

INSPECTION REPORT

Barrowford County Primary School

Barrowford

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique Reference Number: 119166

Headteacher: Mr J A Hufferdine

Reporting inspector: Mr P Kemble
T7269

Dates of inspection: 19th – 22nd April 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706021

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	-	Infant and Junior
Type of control:	-	County
Age range of pupils:	-	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	-	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	-	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	-	Mr J Taylor
Date of previous inspection:	-	February 1995

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
P Kemble Registered Inspector J Hughes Lay Inspector	Music Religious education	Attainment and progress Teaching Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents Efficiency of the school
D Twist	Science Areas of learning for children under five Geography	
P Nettleship	English Special educational needs Art	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
P Snelling	Mathematics History	Leadership and management
C Smith	Equal opportunities Design and technology Information and communication technology Physical education	Curriculum and assessment

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Children under five make good progress in language and literacy and mathematics.
- Attainment in English at Key Stage 1 is above average and pupils make good progress.
- Attainment in mathematics at both key stages is above average and pupils make good progress.
- Pupils with special educational needs throughout the school are well supported and make good progress.
- Teaching is particularly good throughout the school in literacy and numeracy.
- Pupils behave responsibly, have good attitudes to their work and co-operate well.
- Relationships are very good.
- Pupils' personal development is good and arrangements for their support, guidance and welfare are good.
- The leadership and management of the school are good.
- The school's ethos is very good.
- Financial planning and the efficiency of financial control and administration are good.
- The school is very good at implementing its aims, values and policies.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. The organisation of the curriculum in art, design and technology, geography, history and physical education does not provide pupils with a step-by-step progression in the development of skills.
- II. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainments in the non-core subjects are not sufficiently systematic or accurate.
- III. The school does not promote a wide interest and enjoyment of reading and this limits the progress pupils make at Key Stage 2.
- IV. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils' spiritual and creative development.
- V. Annual written reports to parents do not contain enough information about what their children need to do to improve.

The weaknesses are far outweighed by what the school does well, but they will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has successfully overcome the weaknesses pointed out in the last inspection in 1995. The school development plan is now a comprehensive document containing detailed medium- and long-term objectives up to the year 2002. Music provision has improved and standards are now similar to those found in most schools. The school has successfully maintained the involvement of all staff in planning and development. In addition, the school has made substantial progress in its implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and early implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Effective improvements have been made in the provision for information technology and health and safety in physical education, though there has been little improvement in the creative arts, other than music. The attendance rates of pupils have improved.

Standards in subjects

The table shows the standards achieved by eleven-year-olds in 1998 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key:
English	C	C	" Well above average A " Above average B
Mathematics	B	A	Average C
Science	C	B	Below average D Well below average E

Standards in English have shown little improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are not exposed to a sufficiently wide range and variety of literature, and skills of independent reading are lower than expected. However, pupils' listening skills are of a consistently high standard at both key stages. Pupils make better progress in Key Stage 1 than they do in Key Stage 2. This is largely due to good teaching in Year 2 and the implementation of the literacy hour having a greater impact upon these pupils who have experienced it throughout virtually all their school life.

Progress in Key Stage 2 is showing signs of improvement as the literacy hour develops pupils' speaking and reading skills in particular. Progress in all aspects of English is especially good in classes in Year 4 and Year 6.

Standards in mathematics have shown a marked improvement over the last academic year as the result of a well managed school initiative to make changes to curriculum organisation and teaching methods. Standards of numeracy at both key stages are particularly high. Progress is good at both key stages.

Science standards remain unchanged since the last inspection. However, pupils receive many opportunities to experiment and investigate and, as a result, standards are high in this aspect of their work.

Standards in information technology and religious education are in line with those expected of pupils of their age at both key stages. By the time they are five years old, pupils have made good progress in language and literacy and mathematics, and standards are above those of most pupils of their age.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
English	Good	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good	Good
Science	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Information and		Satisfactory	Satisfactory

communication technology			
Religious education		Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Other subjects	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

The quality of teaching for pupils under five and at both key stages is satisfactory, but is strongest in literacy and numeracy lessons. Just over half of the teaching is good or better, including one out of every nine lessons which is very good. Only two per cent of lessons seen were unsatisfactory. Most of the best teaching was seen in classes in Year 2, Year 4 and Year 6, mainly in English, mathematics and science lessons.

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Consistently good throughout the school.
Attendance	Good; above the national average and an improvement since the last inspection.
Ethos*	Very good; it successfully fosters strong relationships and encourages all pupils to take advantage of the opportunities provided; commitment to high achievement is seen in the importance placed on literacy and numeracy.
Leadership and management	Good; the headteacher and governors provide a clear educational direction for the life of the school.
Curriculum	Satisfactory; essential skills for learning in the non-core subjects are not arranged in ascending order, making it difficult for learning to be built on year-by-year; provision for literacy and numeracy is good; provision is satisfactory for children under five. Assessment procedures are satisfactory in English, mathematics, and science but weak in all other subjects.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good; effective individual support for learning difficulties; successful in raising pupils' self-esteem; particular emphasis given to literacy and numeracy.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Satisfactory overall; provision for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory; for moral and social development it is good.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Well trained and experienced teaching and non-teaching staff; resources and accommodation are satisfactory.
Value for money	Good

* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
VI. That it encourages parents in the life of the school.	XII. The inconsistency in the amount of

<p>VII. That it is approachable.</p> <p>VIII. That it gives a clear understanding of what is taught.</p> <p>IX. That it keeps parents well informed about their children's progress.</p> <p>X. That it promotes positive values and attitudes.</p> <p>XI. That their children like school.</p>	
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Inspectors' judgements support parents' positive views. Most parents are happy about the amount of work their children are asked to do at home. The inspectors judge that homework arrangements make a satisfactory contribution to standards.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

The governors, headteacher and staff should now:

