those achieved by pupils in similar schools, the results were similar but results at the higher levels in writing and mathematics were well below. The school has appropriately identified the percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 as a target for improvement.
- 3 The results of teacher assessment showed that the number of pupils who achieved the level expected nationally for seven-year-olds in speaking and listening was very high in comparison with the national average. The number of pupils who achieved the higher level (level 3) was also above national expectations. Teacher assessment shows that standards in science were above the national average. Experimental and investigative science was identified as a strength. The number of pupils who attained the higher level was broadly in line with the national average.
- 4 There has been a steady upward trend in the results of Key Stage 1 reading tests. Although the overall trend in the results in writing is one of improvement, the school has identified standards in writing as a target for improvement. Significant improvement in standards in mathematics was made in 1997, and the school has maintained standards above the national average.
- 5 The results of the national end of Key Stage 2 tests for 1999 show that in English and mathematics the number of pupils attaining the expected level was well above the national average. Standards in science were above average. The number of pupils attaining the higher levels in these subjects was above the national average in mathematics, similar to the national average in English and below the national average in science.

- 6 Standards in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 are in line with those achieved by pupils in similar schools. However, standards in English are below average and standards in science are well below average. Because of a reduction in the number of pupils eligible for free school meals from ten percent to seven percent, the school has moved into the top benchmark group even though there has been no discernible change in the socio-economic background of the pupils. The school identifies these comparisons as a concern and an area for improvement. Although the inspectors identified some lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils in some lessons, and agree that this is an area to target for improvement, the evidence did not reveal consistent lack of challenge or underachievement. Pupils achieve standards which are in line with those attained by pupils in similar schools in Sheffield.
- 7 Over the four years from 1996, the school has maintained an upward trend in the results for Key Stage 2 that is broadly in line with the national trend. There is little difference in the performance of boys and girls in English and science but in mathematics the girls out perform the boys.
- 8 Inspection evidence shows that pupils in Year 2 and in Year 6 attain levels above those expected nationally for their age in English and mathematics. In science, pupils reach the levels expected nationally.
- 9 The pupils with English as an additional language had no competency in English on entry to the school. They are making good progress in relation to the language targets as a result of the support provided by the school in withdrawal groups and in the classroom.
- 10 Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and because of the good support given by the special educational needs co-ordinator and support staff, they make at least satisfactory progress towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans.
- 11 The headteacher, teachers and governors have made very good use of the results of assessment tests and their knowledge of pupils attainment to set targets for improvement for the end of key stage tests in 2000. They have set realistically ambitious targets, which they will review now that they have funding for 'booster classes'.
- 12 The implementation of the national literacy strategy has had a positive impact on pupils' knowledge of language and of standards in reading. Group teaching focussing on guided reading and writing has not been implemented fully. The impact of the literacy strategy has not been fully realised because the tasks pupils are given for the independent work are not consistently matched to challenge them.

- 13 The school has made a satisfactory start in implementing the numeracy hour. Teachers are becoming accustomed to the materials and the approach is having a positive impact on pupils' standards in oral and mental mathematics. Pupils explain their strategies for working out calculations and problems confidently and clearly using appropriate mathematical terms. In mathematics, there is a strength in mental and oral mathematics and pupils throughout the school give prompt and articulate responses to questions. However, independent and group tasks are not always well matched to the pupils' needs and the impact on standards is not so evident in this part of the lessons. The school's decision to group pupils in Year 6 by ability and to teach them in 'sets' for numeracy is having a positive impact on their levels of attainment because work is more closely matched to pupils' prior attainment.
- 14 At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils reach the levels expected nationally for seven-year-olds in information and communications technology. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils do not reach the levels expected of eleven-year-olds. This is mainly because the school does not have enough resources to give the pupils sufficient opportunities to practise the skills and the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. The skills are not sufficiently promoted in other subjects in Key Stage 2.
- 15 In religious education, pupils reach the levels expected for the age group in the locally agreed syllabus at the end of both key stages. In art, design and technology, geography, history and physical education pupils reach the levels expected nationally at the end of both key stages. Pupils in Key Stage 1, reach the levels expected nationally for seven-year-olds in music. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils achieve levels above those expected for eleven-year-olds in music.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 16 Throughout both key stages, pupils maintain very good attitudes to school. They are enthusiastic and enjoy learning and are reluctant to stop when they have to. For example, in a Year 3 lesson about Roman Britain, the pupils did not want the lesson to end. Pupils work hard and show great interest in their work.
- 17 Standards of behaviour are excellent and pupils keep school and class rules well. Pupils need little direct supervision and they have a well developed sense of self-discipline. Pupils respect each other and there is mutual respect between pupils and teachers. Parents and pupils report that instances of bullying are rare and if they do occur they are dealt with quickly and effectively. No instances of bullying were observed during the period of inspection. There were no exclusions in the year prior to the inspection.
- 18 Pupils take appropriate care of their own and other peoples' property and show respect for other peoples' feelings, values and beliefs. However, opportunities for pupils to listen to and value others' ideas in lessons are inconsistent. Relationships within the school are very good at all levels. Pupils are courteous and friendly towards each other and to all adults working in the school and they make visitors feel very welcome. Pupils cooperate well, for example, when working in groups of four to tidy away physical education equipment.

- 19 Pupils' personal development is good overall. Pupils take responsibility for routine classroom tasks around the school such as staircase patrol, door duties and being responsible for assembly music and operating the projector. Some become 'buddies' and play with children in the reception class at playtimes. This has mutual benefits. Pupils make a good contribution to the day-to-day organisation of the school. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to plan and organise their work; this is a shortcoming in the school's provision for pupils' personal development.
- 20 The attendance figures for the school are above the national average and nearly all pupils arrive for school on time and lessons start promptly. Parents are very happy with the positive attitudes and values that the school promotes and feel they have a beneficial effect on their children.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 21 The quality of teaching is good overall. In seven percent of lessons the quality of teaching is excellent. It is very good in 13 percent and good in 42 percent. In 34 percent of lessons, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the remaining four percent of lessons, the quality of teaching is less than satisfactory. These lessons were in mathematics at Key Stage 1 and mathematics and art at Key Stage 2. The excellent teaching was in mathematics and art at Key Stage 1 and science and art at Key Stage 2. Information and communications technology is not generally taught as a separate class lesson but to small groups of pupils alongside other subjects. The quality of teaching in this subject is judged to be at least satisfactory at Key Stage 1 but less than satisfactory at Key Stage 2.
- 22 The quality of teaching for children under five is very good. Particular strengths are in the well structured plans for teaching which allow the children to successfully build on what they have learned before and the use of children's and adults' time. The teachers demonstrate a very good understanding of the way in which young children learn. The activities are stimulating and relevant to the children and successfully promote all the areas of learning. The adults interact very effectively with individuals and small groups of children to question, praise, and challenge them. Because of the very good quality of the teaching, children make good progress and many work at a level well above that expected for the age group.
- 23 Sixty percent of lessons at Key Stage 1 were judged to be good and better, 35 percent satisfactory and the remaining five- percent, unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching in the literacy hour is good and the pupils make good progress. The quality of teaching in mathematics is satisfactory. Teachers are implementing the National Numeracy Strategy effectively and pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Where there are shortcomings in literacy and numeracy teaching, these are usually because the guided and group tasks are not sufficiently well matched to the needs of the pupils. As a result pupils progress is sometimes limited. The quality of teaching in science, design and technology, history, music and physical education is at least satisfactory and frequently good. No observations were made of lessons in information and communications technology or religious education, but teachers' lesson planning and a sample of pupils' work provided sufficient evidence to support the judgement that teaching is at least satisfactory in these subjects.

- 24 At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching was judged to be good in 59 percent of lessons, satisfactory in 37 percent and less than satisfactory in the remaining 4 percent of lessons. The quality of teaching in literacy is good and, as a result, pupils make at least satisfactory and often good and better progress. In mathematics, the quality of teaching is good and pupils make good progress. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been effectively implemented. The whole class teaching is particularly effective but the quality of teaching guided reading and writing tasks and of individual and group numeracy tasks, although generally satisfactory, is a relative weakness. The overall quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and frequently better in science. In the best lessons, teachers make good use of challenging questions to probe pupils' understanding and this enables them to make good progress in the lesson. The quality of teaching in religious education, geography and history is satisfactory. In physical education and music, the quality of teaching is good. In art, the quality of teaching is very variable but is usually at least satisfactory. Although some teachers provide satisfactory and sometimes good teaching in information and communications technology, overall the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory.
- 25 Where the quality of teaching is excellent, lessons are very well planned, move at a brisk pace, and interest and engage the pupils. As a result, pupils make outstanding gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills in the subject. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson, the pupils made very good progress because the lesson was based on the teacher's detailed knowledge of the pupils' prior attainment. The challenging questions were well matched to individuals and enabled the teacher to check pupils' understanding, before introducing the new work. Any misconceptions were dealt with and the teacher gave a clear and well-timed exposition on giving change from five and ten pence. The individual and group tasks which followed were very well planned and enabled pupils of all abilities to make gains in their understanding and consolidate the new learning. The other adults working with the pupils gave very good support because the written plans they were given for the activity set out clearly what the pupils were to learn. No time was wasted. The pupils sustained their concentration throughout the lesson and, at the end of the lesson, they were confident in explaining their strategies. The teacher took the opportunity to take the learning even further by helping the pupils see that giving change involves subtracting one number from another.
- 26 Pupils make good and better progress in almost 60 percent of lessons. This good progress is generally a direct result of good and very good teaching. For example, in a Year 3 literacy lesson when pupils learned how written instructions are organised, they made very good progress because the teacher clearly established what was to be learned, asked questions which drew on the pupils' prior learning and involved them in discussion. The teacher praised their suggestions, which encouraged them to keep thinking and sustain concentration. Similarly, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils were challenged by work involving devising strategies for calculating the cost of pizza and a theatre visit for a number of friends. They were so interested by the work that they did not want to stop. Because the work was stimulating and well planned to provide them with a challenge, the pupils were able to increase and develop methods for calculating answers.

- 27 In lessons where the quality of teaching is satisfactory, the teachers' plans generally state clearly what is to be learned and this remains the focus for the lesson. The most effective part of these lessons is usually when the teacher talks to the whole class, asking questions to assess their understanding, explaining the new work and giving instructions for the tasks. For example, in a Year 3 literacy lesson, the teacher provided a lively and interesting introduction and used her subject knowledge well to explain and demonstrate the features of instructional text. As a result, the pupils made good gains in their understanding. However, the pace of learning often slows as the pupils begin to work on the tasks they have been set. Pupils generally understand what they have to do, but independent and group work is not well established. Consequently, it is difficult for the teacher to make best use of opportunities to work with small groups to extend their understanding, knowledge and skills and this slows the rate of learning. In a number of lessons one task was set for all pupils irrespective of their ability. For instance, in a Year 6 history lesson, where pupils were examining the role of the theatre in Ancient Greek civilisation, there was little difference in the tasks set for lower, average and higher attaining pupils. The teacher did not intervene sufficiently to discuss the pupils' findings or to set a further focus.
- 28 In some lessons, teachers have a tendency to over-direct the activities leaving pupils with few opportunities to devise their own approaches and methods. This limits the pupils' rate of progress and opportunities for teachers to assess that progress. This was evident in a science lesson in year 4 where pupils learning about changes in temperature in hot and cold water carried out the investigation devised by the teacher and then recorded the results on a photocopied worksheet. Valuable opportunities for pupils to devise their own methods of carrying out and recording the results of the investigation were missed. In general, the last few minutes of lessons are used effectively to draw the learning together.
- 29 Teachers have positive relationships with the pupils and support and encourage them in their learning. The pupils' very positive attitudes to learning and very good behaviour make a significant contribution to the rate of learning no matter what the quality of teaching. This was particularly noticeable where the quality of teaching was less than satisfactory. In these lessons, even though the teaching was not stimulating the pupils were willing learners. The most significant weakness in these unsatisfactory lessons was that the teachers talked for too long and repeated instructions unnecessarily which resulted in the pupils becoming restless and having little time to work on the activities. As the lessons proceeded, teachers over-directed the pupils giving them few opportunities to think for themselves. The teachers had low expectations of the pupils' work and independent learning skills. Because of these weaknesses in the teaching, the pupils did not make sufficient progress.