Improve pupils' attainment and progress, for science and the non-core subjects in particular, by making the following adjustments to curriculum planning:

- arranging essential skills for learning in ascending order to ensure that learning is built upon year by year; (paragraph 40)
- identifying the skills and content to be taught in each year group; (paragraph 40)
- establishing systematic procedures for assessing pupils' attainments in the non-core subjects, so that activities teachers plan regularly match pupils' needs. (paragraph 47)

Less important weaknesses to be considered for inclusion in the school development plan:

- raise the priority given to the quality of the learning environment for reading by developing home reading procedures, and ensuring that the library and classroom book corners are stimulating and inviting resources for learning; (paragraphs 43, 85)
- improve the planned provision for spiritual and creative experiences within the curriculum, particularly in drama, art, music and physical education; (paragraphs 36, 49, 119, 151, 180, 184)
- review the content of annual reports to parents, so that they inform parents more clearly about what their children need to do to improve. (paragraph 67)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

- 1 The school is situated in Barrowford, a large village on the edge of the Forest of Pendle in Lancashire, midway between Nelson and Colne. The area contains a mixture of privately owned and rented accommodation. The school consists of two stone buildings dating from the turn of the century, which have been modernised in recent years. There have been no significant alterations to the structure since the last inspection in 1995. The building containing Key Stage 1 pupils has six classrooms, a resource room and a hall, which also houses play equipment for Reception pupils. The building containing Key Stage 2 pupils has eight classrooms, a staff room, an administration area, a resource room, a library, a kitchen and a large hall. There is a hard play area, a woodland environmental area and a car park.
- 2 There are 339 pupils on roll, which makes the school above average for schools of a similar type. There are 14 children under five. The number on roll has decreased since the last inspection, when it was 366. The falling roll is largely demographic and reflects a decrease in the number of families moving into the area. The attainment on entry of pupils into Reception classes is broadly average. The social context of the school is similar to the national average. The percentage of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds (1.2%) is lower than most schools. There are no pupils speaking English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils receiving free school meals (19.1%) is broadly average for primary schools. The percentage of pupils, including those with statements, on the register of special educational needs (16.5%), is broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils who have statements of educational needs (2.4%) is above average for primary schools in Lancashire.
- 3 The school mission statement states: 'Children are individual and special. They are involved in and responsible for their own learning and conduct. Through team-work the highest standards of quality are expected and promoted for all. We value our partnership with parents and the community'.
- 4 The school's priorities as detailed in the development plan include initiatives relating to: literacy; numeracy; information and communication technology; provision for higher attaining pupils; and re-structuring of the curriculum to move away from a largely topic-based provision.
- 5 The school has agreed targets with the local education authority relating to pupils' attainments in the 1999 National Curriculum assessments and tests. The school has also set personal targets with individual pupils, including pupils identified as more able.

Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	27	23	50

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	21	23	24
	Girls	21	22	22
	Total	42	45	46
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	86	91	94
	National	80	82	85

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	20	23	22
	Girls	21	21	20
	Total	41	44	42
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	84	90	86
	National	81	85	86

Attainment at Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	21	15	36

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	11	15	16
	Girls	10	8	10
	Total	21	23	26
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	60	66	74
	National	65	58	69

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a

NC Level 4 or above	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	n/a	n/a	n/a
	National	n/a	n/a	n/a

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year			%
	Authorised Absence	School	4.7
		National comparative data	5.7
	Unauthorised Absence	School	0.4
National comparative data		0.5	

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:			Number
	Fixed period		4
	Permanent		1

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :			%
	Very good or better		15
	Satisfactory or better		95
	Less than satisfactory		5

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

- 6 Inspection evidence shows that in Year 6, standards in English are currently in line with the national average in speaking and listening, reading and writing with fewer pupils than expected attaining higher levels. These standards are broadly average when compared with similar schools nationally. There has been no significant improvement in standards since the last inspection report. There is evidence to show that the recent implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is beginning to have an impact upon standards, in speaking and reading in particular. Also, the percentage of pupils in the present Year 6 working at higher levels, although still below the national average, has slightly increased. These findings are supported by the results of National Curriculum assessments since 1996. The results attained in 1998 are below those of 1996 and 1997, largely due to a greater proportion than usual of pupils in the year group with limited skills of speaking and reading.
- 7 In Year 2, inspection findings show that standards in English are currently above the national average in reading and writing, and in line with the national average in speaking and listening. Standards in reading and writing compare well with those of similar schools nationally, although there are fewer pupils than expected attaining higher levels. There has been a satisfactory improvement in standards since the last inspection. These findings are supported by the results of National Curriculum assessments since 1996.
- 8 Standards in Year 6 and Year 2 in mathematics are above the national average and are well above average when compared with similar schools nationally. There has been a satisfactory improvement in standards since the last inspection. Results of National Curriculum assessments over the past three years show that, although standards have improved overall, there was a decrease in standards in 1997, which was particularly significant at the end of Key Stage 2. The school was successful in identifying the causes for this decline and the action subsequently taken, which included early implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, has been effective in significantly raising standards to levels higher than those attained in 1998.
- 9 Inspection findings show that standards in science in Year 6 and Year 2 are in line with those of all schools nationally. The percentage of pupils working at higher levels is similar to the national average. These findings are supported by the 1998 National Curriculum assessments, but indicate that there has been an improvement in the percentage of pupils in Year 2 working at higher levels. When compared to similar schools, results are above average. There is no consistent trend of results over the last three years. Pupil performance in 1997 was down on the previous year, but recovered in 1998.
- 10 On entry to school, standards are in line with those expected nationally. This judgement is confirmed by the school's assessments made soon after starting school. Children are ready to learn and make good progress in response to good teaching and carefully planned lessons, particularly in literacy and numeracy. By the age of five, attainment is above average in language and literacy and mathematics, and in line with expectations in knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development.
- 11 The school has set realistic targets for attainment in the 1999 National Curriculum

assessments at both key stages, in conjunction with the local education authority.