- 30 The progress pupils make over time is judged to be at least satisfactory and often good. This is because of the structured way in which teachers plan the work and generally enable pupils to build on prior skills and knowledge. An examination of pupils' work showed that teachers give pupils a wide range of opportunities to gain knowledge, understanding and skills. A sample of pupils from across the age and ability range read to the inspectors. This revealed that texts are well matched to pupils' reading ability and they are taught appropriate skills. Teachers keep records of pupils' progress and parents also contribute by making comments in their child's home reading diary. The good practice in teaching and monitoring reading makes a significant contribution to pupils' good rate of progress and the high standards they achieve. A discussion with pupils in Year 2 about their work in information and communications technology revealed that they have had good opportunities to use the resources and achieve the levels expected nationally for the age group. The pupils' achievements are well promoted by their opportunities to use computers at home.
- 31 The quality of teaching for individuals and small groups of pupils withdrawn to work with the special educational needs co-ordinator is good. The pupils' individual education plans are tailored to meet their specific needs and rates of learning. However, the quality of teaching for these pupils in classrooms is variable and some teachers do not sufficiently refer to pupils' individual education plans when they plan their lessons. Where the quality of teaching is good, the teacher provides activities which reinforce the targets set for the pupils in their individual education plans.
- 32 The pupils with English as an additional language had no competency in English on entry to the school. They are making good progress in relation to the language targets as a result of the extra support provided by the school in withdrawal groups and in the classroom.
- 33 The majority of teachers have sufficient subject knowledge to teach all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. They draw effectively on their subject knowledge to ask questions which help the pupils to understand and extend their thinking. However, subject knowledge in information and communications technology is not consistently secure, particularly at Key Stage 2. Occasionally, as for example in art and music at Key Stage 2, some teachers lack confidence. Where teachers lack subject expertise the progress pupils make is limited. Where specialist teaching occurs in music, the pupils benefit from the knowledge and confidence of the teachers who expect high standards from them. The pupils respond very well to the teachers' high expectations, are enthusiastic about the subject and make good progress.

- 34 Teachers use the schemes of work well as a basis for planning effectively with a colleague who teaches the same age group. The learning objective for each lesson is clear and activities generally relate well to this and provide suitable opportunities for pupils to learn. However, day-to-day assessment of pupils learning is not used consistently by all teachers to adjust the objectives for the next lesson or as the basis for the level of difficulty of the group and individual tasks. Where assessment is used well, the tasks and activities are very appropriate for the pupils because the teacher's expectations are sufficiently high. It is in these lessons that pupils make good and sometimes better progress. The variable quality and use of day to day assessment is also evident in the way in which pupils work is marked. The best examples highlight the concepts and understanding the pupil has gained and identify specific points for improvement. The inconsistency in the use of day-to-day assessment results in variable expectations for pupils, particularly at Key Stage 2.
- 35 The literacy hour and elements of the numeracy hour have been successfully introduced and teachers are becoming increasingly confident in using the materials. They have sufficient knowledge and teach the strategies effectively. A few teachers manage the independent group work well and use their time very effectively to teach a target group . However, overall the management of this element of the literacy and numeracy strategies is not well developed.
- 36 The teachers manage pupils very well. The change from one activity to another is managed skilfully and no time is wasted. Instructions and explanations are clear and, as a result, pupils are confident and can begin their work straight away. This has a positive impact on the pace of work and the progress pupils make.
- 37 Teachers make very effective use of the skills of support staff by briefing them well so that they are able to make a good contribution to lessons. Teachers use lesson time well; in most lessons an appropriate sequence of varied activities is planned and the lessons move at a good pace. Learning resources to support the activities are well prepared and accessible.
- 38 Satisfactory use is made of homework to provide pupils with opportunities to practise skills, complete tasks and carry out research. This makes a satisfactory contribution to the progress pupils make.
- 39 Teachers successfully promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in many subjects. For example, in science pupils in both key stages are encouraged to talk about their ideas and what they see and do. Teachers have prioritised the use of appropriate vocabulary and displays of scientific work in classrooms help stimulate pupils in writing up their findings. Mathematical skills are developed as pupils take measurements and record data. Teachers use specific subject vocabulary well.
- 40 Throughout the school pupils acquire skills, knowledge and understanding at a good rate, there are times when tasks and activities do not challenge pupils sufficiently and the rate of learning slows.

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

- 41 At both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum and all subjects are taught in accordance with the requirements of the National Curriculum, the Desirable Learning Outcomes for children under five and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The curriculum meets the needs of the pupils satisfactorily, including those who have special educational needs.
- 42 Curriculum planning for the children in the reception classes is good. It takes account of the national desirable learning outcomes for children aged five and of the early levels of the National Curriculum for Key Stage 1. The curriculum provides children with an open-ended and challenging programme of work. The Early Years co-ordinators have already planned in elements of the Early Learning Goals which are to be the basis of the curriculum for the age group from September 2000. The staff make good use of baseline assessment information to provide the starting point for each cohort of children and the curriculum is adjusted to meet their needs.
- 43 Following the last inspection, the school was asked to complete the policies and schemes of work for all the subjects of the national curriculum. Good progress has been made in the completion of policies and schemes and the school has appropriately adopted national guidance and schemes of work for a number of subjects. All subjects now have policy statements schemes of work and plans are in hand to review these to accommodate changes in the curriculum from September 2000. Long and medium-term planning has been improved and there is a useful curriculum matrix that shows how the curriculum is to be taught from reception to Year 6. The medium-term plans show in some detail what is to be taught each half term and include broad learning objectives. However, these are not always sufficiently precise and do not indicate the range of pupils' attainment in the year group. There is little evidence that monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum is used to fine-tune this level of planning. At both key stages planning is satisfactory overall.
- 44 The strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented satisfactorily and relevant skills are promoted appropriately through other subjects across the curriculum. Appropriate time is allocated to all the National Curriculum subjects and religious education. The curriculum for information and communications technology is limited by a lack of resources and in Key Stage 2, by teachers' expertise. This hinders pupils' progress, particularly at Key Stage 2.

- 45 Appropriate opportunities are provided for pupils to use the key skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing in other subjects. Listening skills are very well promoted in all subjects. Some good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills in role-play in the reception classes. Question and answer sessions are used well to promote these skills. However, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to develop the skill of speaking at greater length in group or class discussion. Pupils are required to use their reading skills extensively to retrieve information and follow instructions. They learn to adapt the style of their writing to the purpose. For example, they present findings in tables and report frameworks in science and use their knowledge of an historical period to write imaginative letters and accounts in history. The promotion of subject specific terms provides valuable vocabulary extension. Numeracy skills are promoted satisfactorily in other subjects. For example, pupils measure, calculate and draw graphs as part of their work in science. They use co-ordinates to locate points on maps in geography and use their knowledge of measures when they bake.
- 46 Equality of opportunity is satisfactorily promoted throughout the school, except that many pupils are regularly withdrawn for a 30-minute choir practice each week during their class literacy or numeracy lesson. Consequently they do not receive their curriculum entitlement on that day. It was observed that their work in subsequent literacy and numeracy lessons was sometimes affected. Occasionally pupils could not take a full part in subsequent lessons because they had not done the initial pieces of work or had missed some vital information.
- 47 A satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities provides good quality additional learning opportunities for boys and girls in Key Stage 2. These mainly include gymnastic, sporting and team game activities in which a very good number of pupils take part. There is also a weekly chess club. Extra curricular activities do not indicate any exclusion and equality of opportunity is promoted.
- 48 The curriculum is enhanced by a suitable range of visits to places of interest including the annual residential visit for Year 6 pupils. Visitors to the school provide an extra dimension to learning. For example, visitors from the local community, including parents, share their knowledge and expertise on a variety of interesting subjects such as articulated vehicles and Chinese cooking. There are very good links with partner institutions including three playgroups and local secondary schools.
- 49 The curriculum includes sex education and health education. An awareness of the dangers of the misuse of drugs and smoking is part of the school's very good health education policy. The provision of 'circle time' makes a good contribution to pupils' personal and social development. The school prepares pupils appropriately in all aspects of their development. Key Stage 2 pupils are prepared well for the next stage in their education and make a smooth transition to the secondary school.
- 50 The school has maintained the good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and for children under five since the last inspection. It has a positive effect on pupils' attainment and progress.

- 51 The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Pupils are helped and encouraged to develop spiritual awareness through many subjects, particularly religious education and through assemblies. For example, time is provided for stillness and reflection as part of the assembly. Christian values are strongly promoted through stories about the life of Jesus. There is a good link with the local church. The pupils are involved in a carol service in the church and there are regular visits from representatives of local religious groups. Opportunities are provided in lessons for pupils to handle beautiful objects, hear music or see works of art. Pupils responded with surprise and delight when shown an old-fashioned china doll and were fascinated by the work of the artist, Escher. During an art lesson pupils were given opportunities to explore and express their ideas and feelings and they responded well.
- 52 The provision for pupils' moral development is very good and is firmly rooted in the aims of the school. Respect for others and positive caring relationships are central to the school ethos and adults provide good models of sensitive and caring behaviour, which are readily followed by the pupils. Pupils are helped to understand the difference between right and wrong. The code of behaviour is explicit and is used consistently by the adults. Each week there is an assembly to celebrate and reward good behaviour and achievements. This successfully promotes values such as caring or the importance of trying hard. Pupils are helped to understand fairness and justice through upholding the rules in games, particularly in sporting activities. The staff provide very good role models for the pupils and each class has its own system for promoting moral development. These are very effective. For example, in one class, pupils nominate those who show particular qualities such as kindness and caring. Year 5 pupils are encouraged to think about their beliefs on moral issues such as the use of alcohol and the showing of adult videos and throughout the school, there are displays of pupils' "millennium promises". Many of the promises relate to moral issues.
- 53 The provision for pupils' social development is good. The curriculum for children in the reception class provides opportunities for them to learn to work and play as part of large and small groups. Role-play situations are used very effectively to promote the children's personal and social development. Pupils at both key stages are provided with a wide range of opportunities to practise and develop their social skills. Pupils are encouraged to be helpful to teachers and to each other. For example, older pupils have special responsibilities such as preparing the hall for assemblies and befriending pupils in the reception classes. The school successfully fosters a sense of citizenship by raising funds each year for a variety of charitable causes. Some pupils independently organise a bring-and-buy sale each year to support a Blue Peter appeal. Each year, the pupils invite about 80 senior citizens for afternoon tea. They bake cakes and make special cards and act as hosts for the occasion. Members of the community are also invited to the school's nativity play. Visits into the local and wider community, including a residential visit for Year 6 pupils, provide opportunities for pupils to live and work together in a different context. As part of a visit to the village of Hope interviewed residents to get their opinions of the village and met and talked with pupils from the local primary school. Pupils in Year 6 use letters and e-mail to communicate with pen pals in Doncaster.

- 54 Provision for cultural development is good. It is promoted well through subjects and through an interesting range of educational visits linked to pupils' work. For instance, as part of their work in geography pupils visit Padley Gorge and become aware of another era as they look at the pack horse bridge and the millstones. Pupils visit museums, study the work of a range of artists and learn about and listen to the work of various composers. The main religious festivals of Christianity are celebrated and pupils learn about those of other cultures such as the Jewish Passover and the Hindu Divali. They learn to appreciate the values and beliefs of others when studying different faiths such as Judaism and Islam. Opportunities are used to foster children's multicultural knowledge and understanding through the curriculum. During Sheffield's Children's Festival pupils were able to meet and talk with well-known children's authors such as Michael Rosen, J.K. Rowling and Jacqueline Wilson. They experience live theatre within and out of school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 55 Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are good. All staff are caring and know the pupils well. Good levels of pastoral care have been maintained since the previous inspection. Parents are appreciative of the care and support provided. They feel that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible and believe the school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. The inspectors support this view. The formal procedures for child protection are satisfactory. However, not all staff have received up-to-date training on identifying and reacting to child protection issues.
- 56 The school is a safe environment and there are effective procedures to report health and safety concerns and to record any remedial action taken. Regular checks of equipment are completed and fire drills occur at regular intervals. These are correctly recorded. Risk assessments have not yet been completed for all areas of the school's work. Good procedures are in place to care for pupils who become ill or get hurt whilst at school. Sufficient staff are trained in first aid and injuries are recorded systematically.
- 57 Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory overall. When pupils start in reception classes, they are assessed using the local education authority's nationally approved baseline assessment. The results are analysed and used well to identify individual needs and to provide suitable activities for the children.