- 12 Standards in English have shown little improvement over time, but the literacy strategy is now having a significant impact at both key stages. Pupils are not exposed to a sufficiently wide range and variety of literature, and skills of independent reading are lower than expected, especially at Key Stage 2. However, pupils' listening skills are of a consistently high standard at both key stages. Pupils are attentive listeners, especially during the literacy hour. Pupils make better progress in Key Stage 1 than Key Stage 2, especially in Year 2 classes. This is largely due to good teaching and the implementation of the literacy hour having a greater impact upon these pupils who have experienced it throughout virtually all their school life. Pupils make slower progress in Year 1 classes where management of pupils is weak. Progress in Key Stage 2 is showing signs of improvement as work in the literacy hour has an effect upon pupils' speaking and reading skills in particular. Progress is particularly good in classes in Year 4 and Year 6, where the teaching of literacy skills is consistent between the two teachers in each year group.
- 13 Standards in mathematics have shown a marked improvement over the last academic year, as a result of a well managed school initiative to make changes to curriculum organisation and teaching methods. The standard of pupils' numeracy skills is particularly high. Pupils make consistently good progress through both key stages as teachers gain confidence working from the structure provided by the National Numeracy Strategy and as a result of the recently introduced setting system.
- 14 Science standards remain unchanged over time. This is largely due to the lack of structure resulting from the inclusion of the subject in the school's topic approach to the curriculum, rather than the teaching of science in regular time-tabled sessions in each year group. However, pupils receive many opportunities to experiment and investigate in science lessons and as a result standards are high in this aspect of their work.
- 15 There is some variation between the attainment of boys and girls in English at Key Stage 2, where girls attain higher standards than boys. The school has identified that boys tend to be less interested in reading than girls and teachers are ensuring that this is taken into account when planning literacy lessons. Higher attaining pupils are well supported and make satisfactory progress. Pupils are often grouped in classes and in mathematics sets according to prior attainment, with the main object of ensuring that the work for higher attaining pupils is appropriate and stimulating. Several higher attaining pupils have individual education plans, which identify particular skills for development. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of well formulated individual education plans and good support from teachers and support staff.
- 16 Attainment for pupils in Year 6 and Year 2 in information and communication technology is in line with the national expectation and pupils make satisfactory progress. The school has more than kept pace with national developments and the subject has a high priority. In religious education, standards are in line with the expectation in the Locally Agreed Syllabus and progress is satisfactory.
- 17 In the non-core subjects of the curriculum, singing is of good quality in music. In history and geography, pupils show a particularly good knowledge and understanding of the local area. In art, pupils show good skills of working with a range of different materials. Emphasis on the expressive and creative arts is, however, limited. Research and investigative skills in history and geography are not well developed, largely as a result of

weaknesses in the school's approach to the teaching of reading and library skills, and deficiencies in the provision of resources in these two subjects. Overall, pupils' progress in the non-core subjects over time is satisfactory, but is no better than that due to the lack of skills progression in curriculum planning. Progress in lessons is sometimes better as a result of good teaching.

- 18 Standards have been maintained in most subjects since the last inspection, but have improved in mathematics and music at both key stages.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

- 19 Children under the age of five demonstrate good attitudes to learning. They benefit from the effective induction programme and settle quickly into school routines. They are attentive and show sustained levels of interest in their work. They are confident children, eager to talk about their work and to share it with others. For example, children talk at length about the language and number games they undertake in class, describing what they have to do or asking for help when unsure. Behaviour of the vast majority of children is good. They are familiar with school and classroom rules and show a good understanding of the boundaries of acceptable behaviour.
- 20 Personal development of children under five is good. They make independent choices and demonstrate a mature approach to school. They are equally confident in whole-school assemblies, the dining hall or the playground and respond well to any opportunities to take responsibility. For example, as part of their personal and social education, children chose an area of class life to be their responsibility, such as maintaining tidy resource and book areas or putting straws in the milk each day. Many children show some independence during group tasks. They work effectively when completing an activity without direct adult supervision. Children work independently and in pairs to good effect.
- 21 Pupils at both key stages demonstrate good attitudes to learning. They are interested in their work, are well motivated and generally eager to participate in lessons. On the small number of occasions when pupils show weaker attitudes to learning, they are insufficiently challenged by the teaching in a particular lesson. This occurs in some Year 1 lessons, when pupil management is poor or activities are not well organised. In Years 3 and 5, a small number of pupils have poor attitudes to their work. However, they moderate their behaviour in response to specific strategies used by the teachers.
- 22 At both key stages, standards of behaviour are equally good in class and around the school. Pupils are polite, courteous and very willing. They are helpful to each other during lessons and to visitors. They listen well to other groups during plenary sessions and most follow instructions well. For example, there is a minimum of fuss when pupils move from whole-class activities to group work. Pupils understand and follow the school rules very well. They respond well to the provision of games equipment and resources for indoor and outdoor play. The atmosphere is remarkably peaceful at lunch-times in the dining hall. Pupils move to and from collective worship in an orderly and quiet manner. There has been one permanent exclusion from the school in the last full year. This was an isolated instance.
- 23 The quality of relationships in all areas of the school is very good. Pupils are very mutually supportive, particularly of those pupils with special educational needs. Mixed

gender groupings in lessons and paired work on the computers are successful in encouraging boys and girls to collaborate well. The idea of establishing 'tutor' roles for pupils with well developed computer skills works very well and pupils respond confidently to instructions from their peers. The small number of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds are very well integrated into school life.