- 58 Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress at both key stages meet statutory requirements and are satisfactory overall. At the end of each key stage, pupils are assessed in English, mathematics and science against National Curriculum expectations for seven and eleven year olds. Apart from the nationally standardised tests the school uses a variety of appropriate assessment procedures at various points. Tests in mathematics, science and reading are used from Year 3 onwards. Use of assessment information to guide curricular planning is not used consistently across the school and is unsatisfactory overall. This slows the rate of pupils' progress because they are not consistently challenged by the work. The previous report stated that assessment and recording were rarely used to inform planning and although the school has made appropriate changes to the assessment procedures, this concern has still not been satisfactorily addressed. A marking scheme has been implemented since the previous inspection. However, is not always used effectively to support pupils' improvement. It is often a ticked acknowledgement of pupils' work with praise for good effort, but there are few comments to help pupils to improve their work.
- 59 The school provides effective support and advice for all its pupils. Monitoring of pupils' academic progress and personal development is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs are carefully identified, and individual education plans are well matched to their specific needs. Their progress towards the targets in these plans is carefully monitored by the special educational needs co-ordinator.
- 60 Pupils' individual annual written reports to parents are satisfactory and meet statutory requirements. They show targets for improvement in mathematics, science and English, give an overview of pupil's progress and attitudes in the remaining subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Parents can make a written comment and are given an invitation to discuss the report with their child's teacher.
- 61 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Needs are identified early through an appropriate range of assessments and records of their progress towards the targets in their individual education plans are up to date. Pupils' progress is reviewed regularly and new targets are set. Because of the systematic approach, pupils are able to make at least satisfactory progress towards the targets set. However in some lessons, the tasks are not consistently well adapted to meet the needs of these pupils and, on these occasions, the pupils make less progress.
- 62 Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are good and they are applied consistently throughout the school. All adults on site provide good role models and reinforce expected levels of behaviour. Lunchtime routines are well established and midday supervisors work closely with teachers to ensure that the lunchtime break is an orderly and pleasant social occasion. No instances of bullying were observed during the inspection. Pupils work and play in harmony irrespective of age or gender. There are satisfactory procedures to promote and monitor attendance.

- 63 The induction procedures for children starting in the reception class are good and ensure that they are happy to come to school. Gentle but firm support is given to all children during their time in reception, which enhances their ability to learn. A very good programme of visits and meetings is used to ease pupils' transfer to the next stage of their education.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 64 An outstanding feature of the school is the strength of the partnership the school has developed with parents. They hold the school in high regard and are very pleased with the school's values, academic progress and standards of behaviour. The previous report was also very positive about links with parents and stated that they contributed effectively to pupils' learning. At the parents' meeting and in the questionnaire completed prior to the inspection, parents were very supportive of the school and believe it encourages their involvement. They find the staff very approachable. Any concerns are dealt with promptly and effectively. They are pleased that their children like school. Inspection evidence supports the views of parents.
- 65 The quality of information provided for parents, particularly about pupils' progress, is good. The prospectus is very detailed, well presented and provides parents with a helpful insight into many aspects of school life. The governors' annual report contains much useful information about the work of the school and of the governing body. However, some of the required items are missing from both documents. The school has been made aware of these omissions and plans to make the necessary amendments. Suitable newsletters written in an appropriately friendly style are sent home weekly and keep parents well informed on such matters as termly topics, day-to-day events, learning objectives and the activities of the Patrons of Abbey Lane School (PALS). Parents also receive useful booklets giving them guidance on helping their children to read. Meetings to explain literacy and numeracy strategies were held for parents. They found these very useful.
- 66 The school provides parents with an appropriate number of opportunities to discuss their children's' progress and annual written reports. Parents can make arrangements to meet with the teacher at a mutually convenient time between the formal occasions and many do this. Parents of those pupils who have statements of special educational needs are appropriately involved in annual reviews.
- 67 Parents' contribution to children's' learning at school and at home is good. They are welcomed into school and feel encouraged to play an active part in its life and work. A large number help in classrooms under the supervision of the teachers. They are well briefed and are able to make a valuable contribution to pupils' education in helping with reading, baking, numeracy and literacy groups and extra curricular activities. Pupils' reading diaries are used effectively to encourage children's' reading at home and also as a means of communication between home and school. All of these activities have a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- 68 The Patrons of Abbey Lane School (PALS) organise an interesting and varied programme of social and fund raising events. Substantial funds are raised which are used to purchase valuable resources for the school. For example, they have provided funding for benches and play logs in the playground; a computer; venetian blinds in classrooms; and have made a contribution towards new basketball posts.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 69 The headteacher, governing body and staff with responsibilities provide good leadership for the school. There is an appropriate and effective management structure where the roles of the governors, headteacher and senior staff are clearly established and well understood. This promotes good relationships and a sense of teamwork.
- 70 There is an appropriate set of aims and values, which was agreed by the governing body and staff. These include aims to promote high standards of behaviour and academic achievement within a caring environment and to develop pupils' positive attitudes to learning and independent learning skills. The school is particularly successful in promoting good behaviour and high standards and pupils are willing learners. However, the promotion of pupils' independent learning skills is less evident. The school's philosophies about the promotion of equal opportunities are clear and equality of opportunity permeates most of the documentation. The school complies fully with relevant legislation.
- 71 The headteacher provides committed and sensitive leadership for the school. He expresses explicit aims and values and demonstrates strong commitment particularly to promoting good communications and positive relationships. The success of his leadership is evident in the very good links with parents, the high expectations established for pupils' behaviour and attitudes and the professional support he provides for staff. For example, formal appraisal of teachers is not in place, but the headteacher carries out annual professional development interviews with each teacher at which their performance is reviewed and targets are set. He has a quiet determination and, when necessary, takes a firm line in order to ensure that his expectations are met. Relationships with staff are very good and this enables them to work effectively as a team. He leads by example and the vast majority of staff clearly value the way in which he supports them in their work and enables them to carry out their roles effectively. The headteacher has delegated responsibilities appropriately to the senior management team, subject and aspect co-ordinators. This is an appropriate division of responsibilities that enables teachers to contribute to the overall development of the school and gives opportunities for individual professional development. The headteacher is justly proud of the things the school does well but is not complacent and is committed to bringing about improvements where there are relative weaknesses.
- 72 The senior management team share this understanding and commitment. They provide strong support for the headteacher and lead by example, particularly in the quality of their teaching. As a group, they reflect critically on what they can do to improve learning and further raise standards. This has involved a thorough analysis of the results of standardised and national end of key stage tests which, in turn, has informed decisions in setting targets for each cohort of pupils and making adjustments to the curriculum. The deputy headteacher provides good professional support for the headteacher and colleagues and has made effective contributions to school improvement, particularly in leading changes in the approach to curriculum planning. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and members of the senior management team provide coherent and systematic leadership and management.

- 73 The governing body fulfils all its statutory roles and responsibilities except that several required items are missing from their annual report to parents. Governors have a clear understanding of their role and how it complements that of the headteacher. They gain a sense of the strengths and weaknesses of the school through the detailed reports they receive from the headteacher and staff. This information helps them to support the senior management team in establishing a sense of direction for the school. They are aware that the school's performance compares favourably with other schools in the area and are eager to maintain the school's high standards and good reputation. Governors do not have a systematic approach to gathering first hand evidence about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This limits the way in which they carry out their role as 'critical friend'. Individual governors provide valuable expertise in their work on the committees for curriculum, finance, 'general purposes' and personnel. Governors are involved in making decisions about priorities to be included in the school development plan and allocate funds appropriately to the initiatives. They monitor progress towards the targets through reports from the headteacher and staff, but evaluation of the impact of developments on pupils' progress and standards is not rigorously carried out. Governors are over-dependent on the headteacher and staff to take the initiative in this area of their work. They have been fully involved in setting and agreeing targets for improvement in terms of pupils' performance in national tests and have a good understanding of the process. Governors satisfactorily set and monitor performance targets for the headteacher.
- 74 The teachers with responsibility for the leadership of a subject or aspect have a clear understanding of their role. Except for their role in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, they provide at least satisfactory leadership. They examine their colleagues' plans for teaching, provide support and advice and manage maintenance budgets effectively to ensure that there are sufficient resources of good quality. There have been some planned opportunities for co-ordinators to work alongside colleagues in order to support curriculum development. For example, literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have used this opportunity to help and advise their colleagues in implementing the strategies. However, other strategies such as classroom observation or discussions with groups of pupils are not used.

- 75 The monitoring and evaluation of the schools performance is unsatisfactory. Although, some monitoring of teaching and learning has been carried out in response to a key issue at the time of the last inspection, the practice is not well established or accepted by all teachers. Some teachers have resisted the introduction of classroom observation by their colleagues. The headteacher and senior management team have managed this carefully in order to persuade everyone of its value. This approach has been successful and attitudes are generally more positive. The Key Stage 1 co-ordinator has made a start by monitoring teaching in the reception class and recognises the importance of the activity in maintaining standards and bringing about improvement. There are plans in place to develop this further after the inspection. The headteacher examines samples of pupils' work and is working with the local education authority's link adviser to develop skills in classroom observation. Subject co-ordinators monitor teachers' planning and literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have observed some lessons in order identify strengths and weaknesses in the implementation of the strategies. However, these activities are not effective in identifying a specific target for improvement because information is not gathered against well-focused criteria. This impacts on the development of the school. For example, priorities for inclusion in the school development are not based on hard evidence gleaned from monitoring and evaluation activities. Consequently, there is a tendency to focus on improving a whole subject or aspect when only a particular element needs to be developed. Similarly, there is no systematic way of checking the extent to which individual teachers promote the school's agreed aims, policies and practices. For example, there has been no examination of teaching and learning styles and strategies to find which best promote the school's agreed aims. This weakens the impact of any improvement.
- 76 The initiatives included in the school development plan are relevant but the plan is over-ambitious in range and extent. Because the tasks needed to bring about the improvements are not listed and time allocated the headteacher, staff and governors are spreading their time, effort and funding too thinly to have a significant impact. Success criteria are not consistently specific or measurable and this makes it difficult for the school to identify the extent and impact of the development on standards and provision. Although governors use 'best value' principles when making decisions about spending, there is insufficient use of success criteria to evaluate the impact of the spending on standards and provision.
- 77 The headteacher and staff make satisfactory use of the targets for improvement in English, mathematics and science. For example, weaknesses identified in pupils' writing have been targeted as a priority for improvement in the school development plan. However, evidence from the inspectors' observation of lessons reveals that not all teachers plan tasks and activities that are consistently matched to pupils' learning needs and this slows the pace of progress towards the targets the school has set for improvement.

- 78 Those with leadership and management responsibilities have a clear understanding of what needs to be done in order to bring about improvement. The school's capacity for improvement is judged to be good because of the headteacher's honest, supportive style of leadership and very good communications skills, the awareness and good support provided by the deputy headteacher, senior management team and governing body. They have the potential to secure and maintain the commitment of all staff, pupils and parents.
- 79 The governing body fulfils its financial planning role effectively. Educational priorities are well supported through the school's financial planning. The finance committee makes good use of all available forecast information during its annual cycle of budget planning. They consider the information provided by the headteacher and staff and take advice from the school's bursar. They also take a long term view and consider, for example, the possible impact on the budget of the change in the local education authority's admission policy and the declining numbers on roll. The governing body has made a clear link between the approval of the budget and its use to meet the costs of spending decisions of the personnel committee and the priorities included in the school development plan. The budget is regularly monitored. by the finance committee who report to the full governing body. The governing body has successfully managed to move the budget from a deficit situation and now maintains a well-balanced budget. Even though the school uses all available funds, the expenditure per pupil is below the national average for primary schools.
- 80 The school makes satisfactory arrangements for the induction of new staff. For example, a teacher new to the school this term has been given extensive guidance on planning for the age group and has been well supported by colleagues. The quality of her work has been monitored by the key stage co-ordinator. The school provides good support for initial teacher training students. Those on school practice during the inspection were well supported by the mentors and class teachers. Several teachers are trained as mentors and the school has a strong commitment to providing experience and training for teaching and nursery nurse students.
- 81 The standard of financial control and school administration is very good. The accounting systems and checks are used efficiently and effectively. The bursar ensures that adequate and accurate financial information is available for the headteacher and governors. Satisfactory use is made of information and communications technology to support the management of finances and administration. The administrative staff provide excellent support for the headteacher and staff enabling them to focus on their work with the children. Administrative tasks are carried out efficiently, the day-to-day organisation of the school is unobtrusive and the school runs smoothly.