- 24 Pupils' personal development and their contribution to the school community are good overall. They take advantage of the many opportunities they are given for choice during the day, in lessons and in the allocation of responsibilities. They enjoy independent activities, such as running their own information technology programs. Pupils set their own personal targets and make decisions about the content of their individual record of achievement folders. They participate less frequently in whole-school initiatives, although some represent their peers on the School Council. Pupils contribute to charitable appeals, which effectively improves their understanding of the needs of others.
- 25 The response from pupils to the literacy and numeracy hours is very good. During literacy lessons, pupils are very involved in the work, showing high levels of interest in the text and word work. Discussions during these sessions are often stimulating as pupils compare texts, authors and their own ideas. In both literacy and numeracy lessons, pupils enjoy having the opportunity to express a view which may be different from that of the teacher. Their teachers value these responses. Pupils generally respond well to books used in the literacy hour. Some choose books to read at home, based on the knowledge of particular authors they encounter at school.
- 26 Pupils' ability to extend their own learning through research is satisfactory although not particularly well developed. They make better use of computers to find information, rather than reference books and dictionaries. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 visit the local public library each fortnight, which provides some useful support for their research skills.
- 27 Parents are very positive about the attitudes, behaviour and personal development of their children and inspection findings confirm their views. Pupils have maintained the very positive attitudes reported at the time of the previous inspection.

Attendance

- 28 Levels of attendance are good and have improved since the last inspection. Attendance is above the national average and there are now very few instances of unauthorised absence. Pupils are punctual and sessions begin promptly. Children under five attend regularly and their parents bring them to school on time. These regular attendance patterns have a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

- 29 The majority of lessons observed during the inspection were in literacy and numeracy, where teaching is often good. When taking into consideration all the lessons seen, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Just over half of the teaching is good or better, including one out of every nine lessons which is very good. Only two per cent of lessons seen were unsatisfactory. This shows that the quality of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection. The greatest concentration of good or very good teaching was seen in classes in Year 2, Year 4 and Year 6, mainly in English, mathematics and science lessons.
- 30 The quality of teaching for children under five is never less than satisfactory and is often good. Staff create a calm, working atmosphere. Expectations are generally high and children are well supported and encouraged in their learning. Teachers are particularly good at using questions to promote pupils' speaking skills and in encouraging pupils to attempt tasks confidently. All adults work well together to provide interesting and stimulating experiences for the children, particularly in lessons related to language, literacy and mathematics. Planning is mainly thorough, but sometimes too few activities are provided for pupils to be creative and find out about things for themselves, and play activities are not sufficiently structured. This limits the progress children make in their knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative development.
- 31 At Key Stage 1, half the lessons are satisfactory and half are good. A small percentage of lessons in Year 1 are unsatisfactory. Almost all the good or very good teaching is in Year 2 classes. In the best teaching, the structure and pace of lessons are good, ensuring that pupils make steady progress in the acquisition of skills and knowledge. Subject knowledge is secure, particularly in literacy, numeracy and information technology lessons and, as a result, pupils benefit from confident, enthusiastic teaching. Introductions to lessons are particularly motivating, especially in Year 2 classes. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are high, especially in English and mathematics, and work is well matched to pupils' needs. Higher attaining pupils receive activities that are suitably challenging. Teachers move pupils on to the next stage of their learning through careful use of questioning, for example in mathematics. Pupils' thinking is extended and they are provided with opportunities to review and discuss their work, for example, at the end of literacy hour lessons. Where lessons are less effective or unsatisfactory, subject knowledge is insecure, for example in physical education, and expectations are consequently not high enough. The management of pupils is sometimes weak, particularly in classes in Year 1, and pupils are allowed to interrupt their teachers too often, disrupting the flow of lessons.
- 32 At Key Stage 2, half the lessons are good, and one out of every ten lessons is very good. The remainder of lessons are satisfactory. Almost all the good or very good teaching is in classes in Year 4 and Year 6. In the best teaching, the relationship that teachers have with their pupils is very good. This has a significant impact on the progress made in lessons, as pupils respond well to challenges and questions posed by their teachers, for example in literacy and religious education lessons. Pupils' contributions to lessons are valued and this is successful in raising their confidence and self-esteem. Planning contains clear learning objectives, which are successfully transferred to pupils, who are then fully aware of the purpose of the lesson and targets to be achieved. Teachers set time limits for pupils to complete tasks, for example in Year 3 and Year 4 classes, and this ensures that lessons move at a brisk pace. Time is found to give good support to individuals, but also to make significant teaching points to the whole-class at regular intervals. Where teaching is less effective, pupils are sometimes kept together for too long, for example during introductions to lessons and this slows down the pace of the

lesson and pupils lose interest. The match of work to pupils' needs is not always appropriate, for example in history lessons. Higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged and lower attaining pupils find the work too difficult.

- 33 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is consistently good. Individual education plans are used very effectively by class teachers and support staff to target pupils' particular needs. There is good communication between teachers and support staff, for example during literacy lessons at both key stages, and this makes a significant contribution to the progress pupils make. The small number of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds are well supported and, along with pupils with special educational needs, are very well integrated into whole-class activities.
- 34 Teaching of literacy and numeracy is often good at both key stages. Teachers use large and small shared texts effectively to raise pupils' awareness of titles, authors and illustrators and, as a result, interest in literature is increasing rapidly, particularly amongst boys at Key Stage 2. However, teachers are less successful at promoting literature in ways other than through the literacy hour. The school library and book corners in classrooms do not provide a rich, literary environment to support the interest generated by the literacy hour. Home reading is not well established or consistent in its application. The methods and organisation used by teachers are mainly good and teachers are following the national guidelines closely. This does sometimes result in inflexibility as teachers adhere closely to recommended timings for parts of the lessons. For example, pupils sit for too long or are involved in sessions that have not been structured sufficiently to meet their particular needs. However, by following the guidelines carefully, teachers are ensuring a steady and continuous progression of skills between year groups and key stages. The teaching of numeracy is very effective. There is a strong emphasis on mental arithmetic and pupils are regularly challenged by quick-fire questions. Expectations are mainly high in all classes, lessons move at a fast pace and teachers are consistent in their approach to numeracy lessons at both key stages. A key feature of successful lessons is the exploration of alternative methods of tackling problems and the expectation that pupils explain the reasons for their choices. Teachers' scientific knowledge is good and the teaching of experimental and investigative science is of a particularly high standard. Teachers use questioning well to assess their pupils' understanding.
- 1 The planning of daily lessons at both key stages is good. Teachers are conscientious and thorough in providing activities that are interesting and maintain pupils' motivation. Teachers plan lessons together in two-year cycles, but do not always match tasks closely enough to pupils' levels of attainment within the twinned year groups and work is either too hard or too easy for some pupils. The emphasis on creativity is weak and opportunities are missed in art, music, drama and physical education for pupils to suitably express their feelings and emotions. Parents are generally happy about the amount of work their children are asked to do at home. Regular homework is set to improve skills in literacy and numeracy and these arrangements make a satisfactory contribution to standards. Marking of work is not always consistent. It is usually helpful in English, mathematics and science, but is less effective in all other subjects.

The curriculum and assessment

- 36 The curriculum provided for the pupils is satisfactory overall with some strengths, but there are significant weaknesses in some of the non-core subjects. These findings are similar to the judgements made on the last inspection. At the time of the last inspection

information technology coverage was uneven, but now it is consistent in all classes. Teachers did not always pay sufficient attention to the safety aspects described in the policy, but this has now improved. A small number of weaknesses still remain. For example, music was taught mechanically with little opportunity for pupils to compose their own pieces. This is still largely the case. In fact the curriculum overall places insufficient emphasis on the arts and creativity, just as before.

- 37 The curriculum for the children under the age of five is satisfactory and firmly rooted in the nationally recommended areas of learning. Careful planning ensures that children are provided with appropriate experiences aimed to promote all of the national Desirable Learning Outcomes. There is no provision for outdoor play, but large climbing apparatus is set out in a separate infant hall and used effectively to develop the children's control and co-ordination. Children are given many opportunities for purposeful play, such as sand and water activities. In addition, good quality planned experiences are provided for children to develop their powers of observation and enquiry skills, for example in baking and in scientific activities. Similarly, the children's speaking and listening skills and powers of imagination are well catered for through role-play activities, such as pretending to be a travel agent or a customer. These experiences allow children to make choices for themselves, initiate some aspects of their own learning and develop independence. However, learning experiences in literacy and mathematics command central importance and are justifiably the most strongly promoted. Baseline assessments are used effectively to gauge children's attainment on entry and provide appropriate programmes of work.
- 38 The breadth and balance of the curriculum provided for Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory. The school ensures that all subjects of the National Curriculum are taught, along with religious education and all pupils have full and equal access. When topics are planned for each half-term, several additional areas are considered, such as health education, citizenship and multicultural awareness. Furthermore, each of these cross-curricular dimensions is drawn from carefully planned units of study. As a result, pupils make better progress in these areas than is the case in most schools. Provision for sex education is good because pupils learn about these matters in a context of growing into adults and caring family values. Similarly, drugs awareness programmes are linked well into wider learning experiences rather than relying on one or two isolated lessons. Weekly discussions about values and perspectives covering a range of topics, known to the pupils as 'Circle Time', ensures that their personal and social education are well provided for. The provision for English and mathematics is good. These subjects, along with information technology, benefit from specific planning for each year group. Literacy and numeracy are particularly strong because the national guidelines for both subjects are closely followed. In these subjects, the curriculum is broken down into finely tuned learning steps enabling pupils to build on previous learning. Such careful planning is contributing to the improving standards. Information technology is now similarly structured and standards are rising as a result. Science remains part of the topic planning arrangements and, whilst the experimental and investigative aspects are well catered for, the knowledge and understanding of each of the different areas of science is not so carefully sequenced.
- 39 Curriculum planning was regarded as a strong feature at the time of the previous inspection. When the National Curriculum was introduced and subsequently revised, the school responded positively by organising the pupils' learning within a range of topics. These topics incorporated learning across several subjects and ensured that all elements were covered. The same high level of commitment to planning still exists, but over the years further refinement of the topics has created a complicated mixture of different

subjects. Teachers new to the school, particularly, find this system difficult to understand. The school recognises that the system needs to be changed into a curriculum based on single subjects, rather than integrated topics.

- 40 There are several disadvantages that render the provision for some of the non-core subjects unsatisfactory. Topics are planned in two-year cycles so that in the event of mixed-age classes, duplication is avoided. However, the same work is provided for the twinned year groups, such as Years 3 and 4. There are occasions when the reading level of work provided is too difficult for the younger pupils, which happens, for example, in history. More importantly the essential skills to be taught are not carefully identified and placed into a clear sequence for learning. This makes it difficult for pupils to build on learning from year to year in subjects such as design and technology and physical education.
- 41 Despite these weaknesses, there are advantages in the school's approach to planning, not least the shared planning undertaken by the four teachers in each planning team. Expertise is shared and pupils receive the same opportunities, irrespective of the class to which they are allocated.
- 42 The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Once their special needs are assessed and identified, individual education programmes are written for pupils who find difficulty in learning, and for those whose special needs relate to high achievement. Their progress towards the targets set is carefully monitored. Pupils who have special educational needs do not miss out on the experiences provided for the majority of pupils, they are fully integrated into the life of the school. The school goes to considerable lengths to ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the curriculum. Material used is checked for gender and cultural bias, stereotyping is avoided and teachers have similar expectations of all pupils. The contribution made by each pupil is seen as unique and the pupils' records of achievement testify to the value placed on individuality.
- 43 Good provision has been made for literacy. The literacy hour is very effectively used and consistently taught in every class. However, the provision for engaging pupils in books outside the literacy hour is weak. Few attractive book displays are around the school and there are too many dated books in the school library. The pupils' interests are neglected in these respects. Very good provision has been made for numeracy. The school wanted to improve the teaching of mathematics and introduced elements of the National Numeracy Strategy ahead of time. Both teachers and pupils find the materials and approaches challenging, but also motivating and effective in raising standards.
- 44 The school makes good provision for extra-curricular activities and caters for a wide range of interests including sport, music, dance and French. These activities are popular and well attended. For example, fifty per cent of the pupils eligible to participate in competitive sport are members of the netball, rounders, football and cricket clubs. They enjoy regular games and matches with other schools, organised by the five teachers involved. The skills acquired, particularly in the recorder, brass and environmental clubs, make a strong contribution to the music and science curriculum.
- 45 The regular homework provided for junior-age pupils, in both English and mathematics, is appreciated by parents. A home-reading programme is organised, but operates better in some classes than others. Overall the provision is satisfactory.
- 46 The assessment of pupils' progress is satisfactory overall, but the strengths and