- 82 The school has a sufficient number of teachers who are trained and experienced to match the demands of the curriculum. There is a good balance of experience and expertise on the staff. Posts of responsibility are appropriately allocated. The special educational needs co-ordinator is well qualified and experienced and provides good support for the pupils and teachers. Special educational needs support staff work very effectively under the guidance of the special educational needs co-ordinator and the class teachers and provide good quality support for the pupils. The teacher who provides support for pupils for whom English is an additional language makes a very positive contribution and enables the pupils to make good progress. A good range of professional development courses is available to all staff. Recently this has focused on literacy and numeracy training. There is a satisfactory number of nursery nurses and classroom assistants who are appropriately skilled to support teaching and learning. They work well with the class teachers in planning and teaching and have a positive impact on the quality of education that the school provides. Lunchtime staff work efficiently and promote high standards of behaviour. Parents who help in the school are briefed well by the teachers, are clear about what it is they are to do and this enables them to make a very positive contribution to pupils' progress.
- 83 The large two-storey building is surrounded by a hard play area that is bordered by a steep grassy bank. The responsibility for the fabric of the building has recently been delegated to the governing body. It is in poor condition in need of considerable expenditure. The governors have established an appropriate rolling programme of interior decoration and improvement but this is a large building and funds are limited. Valuable support for these improvements is provided by the Patrons of Abbey Lane School (PALS) fundraising efforts. The outdoor area has been enhanced by some large play furniture for the pupils in Key Stage 1 that successfully promotes their social and physical development. A courtyard area has been developed as an outdoor classroom for the children under five and this is a valuable resource. However, continuous access is not possible from one classroom and this limits the extent of its use to promote the desirable learning outcomes. Cloakroom space is limited throughout the school and it is only because the pupils behave sensibly and responsibly that these areas are manageable. Corridor space is used for group work and some information and communications technology resources.

- 84 Although there are sufficient classrooms, most these are rather small. Teachers generally manage the space well but opportunities for pupils to have access to practical activities require particularly good planning and management. Opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills are limited to some extent by the size of these rooms. Some classrooms have been enhanced by carpeting that encourages pupils to move about quietly and enables the teachers to make more flexible use of the space. The school makes good use of specialist rooms for food technology, music and special educational needs. Library areas in both key stages are attractive and well stocked but were under-used for independent research and reading during the week of the inspection. A 'general purposes room' houses photocopying and reprographic equipment and provides a useful work space for the staff. The large hall provides a very good resource for physical education lessons and contributes to the good standards pupils achieve. A mobile classroom in the playground is used appropriately for instrumental music teaching and storage but is not in good condition and has an abandoned air which does not match the quality of the learning environment in the rest of the school. Throughout the school, classrooms and shared areas are enhanced by numerous and interesting wall displays of pupils' work. These are of consistently high quality and add to the school's ethos of valuing pupils and having high expectations for them. The conscientious caretaker and cleaning staff maintain the building to a high standard.
- 85 The school has a good number of books, materials and equipment to support the curriculum, except for information and communications technology where there is insufficient hardware and software for a school of this size. Resources are in good condition and are appropriate to the age and needs of the pupils. They are efficiently, and effectively stored and are accessible to staff and, where appropriate, to pupils. The resources are well cared for by adults and pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The headteacher, governing body and staff should work together to:

- i) Improve pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science by:
- accurately assessing pupils' attainment and using this information to provide consistently challenging learning goals for pupils of all abilities but especially the higher attainers;
 - setting pupils individual targets for improvement on a regular basis.

Paragraphs: 2, 6, 12, 13, 28, 29, 34, 57, 58, 77, 111, 112, 115, 119, 126, 128, 129, 132, 136, 140, 141, 143

- ii) Add to the existing monitoring systems by developing strategies for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning by:

- having a clear focus when observing lessons, scrutinising pupils' work and teachers' planning and interviewing pupils;
- identifying what each teacher does well and agreeing where improvements need to be made to make teaching more effective;
- examining the consistency with which teachers promote the agreed aims of the school.
- use the information to identify areas for improvement and address these so that pupils experience consistently high quality teaching.

Paragraphs: 43, 74, 75, 76, 116, 133, 143, 148, 155, 159, 163, 171, 178, 188, 198

- iii) Improve the quality and manageability of the school development plan by:

- agreeing fewer, well-focused priorities;
- identifying the tasks needed to bring about the changes;
- establishing more specific success criteria in order to measure the impact of the development on standards and provision.

Paragraph: 76

Minor issue

Improve the provision for information and communications technology throughout the school.

Paragraphs: 14, 21, 24, 44, 86, 144-148

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	76
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7%	13%	42%	34%	3%	1%	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)	0	406
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	29

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	0	52

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	3.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1999	27	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	26	27
	Girls	27	28	27
	Total	52	54	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (92)	96 (92)	96 (94)
	National	82 (80)	83 (80)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	25	27
	Girls	27	26	27
	Total	52	51	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (92)	91 (95)	96 (92)
	National	82 (80)	86 (84)	87 (85)

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	34	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	28	28
	Girls	27	25	26
	Total	53	53	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (66)	85 (76)	87 (78)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	25	28
	Girls	24	24	25
	Total	45	49	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (65)	79 (74)	85 (79)
	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	2
White	390
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)	16
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	106

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a

Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a

Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998-99
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	£
Total income	578400
Total expenditure	572607
Expenditure per pupil	1383
Balance brought forward from previous year	- 4073
Balance carried forward to next year	1720

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	386
Number of questionnaires returned	215

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	38	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	38	5	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	40	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	53	7	1	3
The teaching is good.	58	38	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	46	10	1	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	23	3	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	24	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	54	36	7	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	67	29	2	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	39	3	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	40	16	6	14

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Parents hold the school in high regard and are very supportive. A number of parents would like there to be more varied after school activities for their children. Some parents expressed the view that they did not get sufficient information about their child's progress. Many praised the school for the amount of information and the daily opportunity to speak to the teachers.

Other issues raised by parents

A very small number of parents wrote to express concern about bullying at lunchtime. A similarly small number of parents said that their high achieving children were not sufficiently challenged or supported by the school.

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

- 86 The educational provision for children under five is very good. Children under five are taught in the reception class. Children begin full-time education at the beginning of the autumn term if their fifth birthday is between September and December, in January if their birthday is between January and April, and in February if their birthday is between May and August. A second class is formed in January as the second intake begins. Children beginning school in February, join one of the two reception classes. There is a good induction process that includes visits to the school, meetings for parents and an informative booklet.
- 87 On entry to the reception classes, the children are assessed using a nationally approved baseline assessment test. The results show that the majority of the children reach levels above those expected in all areas of their development. The children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in the reception classes and by the time they are five years old, they reach at least the levels described by the national Desirable Learning Outcomes, and many reach levels well within the National Curriculum programmes of study for Key Stage 1.

Personal and Social Development

- 88 On entry to school, the majority of children have good personal and social skills. They make good progress and by the time they are five years old, the majority exceed the levels described by the national desirable learning outcomes for five-year-olds in personal and social development. Children quickly learn to work as part of a group and become increasingly aware that their actions can affect other people. They learn about the importance of the traditions of other cultures. For example, the children learn about the Chinese New Year and how Chinese children receive 'Lucky Red Packets'. Some children recognise that this is similar to the gifts they receive at Christmas. Four-year-olds handle resources with care and show respect for the environment. They are encouraged to take responsibility and enjoy being helpers when tidying away. They make independent choices of some of the activities and materials they use, and learn to share the resources. In the outdoor area they learn to cooperate with others when they use a variety of wheeled toys. Positive remarks and praise from staff promote the children's self-esteem and confidence. They make good progress in this area of learning.

Language and Literacy

- 89 On entry to school, the majority of children have good language and literacy skills. Children enjoy stories and listen attentively. They express their ideas and feelings when they take part in conversations with adults or answer questions. They practise their skills in speaking in role-play situations such as the clinic, shop and Chinese Temple. Most children recognise and write their own names and many recognise a wide range of words in displays in the classroom. Children make good gains in their knowledge of sound and letter relationships (phonics) and quickly begin to read. Because of the structured approach to teaching reading and the teachers' high expectations most children read with confidence by the time they are five years old. Average and higher attainers use picture, phonic and contextual cues to help them decode unknown words. Lower attaining children make good use of their sight vocabulary and read simple texts with confidence. They use the pictures to add detail to the story they read. Many children turn to books for enjoyment. A very appropriate approach to the national Literacy Strategy has been adopted and this is helping the children to make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of language. Teachers provide good opportunities for children to practise their skills in writing in role-play situations. This enhances the more formal teaching of writing that takes place with small groups. By the time they are five years old, almost all the children write their names independently. Higher attaining children write to record experiences and tell stories spelling a range of common words correctly. They use writing as part of their play in the classroom shop and have a good understanding of the purpose of writing. Average attaining children use their knowledge of phonics to help them spell some words when they write simple sentences. The lower attaining children dictate their ideas to the teacher and then copy the words the teacher has written. The children's writing is clear and generally well formed and of an appropriate size. The children make good progress in this area of learning because they are highly motivated by the very good quality of the teaching. By the time they are five years old, the majority achieve at least the levels described by the national desirable learning outcomes and many achieve higher levels.

Mathematics

- 90 The results of the assessments made by the teachers when the children start school indicate that most children achieve levels above those typical of four-year-olds. Children are given many appropriate opportunities to learn and practise counting and sorting in practical activities and as part of their play. They learn about number and numerals by playing games, and know a number of number songs and rhymes. The children quickly understand how many are allowed to play in the sand or role-play areas and organise themselves accordingly. Children match objects by number, shape size and colour. For example, in one lesson lower attaining children matched objects and learned to identify the longer and shorter of two objects. In the same lesson, children both of average and above average attainment, sorted three or more objects and name the longest and shortest. Children know the names and some of the features of circles, squares, triangles and rectangles. Because the activities are well planned and the teachers make good use of observational assessment information to plan the next lesson, the children are continually challenged and as a result they make good progress. By the time they are five years old, almost all the children achieve at least the levels described by the national desirable learning outcomes and many achieve higher levels. Their mathematics vocabulary is increasing and they use terms such as 'more', 'less', 'different', and 'most' correctly. The higher attaining children have a good grasp of number order and recognise and use numbers to at least 15. Average attaining children count and use numbers to ten with confidence and lower attaining children count and use numbers to six. They usually recognise the numerals. In one lesson, the teacher involved the five-year-olds in a role-play which required them to count the number of children on the 'bus'. The majority were confident in answering the teacher's questions and quickly worked out how many more or less were on the bus. By the end of the lesson the children had gained a practical understanding of subtraction. Because of the teachers' well planned and relevant approach to teaching the age group, the children make good progress in all aspects of their mathematical development.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 91 Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is at least typical for the age group when they start school. Many benefit from good pre-school experiences with interested parents and through play-groups. The children are interested in and curious about the world around them. They are eager to investigate, ask questions and listen to explanations from the adults. Role-play situations are used well to support the children's learning. For example a 'Chinese Temple' helps them to understand cultural differences. They explore the properties of sand, water and other materials and concentrate for long periods. For example, five-year-olds are fascinated by toys frozen into a block of ice and talk enthusiastically about how the ice melts, particularly when they have smashed some pieces off the block. They concentrate on building using a variety of construction toys and demonstrate a good understanding of joining the sections, balance and making the object strong. For example, in one lesson four-year-olds invented caterpillars and tried to make them as long as possible without them falling apart. In another lesson the five-year-olds tasted vegetables before and after they had been stir-fried for a Chinese meal. They talked about similarities and differences in taste and texture and expressed preferences. They showed a satisfactory understanding of food hygiene and healthy eating. Children using a computer are confident and the majority use some keyboard functions and use the mouse to locate and move objects on the screen. Some five-year-olds enjoy typing in suggested actions for 'Pod' and use the keyboard with confidence. However, access to computers is limited by the level of resourcing. Children make good gains in understanding some of the key ideas in this area of learning because the teaching is appropriately based on practical activities and opportunities for children to talk and ask questions. However, the sample of children's work revealed a strong emphasis on children completing photo-copied work sheets which give too few opportunities for them to record their own understanding and ideas. By the time they are five years old, the majority of children reach at least the levels described by the national desirable learning outcomes for the age group and many achieve higher levels.