weaknesses almost parallel those of the curriculum. Particularly good use is made of the end of key stage assessments. The results of tests for seven- and eleven-year-olds are carefully analysed and changes are made to the curriculum to strengthen any weaknesses. For example, weaknesses in mathematics were identified over eighteen months ago and action taken to improve the teaching has considerably raised attainment levels. The school is currently examining the performance of higher attaining pupils and boys in an endeavour to raise standards in these respects. The school has introduced end of Year 4 tests to provide a more complete picture of pupils' performance through school and test results will soon be available at regular intervals throughout the school. Assessment is used effectively to identify ability groupings in English and mathematics and to monitor the progress pupils' make in these subjects.

- 47 As yet, there are no comprehensive assessment procedures for the non-core subjects and religious education, although the co-ordinator has recently drawn up checklists to measure pupils' progress of information technology. Teachers use a variety of ways to identify the quality of learning in subjects, such as history and geography, but these are inconsistently applied and unsatisfactory overall. The problem is compounded further because not all teachers interpret the school's marking policy similarly. The weaknesses in assessment are carried through into the writing of end-of-year reports where teachers' comments are sometimes too general and do not sufficiently identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses. The school makes good use of records of achievement. Pupils are encouraged to select good pieces of work to use as a benchmark for further improvements. This is leading to some useful target setting. However, the achievement files are becoming bulky with miscellaneous information and it is not easy for pupils to read them.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

- 48 The school makes satisfactory provision overall for this aspect of pupils' development. The quality of provision has been maintained since the last inspection. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good, and parents are positive about this area of the school's provision.
- 49 Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. It is effectively promoted through religious education and collective worship, but planned experiences across the whole curriculum are limited. For example, literature is not used to stimulate pupils' spirituality and very little use is made of the creative arts to deliver a spiritual dimension to pupils' learning. Insufficient opportunities are offered to pupils to reflect on the awe and wonder of the world during lessons.
- 50 The quality of the daily act of collective worship is satisfactory, although sometimes pupils only receive a brief moment for prayer and reflection. There is a lack of pupil involvement in most assemblies and this makes them less effective. Pupils are able to praise through song and to worship God. Occasional visits from local clergy make a positive contribution to some of the acts of worship.
- 51 The school's provision for moral development is good. Pupils have a keen understanding of the differences between right and wrong. Teachers encourage even the youngest children to consider the consequences of their actions on others. Children in a Reception class were spellbound by the story of 'The Mouse with Seven Tails' and clearly understood how upsetting it is when differences in appearance are ridiculed by others. Pupils are encouraged to value each other's comments in lessons and they display very

good listening skills as a result. They learn to consider the needs of others within school through the daily contact they have with pupils with special educational needs. Pupils follow the good examples set by staff and provide support for their peers during the course of the day whenever necessary. The needs of those less fortunate in the wider world are also successfully brought to pupils' attention by support for a number of charitable appeals.

- 52 Provision for pupils' social development is also good. They are successfully encouraged by staff to listen to the views and beliefs of others and to work together. The system of 'pupil-tutors' in information technology is a good example of more confident pupils helping class-mates to succeed in tasks during lessons. Co-operation and collaboration are successfully encouraged by staff. The school rewards good manners, consideration and help for others through its Star Award Scheme. Certificates are awarded weekly and are displayed for public celebration. In some lessons, pupils are offered information about how society takes care of less fortunate members of society, for example, in a Year 2 history lesson on the care of orphans.
- 53 There is satisfactory provision overall for pupils' cultural development. Well-planned experiences at both key stages extend both the cultural and multicultural aspects of pupils' development. Extra-curricular activities such as folk dancing extend pupils' understanding of their own cultural traditions. Younger children learn traditional stories and rhymes. However, the creative arts, and in particular music, are not strongly represented in the curriculum. As only a small number of visiting artists and performers come to school to promote the arts, pupils do not experience a rich mix of cultural materials.
- 54 Good multicultural provision allows pupils to develop an awareness of and respect for other people's faiths and cultures, largely through the religious education programme. In a Year 4 religious education lesson, pupils learned about the traditions of Sikhism. They learned about the most important beliefs and customs for Sikhs and then sampled real Karah Parshad. Topic plans contain regular multicultural experiences and ensure that provision is well established throughout the curriculum.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

- 55 Good provision is made for pupils' support, guidance and personal well-being. Pastoral care is well considered by the staff and is a strength of the school's provision. Parents report that they are happy with the levels of support their children receive. Inspection findings endorse their view.
- 56 Teachers have a good knowledge of their pupils' personal and social development. They know their pupils very well and are aware of their achievements. The well considered programme of personal and social education is effective throughout the school and supports this aspect of the school's provision.
- 57 Pupils with special educational needs are offered good levels of educational support and provision and are quickly identified by the school. Individual education plans often include behavioural issues and are also completed for higher attaining pupils to ensure they are sufficiently challenged by activities. These plans are accessible in classrooms and are used daily in literacy and numeracy lessons. All pupils set themselves targets for development, and staff often remind pupils to check them. Pupils with special educational needs are offered sensitive support and do not feel out of place when they are

questioned about their targets.