Physical development

- 92 When children start school, their physical skills and their co-ordination in controlling small tools and equipment are generally well developed. In the outdoor area, they improve their control of wheeled toys and gain an awareness of space and of those around them. They improve their agility both in the outdoors and in physical education lessons. Children make good progress in using scissors, modelling tools, paintbrushes and pencils. By the time they are five, the majority cut out accurately, write clearly and produce drawings which include some detail. For example, when they made Chinese 'lucky red packets', the majority were able to cut along the lines with some accuracy, use the glue spreader to put the glue in the right place and assemble the packet with little assistance. Many of the children are sufficiently well co-ordinated to use chopsticks to eat a Chinese meal. The teachers provide many relevant practical opportunities for children to practise their skills and, as a result, the children make good progress.

Creative development

- 93 When they start school, most of the children have had some experience of engaging in imaginative role-play, painting and picture making and hearing stories. Many achieve levels above those typical of the age group in this area of learning. The teachers provide relevant and stimulating situations and encourage children to develop their creative ideas in play. The adults are willing participants in the 'make-believe'. For example, an imaginative role-play about the passengers on a bus helped the children to make good gains in the mathematical area of learning. A selection of plastic insects encouraged children to invent situations and stories. The children have free access to opportunities to paint, make models, be a shopkeeper or customer, a doctor or a parent. They use their imagination to create situations and characters in the role-play and to try out an idea in a painting or model. For example, one boy was absorbed by constructing a building and created a complex story about it. This supports children's language development very well. These opportunities for independent play are well resourced but teachers miss opportunities to extend and challenge children in their play because they tend to concentrate on more formal teaching of groups. Children have experience of using musical instruments to accompany their singing and to create a musical story of the 'Chinese Dragon'. They join children in Key Stage 1 for hymn singing and learn a range of songs in the classroom. They sing with enjoyment observing changes in pace and volume. Children make at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress in this area of learning and, by the time they are five, they achieve the targets described by the desirable learning outcomes for the age group.
- 94 The children are eager to learn. They concentrate for sustained periods and show determination to complete tasks. The children relate well to each other, sharing resources and taking turns in conversations they instigate. They enjoy the contact they have at playtimes with their friends in Year 6 and interact well with adults. The children are confident, behave very well and take a pride in their work.
- 95 The quality of teaching is very good in all areas of learning. Teachers foster children's speaking, listening, personal and social skills very well at every opportunity. All the adults who work with the children in the reception classes have high expectations for their behaviour and intellectual development and the children respond to this by behaving well and concentrating on their tasks. The adults make good use of well-focused praise that makes clear to the children why what they have done is good and they are able to repeat the good features of their work at other times. This has a positive impact on children's progress. A particular strength of the teaching is the use of assessment information to inform planning. The teachers are aware of the achievement of each child and they plan work and ask questions which challenge individuals and enable them to make gains in learning. Learning activities are stimulating and resources are changed frequently to sustain the children's interest. The teachers involve the nursery nurses in planning and teaching. This enables the nursery nurse to provide skilful and timely intervention and to interact purposefully with the children. As a result, they make very significant contributions to children's progress. A major contributory factor to the very good provision made for children under five is the adults' very good understanding of the way in which young children learn. Parents who volunteer to help in the classroom are given clear guidance for the activity they support and make significant contributions to the provision for the children.

- 96 The children benefit from the very good quality of the curriculum. The plans for teaching are appropriately based on learning objectives drawn from the desirable learning outcomes for children aged five, the Early Learning Goals and Level 1 of the National Curriculum for Key Stage 1. Where relevant links can be made, some of the teaching is planned as part of a topic. There have been good improvements in the curriculum, assessment procedures and the range of learning resources since the last inspection. Because the plans for teaching are so clear and assessment information is recorded and used so effectively, the two teachers who teach one class as a job-share arrangement and a teacher new to the school this term are able to provide children with continuity of learning.
- 97 Children with special educational needs are identified early and given good support which enables them to make at least satisfactory progress. Links with their parents are good.
- 98 Links with parents are good and very positive. Teachers are approachable and accessible. Parents are always welcome and some help in school. Assessment is thorough and individual pupils' profiles are comprehensive and updated regularly. A formal report is sent to parents annually and there are opportunities for informal and formal meetings for parents throughout the year.
- 99 The indoor accommodation is satisfactory and learning resources are sufficient and of good quality. The classrooms are enhanced by attractive displays of the children's work which are used very effectively to value children's efforts. The children benefit from the provision of an outdoor play area but this is some distance from one classroom, which limits its usefulness. This is a shortcoming in the provision.

ENGLISH

- 100 The results of the national end of Key Stage 1 tests for 1999 show that pupils' attainment was well above the national average in reading and writing. In reading, 93 percent of pupils attained the expected level (level 2) and the proportion achieving the higher level (level 3) was well above the national average. In writing, 96 percent of pupils achieved the expected level. Although the percentage of pupils attaining level 3 in teacher assessments was above the national average, no pupils achieved this level in the tests. Pupils' performance in reading and writing was broadly average when compared to the results of pupils at similar schools. Girls and boys do equally well in the reading and writing tests. In their teacher-assessed work in speaking and listening pupils' attainment was well above the national average at the expected level and above the national average at the higher level. Standards have been maintained over the last three years.
- 101 The results of the national end of Key Stage 2 tests for 1999 show that pupils' attainment was well above the national average at the expected level (level 4) and close to the national average at the higher level (level 5). When compared to similar schools, their performance was average at the expected level and below average at the higher level. There has been an improvement each year over the last three years. There is no difference in the performance of girls and boys.

- 102 Inspection evidence shows that pupils' in Year 2 and in Year 6 are on line to achieve high standards in the national end of key stage tests but are unlikely to match the standards achieved in 1999. This difference is partly explained by differences in the overall ability of last year's cohort of pupils and that of the present Year 2 and Year 6 pupils.
- 103 At the end of both key stages, pupils listen very well to their teachers and to each other in many different situations, and this significantly helps their progress in all subjects. Year 6 pupils make effective use of the continually extending range of vocabulary, to answer teachers' questions in detail and to explain, enquire and compare. Most Year 2 pupils have a good vocabulary and express themselves clearly in conversations and discussions.
- 104 Most pupils read aloud confidently, accurately, fluently and with expression. They read from a variety of books and texts and use their reading skills to help them to learn in other subjects. Year 6 pupils talk enthusiastically about the books they read, recalling the story line well, talking about the characters and explaining what they like or dislike about them. They are familiar with a good range of authors. In Year 2 pupils of all abilities have a very good knowledge of letter sounds and use this knowledge and a range of other strategies to read new words they encounter. They read simple books with developing competence. Lower attaining pupils in Year 6 read aloud more hesitantly than other pupils but they have mastered the basic skills of reading and use these effectively to decipher new words and to extract meaning from the text. Many parents give valuable support by reading regularly with their children and this has a positive impact on standards.
- 105 Pupils learn to write in a variety of styles and for a range of purposes. For example they write poems, stories and in most subjects, they have opportunities to practise report writing and use formats for recording the results of investigations and research. Higher and average attaining pupils produce good quality independent writing in religious education. Year 6 pupils write sensitively about places that inspire spiritual feeling because of their beauty, size or significance such as Niagara Falls or the Egyptian Pyramids. Pupils in Year 2 write about the events surrounding the Birth of Christ. Lower attaining pupils complete similar work and with the teachers' support produce work of good quality.
- 106 By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils use simple punctuation successfully. They use capital letters for proper nouns and end sentences with a full stop. More able pupils use speech marks and divide their work into paragraphs. The majority of pupils spell correctly and when given opportunities write imaginatively: for example a poem about winter, an imaginative account of how a hedgehog got his spikes or re-tell a traditional story.
- 107 Year 6 pupils' writing is well structured into paragraphs and spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate. The standard of handwriting and presentation is very good. Pupils choose words well and express their ideas in letters, stories, reports, biographies, instructions and poetry for a range of audiences. They learn to tell the story of Othello from the point of view of different characters and write two letters each describing the same situation as seen by a mother and a daughter.

- 108 Pupils' attitudes in both key stages are good. They are attentive, keen to learn and apply their skills to support their learning in other subjects. They take pride in what they do and their written work is always well presented.
- 109 The quality of teaching in both key stages is good overall. It was satisfactory in half the lessons observed and of the remainder, half were good and half were very good.
- 110 The school has adopted the National Literacy Strategy and teachers have made a good start with putting this into place. Lessons generally have a good number of successful elements but many teachers have some gaps in their technical knowledge of language. The quality of teaching of the shared text work and the focussed word or sentence work is at least satisfactory and often good. In the best lessons, teachers develop in the pupils a real enthusiasm and enjoyment of the text. Where the quality of teaching is satisfactory, the teacher lacks sufficient enthusiasm and pupils' interest becomes dutiful rather than keen.
- 111 Teachers always manage pupils well and give them encouragement. There is a positive climate for learning and higher achievement. Explanations are clear and pupils are often given an understanding of what they are expected to learn. In the best lessons these learning objectives are the basis of the plenary session but in less satisfactory lessons the value of this session to clarify thinking and reinforce learning is not recognised and it either does not take place or it is used inappropriately. Teachers mark pupils work and tell them in lessons how well they are doing but written marking does not always point out to pupils ways in which they can improve their work
- 112 In both key stages teachers plan the opportunities for writing at length well and the work produced is generally good. However, in Key Stage 2 there is too rigid a division between word, sentence and text level work and pupils spend a disproportionate amount of time on mechanical exercises designed to test rather than extend their learning. The work planned does not allow for pupils to transfer the specific skills they have learned to other contexts. In some of the lessons teachers' time during the independent learning session was not well used. Teachers supervised groups of pupils or helped individual pupils to do the set work and did not focus their teaching on a particular group of pupils to extend their skills, understanding and knowledge. Teachers do not have a consistent approach to assessing pupils' achievements in lessons or using this information to plan future work for them.
- 113 In other subjects, teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to apply and improve their competence in literacy and pupils are encouraged to express themselves clearly in speech and writing and to develop their reading and writing skills. For example, as part of their study of the Romans Year 3 pupils write letters that legionaries might have sent home to describe their situation. Teachers develop vocabulary well by teaching subject specific terminology. For example, pupils are taught geographical terms and teachers ensure that the pupils use the correct terms in their writing. A shortage of computers limits pupils' opportunities to develop word processing skills.

- 114 The co-ordinator has recently concentrated on the development and planning of the national literacy hour. The co-ordinator is released each week to spend time with each of the classes in turn and uses the time to support the work of a group of pupils. This has been useful in helping to develop pupils' writing. The co-ordinator checks the teacher's planning but has not yet been involved in classroom observation. This means that strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning are not identified and dealt with.
- 115 There is a good range of 'big books' for shared text work and a number of sets of interesting and attractive books for group reading. There is a good range of fiction books in both key stages. The libraries have an adequate number of non-fiction books and these are used well to support learning in all areas of the curriculum. There is no whole school approach to monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress. This is left to individual teachers' discretion and as a result, the collection and use of assessment information is inconsistent.
- 116 The lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation of progress identified as a shortcoming in the last inspection report has not been addressed. Good standards of attainment have been maintained and there is now a structured programme of work provided by the national literacy framework to facilitate continuity and progression.

MATHEMATICS

- 117 The end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum test results for 1999 show that pupils' standards of attainment were above the national average. Although the percentage of pupils achieving within the expected level for their age (level 2) was well above the national average, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level (level 3) was below the national average.
- 118 At the end of Key Stage 2, the school's 1999 test results show that attainment was well above the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected level (level 4 or above) was well above the national average and the proportion achieving the higher level (level 5) was above average. Pupils' performance at the end of both key stages was broadly average when compared with the results of pupils in similar schools. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
- 119 The inspection evidence shows that by the end of both key stages, the great majority of pupils attain levels which are at least in line with national expectations. The majority of pupils in Year 2 achieve the levels expected nationally for seven-year-olds and approximately a fifth achieve higher levels. The percentage of pupils on line to achieve levels above the national expectation by the end of Key Stage 1 has improved due to the implementation of the numeracy hour but is still just below the national average when compared to 1999 results. Almost all Year 6 pupils reach the levels expected nationally for eleven-year-olds and almost one third reach higher levels. The percentage of pupils on line to attain the higher level at Key Stage 2 is close to the 1999 national average rather than above. This judgement is based on the results of tests carried out in Year 4 and Year 5. There is no difference in the achievement of boys and girls.