- 58 Children under the age of five are well supported by the school. The initial programme of home visits provides valuable information for staff about these children and their families. Pre-school visits and effective links with local playgroups and nurseries enable the new intake to settle quickly and with the minimum of anxiety.
- 59 Overall, monitoring of pupils' progress and development is good, although annual reports to parents do not contain enough detail as to how their children can improve. Monitoring is particularly effective in English, mathematics and science. Pupils are well grouped according to their ability. Teachers offer a good range of activities, which are successfully matched to pupils' levels of attainment and provide effective challenges. Teachers and support staff demonstrate a good understanding of each pupil's strengths and weaknesses.
- 60 Issues of health and safety are well addressed. Clear policies are in place and adults display a good general regard for all matters of health and safety. The site supervisor is conscientious in his duties and responds quickly to any hazards. Issues that arise are addressed promptly by the headteacher and his staff. Outside agencies are contacted immediately for expert support and the school's pastoral systems work efficiently. A particular strength of its provision are the weekly pastoral meetings, which all staff attend. These are a forum for teachers to express any concerns they may have about individual pupils. The whole staff is then alerted to potential problems and the most appropriate solution is discussed. A consistent approach is achieved, which significantly benefits the pupil concerned. Appropriate arrangements are made for the provision, administration and recording of any first-aid treatment. Lunch-time supervisors are well briefed and they uphold the high standards of behaviour expected by the school. Lunch-times are pleasant, social occasions, conducted in a calm and orderly atmosphere. All staff pay close attention to pupils with special educational needs. They are offered very good levels of support and are able to participate fully in every area of school life.
- 61 Staff manage and promote good behaviour very well; teachers have high expectations and set equally high standards for pupils. Adults working in the school provide very good role models for their pupils. They are consistent in their use of praise and encouragement for work well done, and weekly awards are given for outstanding effort and attainment. School- and class-rules are well known to all pupils. Staff adopt a consistently low-key but effective approach to discipline where self-discipline and responsibility are encouraged. Parental involvement is sought at a very early stage when any problems arise.
- 62 Suitable arrangements are made to ensure child protection issues are correctly addressed by all members of staff. The headteacher is the designated teacher responsible for this area. Support from outside agencies is requested when required.
- 63 Procedures for monitoring attendance are good. Class teachers draw any concerns to the headteacher's attention, who takes appropriate action. Instances of unauthorised absence are checked and recorded accurately each term. Arrangements have improved since the last inspection and the instances of unauthorised absence are now below the national average. Attendance registers are well maintained.
- 64 Satisfactory liaison takes place with local secondary schools. Staff from Year 7 visit the school and pupils make return visits to their new school before the start of the academic year. The popular extra-curricular French club also provides pupils with an interesting

opportunity to sample a modern foreign language before beginning their courses at secondary school.

65 The school has maintained the high standard of provision found at the previous inspection.

Partnership with parents and the community

66 The school establishes a satisfactory partnership with its parents. Initial home visits by the Reception teacher lay the foundations for a positive relationship between home and school. Induction information and details of school routines are communicated effectively through the school's prospectus and initial documentation. Little curricular information is published in the prospectus, which is not helpful for prospective parents. However, parents with children already at the school are provided with specific curriculum information each term and this helps them to support their children's learning out of school. Teachers are available to talk to parents about any aspect of school life after school. Records of achievement files are maintained for each pupil and parents are welcome to look at these and contribute to them at any time. Information about social and fundraising events is communicated to parents through newsletters sent out by the Friends of Barrowford School Association. Parents express satisfaction at the amount of information they receive.

67 Annual reports to parents on the progress that their children make are barely adequate. They lack concise evaluative comment, clear judgements on the progress pupils' make and targets for future development. Although these written reports are well presented, they provide only the broadest overview of pupils' attainment and progress. The school has, however, responded well to parental requests for more regular information on their children's progress during the year. Interim reports are produced at the end of each term. Although necessarily brief, these evaluations are concise and informative. They provide a clear indication of the progress a pupil has made during the term. Parents of children with special educational needs are well informed of their children's progress. They are confident that the school knows their children well and that they will be informed immediately of any concerns. Appropriate links are also maintained with the local special schools.

68 Parental involvement in the school is good. The school encourages parents to attend meetings, curriculum evenings, class assemblies and to support pupils in the classroom. A small number of parents regularly assist teachers and they make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. The Friends of Barrowford School Association is well supported although only a small core of parents organise social and fundraising events. Monies raised help to provide additional learning resources for the school. Parents are supportive of the school and happy with the standard of education provided.

69 The school ensures that parents are well informed about the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. A good number show an interest in these areas and provide support for their children at home, helping with reading and spelling, for example. Parent helpers in the classroom enjoy helping with the numeracy strategy in school.

70 The vast majority of parents are happy with the amount and type of homework set. They are familiar with the school's homework policy and most sign the School and Parents' Agreement, which emphasises the positive partnership between school and home.