- 120 Year 2 pupils add and subtract differing amounts of money applying this knowledge to work out how much change should be given when shopping. Both average and lower attaining pupils use their knowledge of multiplication facts to work out simple problems. Average attaining pupils are also using this knowledge to help them carry out simple number operations involving division. Higher attaining pupils use their knowledge of multiplication tables to ten and have an understanding of hundreds, tens and units. Lower attaining pupils add and subtract numbers to twenty. Pupils of all levels of attainment are learning about symmetry and during the inspection some pupils made good gains in their understanding and were able to identify reflective symmetry by the end of the week.
- 121 The majority of average attaining pupils in Year 6 know up to their ten and twelve times table, they add and subtract two and three digit numbers mentally and understand and use terms such as numerator and denominator. They understand the divisibility rule when working with equivalent fractions. Lower attaining pupils recall numbers in pairs up to a hundred. Higher attaining pupils multiply and divide sums of money and check their answers by applying inverse proportions and using estimations and approximations.
- 122 Pupils make at least satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress in Key Stage 2. Pupils apply their knowledge and understanding of number operations to calculate using increasingly higher numbers and more complex problems throughout both key stages. Teachers consistently and systematically encourage and challenge pupils to explain their strategies in working out mathematical problems both mentally and orally. They are taught to use a wide range of strategies to work out problems mentally and this has a significant impact on pupils' learning and achievement. Many pupils in Year 1 develop different strategies for adding and subtracting numbers to twenty. In Year 3 pupils learn to multiply and divide by using tables and repeated addition. Pupils in Year 4 work out multiples when calculating using money. They make appropriate use of calculators to check their answers. In Year 5, pupils demonstrate their knowledge of fractions and correctly order a series of fractions and decimals. They work out percentages mentally and orally and then increase their facility to use calculators by learning how to check percentage answers.
- 123 Pupils' learning in shapes, space and measures is good in Key Stage 2 and satisfactory in Key Stage 1. Teachers of pupils in Year 4 make good use of practical apparatus to help pupils understand the definitions of a prism and a pyramid and how the two differ. As a result of good teaching, pupils were able to explore and discover the properties of these shapes for themselves. By the time pupils are in Year 6, higher attaining pupils are beginning to use formulae to work out areas of more complex 2-dimensional shapes. Pupils in Key Stage 1 increase their knowledge of standard measures but the scrutiny of work shows that fewer activities are provided for this aspect of mathematics because there is less time spent on it.

- 124 At both key stages the progress of pupils with special educational needs is good. This is particularly effective in Year 6 where the decision to teach pupils in ability groups of 'sets' is having a very positive impact on all pupils' learning. The higher and lower achieving pupils are making particularly good gains. These pupils made good progress in the development of mathematical vocabulary and understanding of positive and negative numbers. Higher attaining pupils are working with very large numbers and use all four number operations with decimals to two places.
- 125 Pupils' attitudes in lessons are good. The vast majority work very hard, persevering when in difficulties and concentrating well. This is particularly so in mental and oral mathematics. In Key Stage 2, teachers set pupils written mathematical problems to solve which are realistic and appropriate to their interests. This has a good impact on pupils' liking for the subject. Pupils listen attentively and mostly show respect when others are speaking. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very much related to the quality of teaching. Sometimes the behaviour is good in spite of less effective teaching. The behaviour of most pupils is at least very good and sometimes excellent.
- 126 The quality of teaching is good overall but ranged between excellent and unsatisfactory. In 44 percent of lessons the quality of teaching is good and in 31 percent of lessons it is satisfactory. The quality of teaching was unsatisfactory in one lesson in each key stage. The teaching of mental strategies is a strength. The management of pupils is good in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. The majority of lessons in both key stages maintain a good brisk pace and support staff and resources are effectively deployed to support learning. Whole class teaching, explanations and demonstrations are usually very clear and well thought out. For example, in a Year 1 lesson about missing numbers the use of an empty chocolate box aided pupils' understanding of what was required when they came to do their work and helped them to complete their tasks successfully. Teachers generally challenge pupils' thinking through skilful questioning and use specific vocabulary well.
- 127 The excellent teaching was characterised by good planning so that the differing tasks given to different groups of pupils were very well matched to their needs and prior attainment. One group was able to work independently and successfully. Where the quality of teaching was very good, the content and context of the activities were realistic and at just the right level of challenge to interest the pupils and take them on. The lesson promoted very good attitudes to mathematics. It stimulated the pupils to the point that when the time came to stop they wanted to carry on working.
- 128 Where the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory, the main shortcomings are in the teacher's poor management of time and pupils. Explanations and teaching are laboured and hinder pupils' progress. The pupils are not engaged by the long introductions and lengthy over-repetitive instructions and, consequently, do not sustain their concentration. Occasionally, there is too much emphasis on recording mathematics which either slows the lesson down or interferes with learning. For example, in a lesson in Key Stage 1, lists of sums were set for pupils to copy and complete rather than allowing them to work them out practically or mentally and find their own method of recording the process.

- 129 Teacher's planning for numeracy lessons is matched to the learning objectives of the National Numeracy Strategy. The school has made satisfactory progress in a short time in implementing the numeracy strategy. Within lessons the mental and oral, the class teaching and the plenary sessions are mostly well planned and carried out. Teachers are conscious of the need to match activities to the needs of individual groups of pupils in the main part of the lesson but the quality of this part of the lesson is variable and the planned activities are not always truly different or truly matched to pupils' requirements. Although there are very good examples of the management of group activities and of teacher intervention with groups, the overall quality is variable. The school has identified this as an area for improvement.
- 130 Pupils are given suitable opportunities to reinforce their numeracy skills through work on co-ordinates in geography, timelines in history and measuring and the use of graphs in science. Information technology does not make a significant contribution to mathematical learning. Mathematics lessons make a satisfactory contribution to literacy in the introduction and use of specific mathematical vocabulary.
- 131 Very good use is made of displays to stimulate and encourage pupils' interest in mathematics. The displays are attractive and show a good range of pupils' own work and investigations. For example, in Year 3 pupils had done some very interesting work on measuring and using fractions to divide pizzas into pieces, and then to work out the cost. Other work on fractions showed pupils' drawing of a row of frogs with the explanation that 'Three quarters of my frogs are ladys. One quarter of my frogs is a man.'
- 132 A range of assessment strategies is used. The main focus of these is the use of commercial tests and national optional tests for pupils in Year 4 and Year 5. The results of tests are used to place pupils into mathematics sets in Year 6 and to predict national test levels at the end of the key stages. Teachers assess pupils' learning and achievements within lessons but procedures are left to the individual teacher's discretion. Therefore, the gathering together of assessment evidence is inconsistent across the school and it is not used consistently to plan the next step in pupils' learning.
- 133 The mathematics co-ordinator is given time to monitor teaching and learning across the school. This time has been mainly used to demonstrate and work alongside teachers, supporting them in the implementation of the national numeracy strategy. This has been effective in building teachers' confidence and useful in the early stages of implementation. The co-ordinator checks the teachers' planning, gives good advice to colleagues and provides good leadership. Procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and the impact of the curriculum are not well developed.

SCIENCE

- 134 The school's National Curriculum test results for 1999 show that at the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment was above the national average compared to all schools nationally, but were below average in comparison with results attained by pupils in similar schools. The test results since 1996 indicate that standards have been maintained in line with those achieved nationally. However, the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level (level 5) was below the national average, and well below the average for schools in a similar context. There was little difference in the performance of girls and boys from 1996 to 1999 which is against the national trend.
- 135 The 1999 end of Key Stage 1 teacher assessments for seven-year-old pupils showed that standards were above the national average. The percentage of pupils who achieved at the higher level (level 3) was broadly in line with the national average. There are no available comparators this year for similar schools.
- 136 Although the school has kept pace with the standards achieved nationally, the standards achieved by higher attaining pupils (that is, level 3 in Key Stage 1, and level 5 in Key Stage 2) do not match the national average. When compared to the results of pupils in similar schools the results are also below average.
- 137 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have sound scientific knowledge and skills. They have some awareness of the characteristics of a fair test. For example, in a Year 2 class, pupils realise that you need to have ice cubes of a similar size, place them at the same place in a similar situation when comparing melting times. They know about materials and some of their characteristics and properties and know that plants need water and light to grow. They are aware of the life cycle of plants and animals and that humans need a balanced diet and exercise to stay healthy. They look for similarities and differences in an investigation and record their findings in tables, charts and reports.
- 138 Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils build on their skills of observation, prediction and hypothesising. Pupils in Year 6 understand that a change of variable will speed up the rate of dissolving a solid. They recognise the need to keep an accurate record of their observations if they increase the rate of stirring of a solid with a liquid or change the heat of the liquid. Most pupils in Year 6 apply prior knowledge and understanding of fair tests to new work. They also apply this knowledge and understanding to their everyday life. For example, Year 6 pupils recognise that the hotter the water and the more you stir a tablet the quicker it will dissolve. All pupils in Year 5 learn about the evaporation of different liquids into gases. They recognise that different liquids evaporate at different rates. Year 4 pupils are developing their understanding of temperature and the need to insulate things to keep them warm. Pupils in Year 3 set up experiments to find out the differences between soils and that particles of soil can be separated by sieving. Pupils are developing understanding of how to record their findings by diagrams with appropriate labelling to describe the particle of soil.

- 139 Pupils' attitudes to their work in science are always good in both key stages. When pupils are involved in group investigations there is a sense of enjoyment. Year 3 pupils concentrate hard and work enthusiastically to ensure they have classified the different particles of soil correctly. In all lessons behaviour is good. Pupils act responsively, listen carefully to their teachers and each other. Relationships between pupils are always good and this results in good co-operation and collaboration. Year 6 pupils discussed and shared their ideas well from a previous investigation on dissolving solids.
- 140 Pupils' rate of learning is satisfactory at both key stages. Where good rates of learning are achieved this is due to the overall quality of teaching, which is satisfactory or better at both key stages and has a direct impact on the standards pupils achieve. Teachers' subject knowledge is soundly developed but there is some lack of confidence and lost opportunities in developing pupils' understanding through investigative work. Although the teachers guide and encourage the pupils, the over-use of a directive style of teaching and tight control of pupils' learning often limits the rate of learning. In the better lessons, teachers use open-ended questioning effectively to prompt pupils' thinking and probe their understanding. In addition these lessons have a definite structure, a brisk pace, with an appropriate emphasis on practical investigations and high expectations of what pupils learn to build on what they already know. In one outstanding lesson observed in Key Stage 2, the teacher very carefully matched the lesson to meet the need of all pupils in the class, and intervened and raised questions to make pupils think like young scientists. The marking of work is variable, in the better examples seen teachers indicate where pupils understand concepts and where they need help and support in their learning.
- 141 The curriculum provides a good balance of all attainment targets and allows for the systematic building of scientific knowledge and understanding. This means that pupils' skills of prediction, observation and recording their findings are developed through the school. However, there is an over reliance on photocopied work sheets that restrict opportunities for pupils to develop scientific and investigative enquiry. This continues to be unsatisfactory practice which was noted in the last inspection report. Pupils, particularly higher attaining pupils, are restricted from working in small groups to undertake more detailed and focused investigations and to develop independent learning skills.
- 142 Science teaching contributes well to the development of pupils' literacy skills. At both Key Stages, pupils are encouraged to talk about their ideas and what they see and do. Teachers have prioritised the use of appropriate vocabulary and displays of scientific work in classrooms help stimulate pupils in writing up their findings. Mathematical skills are developed as pupils take measurements and record data.

- 143 The quality of leadership in science is good. The co-ordinator is committed to raising standards particularly for high achieving pupils in the school. The school has a policy and a scheme of work, which offers teachers support and guidance and ensures the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. The subject is reasonably well resourced and these resources are accessible to staff. However, there are shortages of visual aids and computer software to support the subject. The co-ordinator makes appropriate use of opportunities to monitor the science curriculum by checking teachers' plans each half term. There are no formal whole school assessment procedures in place currently, although the co-ordinator is trialling a system before implementing it across the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

- 144 Pupils in Year 6 are not on line to attain the standards expected nationally by the end of Key Stage 2. In the work covered during this school year, combining illustrations and written texts, they use different sources to produce pictures, such as clip-art files and a paint program, but texts are brief and many are copied. Pupils have the technical skills to alter the typeface, size or colour and to re-position their text but are not challenged by the low and undemanding level of work. The work is not linked to any other subject in order to provide an appropriate context for learning and a real purpose or audience for whom they can write in a style that would take account of the interests of the readers. Consequently, pupils are underachieving in the organisation and presentation of their information. There has been no change in standards since the last inspection.
- 145 Pupils are on line to attain the standards expected nationally by the end of Key Stage 1: Standards have been maintained at this key stage since the last inspection. Year 2 pupils use their keyboard skills successfully across different subjects and in different contexts through well planned experiences provided by their teachers. For example, by creating increasingly complex symmetrical designs in mathematics and by writing stories, making labels for classroom displays in English and to record the results of investigations in science. Pupils have a sound technical vocabulary with which they describe and explain the functions of keys, such as backspace and shift, and explain the meaning of terms such as 'bold' and 'italic' in their own words. They are beginning to select appropriate tools to create lively pictures in connection with their work in art, such as the use of the spray tool to create the texture of wool and the use of the pencil tool to create spiky textures.

- 146 Teachers in Key Stage 2 make some use of computer programs to support learning in other subjects, such as those investigating the properties of shapes in year 6, the use of CD-ROM in Year 5 for research work in geography and for generating number sequences in Year 3. However, computers are not always used effectively to support learning in other subjects, especially in literacy lessons, and there are many occasions when computers are not in use at all. The school has adopted a new scheme of work. This is used most effectively in one year 4 class where pupils draw a fish and learn to make copies, change sizes and use tools to create patterns. They work confidently and independently and make very good progress because of the helpful and clearly written instructions provided by the teacher. These pupils enjoy the challenging nature of the task and use their initiative to carry out the instructions, showing good levels of self-reliance in their determination to learn for themselves. In Year 5 most pupils can describe databases, explain their use and understand the term 'field'. They enter labels and numbers into spreadsheets but the work is not developed to include costs and pupils are unable to use their spreadsheets to carry out calculations. The majority of pupils under-achieve as planned learning outcomes are not met. New skills are generally taught to the class or to small groups of pupils. Pupils are then given opportunities to practise individually or in pairs within the context of other lessons. However, resources are limited and this slows the rate of pupils' progress. The quality of the one information and communications technology lesson on the timetable for the inspection week was satisfactory but teachers' subject knowledge and understanding is variable. Consequently, expectations of pupils' learning within and across year groups are not consistently high. This results in differing rates of progress. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall.
- 147 Good links are made with literacy in Key Stage 1 and other subjects contribute effectively to pupils' developing information technology capability. In Year 1 teachers take every opportunity to support pupils' learning by creating word banks to develop pupils' reading and writing skills, for example to make labels for science displays, word lists for pupils with special educational needs and more complex letter strings for the more able pupils. They compose sentences in connection with their work on 'Divali' in religious education with the aid of word banks. The progress that pupils make in Year 1 is built on well by teachers in Year 2. Teachers follow the scheme of work and learning outcomes are used effectively to assess pupils' progress, supported by the work on display. Pupils' work shows good gains in knowledge and understanding since the introduction of the new scheme of work, despite the fact that the Year 1 classes have to share a new computer. Teachers in this key stage have good knowledge and understanding, and high expectations of pupils' learning.

- 148 The school has suffered from severe financial constraints over recent years and this has had an adverse effect on the provision for information and communications technology. New computers have only recently been purchased, although there are not enough to provide one for every classroom, and access to the National Grid for Learning and the Internet has only been made possible this term. This factor, together with the introduction of a new scheme of work has resulted in the need for staff to develop their knowledge and understanding of the new hardware and software. The co-ordinator has organised after-school sessions for staff to develop their understanding of new software but this has not resulted in visible improvements as yet. The role of the co-ordinator does not include the monitoring of pupils' work and the standards they achieve. Even when taking account of resource constraints, the school is not making effective use of information and communications technology.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 149 At the end of each key stage, pupils achieve standards which are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The school has maintained the standards achieved in the last inspection.
- 150 Throughout the school, pupils develop a secure understanding of the beliefs and practices of the world's major religions. They recognise the importance of worship, prayer and celebration and know how and why the believers of various religions worship God and celebrate their faith. Year 6 pupils show that they are developing a good understanding of aspects of the Jewish faith such the ceremony of Barmitzva and its importance to Jewish people. They have studied various aspects of Christianity and this is successfully linked to values such as caring, sharing and helping others and a consideration of the work of charities such as "Shelter". Pupils write about and discuss their own ideas and attitudes.
- 151 Year 2 pupils write detailed accounts of the events surrounding the birth of Jesus. They describe events of the Old Testament such as the flight of the Israelites into Egypt and Moses being found in the bulrushes. The pupils' understanding of religious and cultural tradition is further extended by a study of Hinduism and its festival of light.
- 152 Pupils in both key stages have positive attitudes; behaviour and levels of concentration are good. Key Stage 1 pupils discuss who they might thank for the good things in their life. Many spontaneously refer to God and one child remarks that you can say secret things to Him. Analysis of work done by pupils shows many examples of mature, sensible attitudes. For example, at the end of the Key Stage 2 pupils write perceptively about places which are special to them whether shared with others or private discoveries of their own. One pupil describes a secret corner where one "could read a book without anybody knowing". Throughout the school pupils work with enthusiasm and enjoyment. Religious artefacts are handled respectfully and carefully.

- 153 The quality of teaching in the one lesson observed in Key Stage 1 was good. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall with one lesson which was good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and the learning targets are clear. In all the lessons teachers introduced an element of spirituality in keeping with the nature of the subject. For example, pupils in Year 6 reflected on the meaning of a prayer which is part of a Barmitzvah. In Year 1, a sense of the belief and reverence that could be found in a Hindu home was evoked by a demonstration of the ceremony of worship of the Hindu god, Ganesha.
- 154 Literacy skills are promoted appropriately through the opportunities teachers provide for speaking and listening, reading and writing. Pupils in Year 3 enthusiastically discuss who could be the recipients of their prayers. Pupils in Year 5 write knowledgeably about the Five Pillars of Islam.
- 155 Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has produced a scheme of work that follows the local education authority's guidelines and has adapted it to the school's needs. This scheme provides valuable information and clear direction on the teaching of the subject. There is a good range of resources which includes artefacts to support the teaching of the religions studied. The co-ordinator monitors the planning to ensure coverage of the scheme of work but has no opportunities to monitor teaching or the quality of pupils' work. Religious education makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and a very good contribution to the school's ethos.

ART

- 156 Pupils are on line to attain the standards expected nationally in their work in art by the end of both key stages. In Year 6, pupils have made imaginative masks with good features by building up shapes and adding decorative detail, such as wools and beads. Their work on portraits shows sensitive handling of paint to produce sound watery effects and pencils are used creatively to represent, for example, the lines and movement of hair. In one class the good pencil drawings in sketchbooks, based on the direct observation of different body actions, were used very well by pupils to convey a sense of movement in the challenging task of making three-dimensional models of the human figure.
- 157 Teachers' subject knowledge is good and a range of art experiences is planned to help pupils to develop their ideas and work with a range of materials. Some work is less creative and challenging where methods are directed by the teacher, such as that linked to the study of the Ancient Greeks. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils used a good art vocabulary to describe the tactile quality of objects and show their understanding of texture by interpreting their oral descriptions, such as 'spiky', 'furry', 'bumpy', visually with pastels and crayons. They produced very exciting and creative work as a direct result of the appropriate stimulus materials used, the inspiring lesson introduction, which enabled all pupils to contribute their ideas and feelings, and the chance for pupils to investigate and develop their ideas. Very well planned opportunities for speaking and listening were made and the thoughtful, open and valued responses by pupils in the lesson introduction resulted in a strong sense of spiritual development. Lively paintings of self-portraits on display show satisfactory paint handling skills. In some other work, however, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to plan and develop ideas for making stable constructions from natural materials. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

- 158 A very good scheme of work has been introduced and this is having a positive impact on the consistency of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2. Pupils' progress was judged to be inconsistent in the last inspection report in this key stage. Teachers in both key stages plan their lessons well, have clear learning objectives so that pupils understand the purpose of activities. Good starting points for learning are introduced by teachers and developed well by pupils. For example, in a Year 3 lesson the work of Escher was used most successfully to extend pupils' understanding of repeating and tessellating shapes, and made good links with mathematics. Pupils used their imagination well to produce creative shapes, patterns and colours in a highly motivated way. Pupils' work on landscapes in Year 5 indicates good standards of drawing in the way that shapes, lines, patterns and colours are represented in response to the well planned opportunity to make direct observations of views from the school windows. In a Year 4 lesson, excellent teaching methods were used to introduce paint handling skills. The pupils were encouraged to explore wet and dry paint and used the results of their investigations most effectively and enthusiastically in their subsequent paintings. Pupils in Year 1 have good experience of a range of drawing materials and paint, and their observational drawings of teddies show a good variety of creative and personal interpretations through the thoughtful use of pastels. Pupils make good progress overall.
- 159 The quality of teaching is very variable but is usually at least satisfactory. There are some weaknesses in teaching and learning. Where these occurred in both key stages, work was directed by teachers, lacked appropriate challenge and opportunities for pupils to explore materials in order to develop and express their own ideas. Examples of these are where both younger and older pupils were shown how to do a 'wash' background rather than help them develop understanding of different paint consistencies. The co-ordinator role has recently changed and there are no arrangements in place to monitor standards following the introduction of new planning guidance.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 160 Only one lesson in design technology was observed due to the organisation of the curriculum. Pupils' work on display, in their work folders and in photographs indicate that they are on line to attain the standards expected nationally in design technology by the end of both key stages. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

- 161 Pupils in Year 1 have made satisfactory animals and toys in card with moving parts. Their levers pivot successfully and the sliding parts move heads effectively. Some pupils made jointed snakes using split pins. Teachers have planned good opportunities for pupils to investigate these simple mechanisms by providing an interesting collection of toys with different kinds of moving parts. Sentences written by pupils explain how different toys move and make good links with literacy. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils build on their knowledge of joining materials when they practise sewing techniques using running stitch on binca material. They show satisfactory skills in cutting materials to a planned shape and join them with stitches and glue when making hand puppets. Good planning liaison between the class teacher and learning support assistant resulted in a well managed activity which pupils clearly enjoyed. Pupils in Year 4 have designed and made their own books with moving mechanisms, such as pop-up, levers and hinges. They wrote their own version of the Christmas story with a particular audience in mind and read their stories to younger pupils in the school. The engaging illustrations and humorous moving parts are of a high quality and make very good links with literacy and art. The teacher clearly inspired pupils to give of their best. Good use is made of construction kits to make satisfactory wheeled moon buggies and landing modules with stable structures. By the end of Key Stage 2, the planning of past work shows that Year 6 pupils understand that a successful product is based on detailed research, careful design, and skilled making in their work on designing slippers. There are some weaknesses in teaching in Key Stage 2 that result in inconsistent standards within year groups. For example, work is unfinished or does not include key aspects of the learning programme, such as moving mechanisms. This leads to the learning outcomes not being met.
- 162 Parents contribute their time and expertise in areas that need close supervision for health and safety reasons, such as the preparation of food. This results in exciting opportunities for pupils to prepare foods from different cultures and is linked to other subjects studied in class.
- 163 The school has adopted a new scheme of work for the subject but the co-ordinator is not involved in monitoring standards since its introduction.

GEOGRAPHY

- 164 The organisation of the timetable meant that during the inspection only one lesson was observed at each key stage. An examination of teachers' planning, samples of pupils' work, and displays around the school provided sufficient evidence to judge that pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress throughout the school and achieve the levels expected nationally by the end of each key stage.
- 165 Satisfactory standards have been maintained since the last inspection and the school now has an appropriate scheme of work to provide adequate coverage of the curriculum.

- 166 By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are aware that pictures or symbols represent objects or specific places on a map. They identify features in the locality and record these on simple diagrams and maps. They understand that places have good and bad features and compare their own and another environment in terms of these features. They name the places that make up the United Kingdom independently. Year 6 pupils identify countries, oceans and the continents on a map of the world. Their knowledge and understanding of the subject vocabulary is satisfactory. In their study of rivers they use words such as 'tributary', 'river mouth', 'meander', 'delta' and 'braid'. They describe the water cycle. The quality of pupils' independent work is good. For example they visit Padley Gorge and the well written, carefully illustrated, accurate accounts they produce reflects their enjoyment of the visit and the quality of the learning that was achieved.
- 167 Pupils' response in lessons is good. They listen attentively and make good contributions to discussions and question and answer sessions. They take pride in their work and present it well.
- 168 The quality of teaching in the lessons seen was satisfactory. Pupils engage in activities enabling them to practise and develop geographical skills, knowledge and understanding. Good aspects of the teaching in both lessons were teachers' enthusiasm and clear explanations and the provision of opportunities for pupils to develop their learning by encouraging them to join in discussions. An examination of a sample of pupils' work shows that a variety of geographical topics and aspects are being covered and that pupils are making satisfactory progress. For example, in Year 1 pupils become aware of the local environment, the layout of the school and their classroom on plans. They draw a picture map of the route taken by characters in one of their stories. In Year 2 pupils read a story about an imaginary island and produce a map and make comparisons between this and their own area.
- 169 In Key Stage 2, good use is made of educational visits to enable pupils to apply their skills. For example, the main focus when Year 4 pupils visit the village of Hope is land use. They use mapping skills as they study the route followed and identify and record features such as the shopping and market areas and the church as well as hills and rivers. Investigative skills are promoted when pupils in Year 3 use travel brochures to research information enabling them to choose destinations which they write about and locate on a map. However geographical skills and understanding are not enhanced when, on occasion, pupils in some classes in Key Stage 2 are required to copy factual information into their books.
- 170 Geographical skills are applied successfully to other areas of the curriculum. In history pupils compare Victorian and modern maps of the local area. Educational visits promote the skills of speaking and listening and narrative writing. Reading and comprehension skills are practised as pupils read about the imaginary Isle of Struay and use the information to produce a plan of how the island might be. Numeracy skills are used when they convert data from a traffic survey into graph.
- 171 The co-ordinator has slightly modified the exemplar scheme of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to include more map work and this is being followed throughout the school. She has not had opportunity to monitor planning, the quality of the teaching or the work produced. Provision of resources is satisfactory. Good use is made of the local area to promote geographical skills and knowledge.

HISTORY

- 172 Only three lessons were seen during the week of the inspection. However, there was sufficient evidence available from examination of teachers' planning, teachers' records, pupils' work, classroom displays and discussions with teachers and pupils to allow judgements to be made. By the end of Years 2 and 6 pupils achievement is in line with levels expected of seven and eleven year olds. This is sustaining the standards highlighted in the previous report.
- 173 Pupils make steady progress in Years 1 and 2. They learn that yesterday is the past and can sequence events to show an emerging sense of time. They develop a sense of the past through activities such as comparing old toys with new as was seen in a Year 1 class. They also learn about different periods of history. Pupils in Year 2 have studied the effects of the 'Great Fire of London' and how Samuel Pepys recorded the event.
- 174 Pupils in Key Stage 2 make a steady progress. They learn about different historical periods and increase their understanding of the passage of time. Pupils have developed a sound factual knowledge and are able to link different historical periods together from time lines displayed in many classrooms. For example, pupils in a Year 3 class have written letters as if they were soldiers stationed at Hadrian's Wall. They further develop their knowledge of the Roman period in Britain by researching their way of life. Pupils develop historical knowledge and understanding through dramatic reconstruction. For example, pupils in Year 4 enacted a visit of Queen Elizabeth to Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire in full Elizabethan costume. This was reinforced by a visit to the 'Bishop's House' in Sheffield, which dates back to the Tudor period. Pupils in Year 5 have completed an extensive study of Victorian Britain. Displays around school show examples of pencil sketches of Victorian architecture and how the local area around the school has changed. Work on the Ancient Greeks by Year 6 pupils has been extensive and detailed and included researching and finding out the role of the 'Theatre' in Ancient Greek civilisation.
- 175 The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' social, moral and cultural development. It also has an impact on the development of English and literacy skills through pupils' reading and writing activities, and pupils' involvement in speaking and listening activities. A Year 1 class used sets to help distinguish between 'old' and 'new' toys. There are also links with other subjects. For instance, art and design and technology are used successfully to provide opportunities for pupils to illustrate the roman invasion of Britain.
- 176 Pupils' attitudes to history are good. They listen well as the teacher explains and describes the task or activity to be completed. They enjoy discussing and talking about the differences between the present day and times long ago. They concentrate on their work well and sustain their effort throughout a lesson, which results in a better understanding of the similarities and differences of the past and present.

- 177 The quality of teaching at both key stages is good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and are enthusiastic about the subject. They encourage the pupils and raise questions that need to be considered from a particular point of view. For example, in a Year 6 class pupils were challenged to consider the role of the 'Theatre' in Ancient Greek Society. However, the sample of pupils' work revealed an over-reliance on photocopied work sheets. This was highlighted in the last report. In addition, there is a tendency for teachers in both key stages to over-direct the pupils. Consequently, pupils, particularly in upper Key Stage 2, have too few opportunities to develop independent learning skills.
- 178 The co-ordinator is enthusiastic about the subject and she is keen to promote its profile across the school. There is a policy and scheme of work, which ensured progression and continuity across the both key stages. The subject is well resourced and resources are accessible to both staff and pupils. Good use is made of the local environment and local museums. A parent came into school to talk to Year 1 pupils about 'Toys' and their historical significance. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning each half term. There are no formal, whole school systems of assessment. Informal systems help teachers to compile comments for a pupil's annual report. Attractive displays in classrooms and corridors include a full-sized model of a Roman soldier. These displays help to promote the subject and value pupils' work.

MUSIC

- 179 By the end of both key stages, pupils reach levels above those expected nationally in performing, listening and appraising. There was insufficient evidence during the inspection to enable a secure judgement on pupils' achievements in composition to be made. Standards in singing are particularly high at both key stages. Pupils listen carefully and sing a phrase they have just heard with accurate pitch and rhythm. Their good listening skills enable them to learn tunes and rhythms quickly and they make very good progress in lessons.
- 180 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know many songs and hymns from memory. They sing in unison keeping a steady beat. Pupils add meaning to the ideas expressed in the songs by singing softly or loudly. They clap rhythms and add actions to the words. They recognise high and low sounds and identify repeated musical phrases. Year 2 pupils in the choir learn more complex songs, singing the notes accurately and enunciating the words clearly.
- 181 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils sing confidently controlling the tempo and dynamics well. They make expressive use of phrasing. When they sing in two parts they sustain the melody well. Many pupils play recorders, guitars and orchestral instruments. They read musical notation accurately observing time signatures, phrasing and dynamics. Pupils in the choir sing complex melodies and rhythms with clear diction and accurate pitch.
- 182 Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, achieve high standards in performing because of the good quality of teaching and their very positive attitudes to the subject. The key skills of speaking and listening are encouraged and developed well in lessons. For example, pupils are required to give accurate definitions of the sounds and rhythms they perform using the correct terminology.

- 183 Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to music and work hard in lessons. They sustain their concentration for long periods and behave very well.
- 184 The quality of teaching provided by the co-ordinator is consistently good. The strengths of the teaching are in the brisk pace, appropriate choice of activities and high expectations for the accuracy and quality of the performance. weaknesses. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to comment on their own performance or that of others, these good qualities are the result of good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject. Shortcomings occur when pupils are given too few opportunities to comment on their own performance or that of others. Only one lesson taught by a non- specialist was seen. Although the lesson from the scheme was relevant and interesting, the teacher lacked enthusiasm and did not make the best of the idea or of the skills and interest of the pupils.
- 185 The scheme of work, based on a commercial scheme, which has been implemented since the last inspection, provides a well structured programme for pupils throughout the school. All class teachers are involved in teaching music. The scheme of work helps teachers to plan lessons that teach and develop musical skills and knowledge in a systematic way. As a result, pupils make good progress. The scheme of work provides many appropriate and well structured opportunities for pupils to develop skills in composition. For example, one lesson involved children in exploring the range of sounds that could be made using a variety of plastic bags, wrapping and containers. Another involved them in exploring vocal sounds and recording them graphically so that the composition could be repeated and improved.
- 186 The subject makes a positive contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development. They have opportunities for singing and playing as part of a group and listen to and perform music from a variety of cultural traditions. For example, pupils performed a musical, 'The Christmas Dove and the Woodcutter' for their families and friends. The performance recorded on video was of good musical quality and involved choral singing and solos. Pupils in the two choirs and the recorder group learn the importance of being part of a team as they practise, perfect and perform a range of musical items.
- 187 There are no formal assessment systems in place although teachers do provide clear feedback and encouragement during lessons. Each year, the co-ordinator teaches each class to allow the class teacher to observe and assess pupils' achievements in music. This assessment is used as the basis for the comment in the pupils' annual reports to parents.
- 188 The co-ordinator provides enthusiastic leadership for the subject. She has a clear vision for developing the subject and provides good subject knowledge, good support for colleagues and a strong lead in terms of quality of teaching and high expectations. The co-ordinator has appropriate plans to monitor the success of the music scheme of work when she is released to carry out curriculum development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 189 During the week of the inspection the physical education lessons observed were outdoor games, dance and gymnastics. Discussions with pupils and teachers and scrutiny of teachers' planning indicate that the school provides a balanced programme of physical education, which fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils learn to play games, participate in gymnastics activities, and respond to music through dance and movement. Pupils in Year 5 have swimming lessons throughout the academic year.
- 190 Pupils of all abilities make good rates of learning in both key stages. Pupils develop their skills and perform with increasing competence. They all have a clear understanding of the effects of exercise on the body. Pupil's achievements at the end of both key stages is in line with and occasionally exceeds what is expected nationally.
- 191 Pupils in Year 2 plan a sequence of movement which involves travelling over and around benches, under and through large apparatus. Pupils jump off apparatus and land lightly and safely. Pupils were able to talk about what they were doing and make simple judgements about its quality and how it could be improved and refined. In Key Stage 2, pupils practise, improve and refine their performances in dance and movement lessons. For example, in a Year 6 class pupils used music and dance to interpret the story of 'Theseus and the Minatour'. they used dramatic movement, including facial expression to add to the quality of the performance. Pupils acquire a good range of ball skills in outdoor games lessons. They use hockey sticks to strike, receive and pass a ball. They develop a good sense of the need for 'fair play' and rules. For example, Year 6 pupils playing a mini-game of hockey observed the rules agreed between themselves and the class teacher. Gymnastics skills are well developed and pupils know how to organise a sequence of movements. For instance, Year 5 pupils developed and refined a sequence of movements, which included jumping, balancing and rolling, with an emphasis on the quality of performance.
- 192 The key skills of speaking and listening are encouraged and well developed in physical education. Pupils speak to each other and teachers as they make judgements about their performance. They gain experience of different sports and many compete effectively within school and in competitive inter-school sport.
- 193 Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning in physical education and most respond well to the challenges presented by teaching staff. Most pupils contribute well and often make a great effort to improve and refine the performance. The quality of pupils' relationship with staff and other pupils is good and this contributes much to their attitudes towards the subject. For instance, they are always willing to help and support those who have less well developed skills. This was seen in a Year 2 class where pupils helped each other travel under and through large apparatus. Most pupils enjoy sustaining energetic activity over long periods of time. Pupils work well together and co-operate and collaborate effectively in pairs or small groups.
- 194 The subject makes a positive contribution to the pupils' social and moral development. They have opportunities for playing team games and develop a sense of competitiveness and fair play.

- 195 The overall quality of teaching in both key stages is good. All lessons begin and end in an orderly manner and contain appropriate warm-up and cool-down activities. Lessons are well organised, have a clear structure and focus. They are planned to offer progression and a safe working situation. Teachers set appropriate challenges, provide clear instructions and explanations and encourage pupils to develop their skills. Lessons usually have a lively pace and class management of pupils is good. Teachers are secure in their knowledge and understanding of all elements of the subject. They actively encourage all the pupils to participate in every aspect. Questioning and demonstration is used effectively and pupils are encouraged to improve and refine their performances, for example in a dance. Most staff act as good role models, dressing appropriately and showing an enthusiasm for physical education which is reflected in the pupils' attitudes.
- 196 The wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities provided includes soccer, a gymnastic club, short-tennis, basketball, netball, cricket and rounders. The school take part in competitive sport with local schools.
- 197 There are no formal assessment systems in place although teachers do provide clear feedback and encouragement during lessons. Annual reports to parents include comments on pupils' rate of learning and achievement in physical education.
- 198 The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic about physical education and provides very good leadership for the subject. She is working hard to utilise a green area in the school grounds for outdoor and adventurous games. The school is well resourced for all elements of the subject which are accessible to staff and pupils. There is a large hall for indoor use and large playground for outdoor use. However the playground is in need of resurfacing. There is a school policy and scheme of work for physical education, which provides good guidance and support for teachers.