- 71 Satisfactory links are established with the local community and these enrich the curriculum offered to pupils and have a positive impact on their attainment and progress. Regular use is made of the locality for visits and walks to support design and technology or history, for example. Pupils enjoy educational visits to a number of local places of interest, including a nearby farm. Year 6 pupils participate in a week-long residential trip, which makes a positive contribution to their personal development. However, pupils' creative development is not well supported through links with the local community. Representatives from the local football club and tennis professionals come into school to coach pupils and improve their skills. Occasional visits from local clergy bring an added dimension to some assemblies - at Harvest Festival, for example. Young children attending the local playgroup make regular visits to Reception. They play with equipment and speak to staff who will be teaching them the following year. This helps them to become familiar with the larger school environment and ensures a smoother transition to full-time education.
- 72 Few businesses remain in the area and although the school is very open to establishing links with local commerce, this is currently not very easy. Local shopkeepers are supportive of any fundraising activities undertaken by the school and a well known car company recently sponsored a school newspaper which provided the community with a very clear picture of its achievements. Students from local colleges of further education and secondary schools complete work placements in school and these help to maintain links between the school and other educational establishments in the locality.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

- 73 Leadership and management provided by the headteacher and governors are good. The headteacher gives a strong and sensitive lead, and together with the governors and senior management team, sets a clear educational direction for the life of the school. Leadership skills are effectively spread across the school, with responsible staff in the Early Years of Key Stage 1 and upper and lower Key Stage 2. This deployment is based on a well thought out team approach, which successfully distributes decision making across the school.
- 74 The mission statement and the aims of the school are clearly represented in the school development plan. They are reflected well in the life of the school. For example, they include reference to developing language and number skills in pupils and these are key activities in the school's current practice. The 'individual' and 'special' nature of children is reflected in the provision of independent education plans for more able pupils as well as those with learning difficulties, and in the value that is given to pupils' records of achievement.
- 75 The school has a very good ethos, which successfully fosters strong relationships and encourages all pupils to take advantage of the opportunities provided. The school recognises the importance of ensuring that all pupils have full access to the curriculum, including those with physical disability. The school's commitment to high achievement is seen in the importance placed on literacy and numeracy and the priority given to the provision for higher attaining pupils. The school has begun to analyse and use data to set targets, although this is not yet developed sufficiently for all subjects, or for individual pupils.

- 76 The school's response to the previous inspection has been good and standards have improved in a number of areas. It has addressed the weaknesses in medium- and long-term school development planning, with extensive analysis to identify areas of intended change up to the year 2002. Appropriate priorities are clearly set out in the detailed plan of action for 1999-2000. Music provision has improved and standards are now similar to those found in most schools. The school has successfully maintained the involvement of all staff in planning and development. In addition to addressing the key issues from the previous inspection, the school has made substantial progress through implementing the National Literacy Strategy and through early implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Effective improvements have been made in provision for information technology and in health and safety in physical education, though there has been little improvement in the creative arts, other than music. The attendance rates of pupils have improved.
- 77 The governors have a good understanding of the main priorities and issues facing the school in the coming years. They give full consideration to alternative ways forward, for example in dealing with falling rolls, budget shortages and the need for staff reductions. They take positive decisions for action. Their established systems of working help new governors to become quickly integrated. They learn about standards through reports from the headteacher and staff, and they analyse and debate performance data.
- 78 Whilst school development planning is of good quality, there is a weakness in short-term planning, which makes monitoring of both the curriculum and the success of the development plan more difficult. Although the action to be taken is described, the criteria for judging success are weak. They do not provide the basis for a clear measure of how the changes will improve attainment, progress or the quality of education. Nevertheless, monitoring of teaching and curriculum is good. Key co-ordinators, whose subjects are priorities for development, carry out their roles effectively. The results are seen in the improvements in standards of literacy, numeracy and information technology. Their work has led to a better curriculum and better teaching. Results of national assessments and other tests are carefully analysed to identify gaps or weaknesses in provision, for example weaker reading skills in boys. Action is then taken in the next school development plan. Monitoring of the quality teaching by senior management is not systematic, but informal systems are effective in identifying where improvements need to be made and what action needs to be taken.
- 79 The school's provision for pupils with special needs is very well managed. The policy has been recently revised and the special needs co-ordinator is effective in ensuring pupil reviews are kept up to date. Management of provision for the under-fives is good, with a particular strength being the high quality of the induction programme.
- 80 The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy Strategy and the literacy hour is taught consistently well across all classes. Teachers have a good understanding of what is needed and a strong commitment to making it successful, and this has made a significant contribution to its successful implementation. The co-ordinator is keeping an eye on its progress and making changes as they are needed. The school's early implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy reflects initiative and is a strength. It is well established and the co-ordinator is already identifying improvements that need to be made.
- 81 The school has a good capacity to improve in the future. This is exemplified by the rigorous way in which it identifies its own weaknesses and the willingness it shows in

embracing national priorities, such as the literacy and numeracy hours. The headteacher, staff and governors show a strong commitment to making the school better.

82 The school complies with all major statutory requirements.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

35

83 There is a satisfactory number of suitably qualified teachers and other classroom staff to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. The match of teachers' experience to the demands of the curriculum is good. Levels of staffing are satisfactory for both teaching and non-teaching staff. Staff subject knowledge and expertise are at least satisfactory in all subjects, and is good in mathematics, music, art, physical education, information technology, religious education and the provision of special needs. In response to an issue raised in the last inspection report, the school has provided some non-contact time for subject co-ordinators, although not on a regular basis. There is a satisfactory number of support staff and they are appropriately trained and deployed. They are well integrated into the work of the school and provide valuable support for teaching staff in the classrooms. The support they give to pupils in the classrooms, particularly the lower attaining pupils and those with special needs, is good. Maintenance and other non-teaching staff make an important contribution to the work of the school. The school receives good support from outside agencies.

84 Arrangements for the induction, appraisal and professional development of staff are good and have a positive impact on their motivation and subject knowledge. The provision of in-service training for literacy and numeracy is good and has had a significant impact on standards in both subjects. Training in other areas of the curriculum is limited due to financial constraints. The induction of new staff and newly qualified teachers is an important part of the school's work, and is well organised. Newly qualified teachers each have a mentor, and receive effective training and support where necessary. The school's staff appraisal arrangements work well and are based on the Investors In People initiative. The school has received recognition for its work in this area.

85 The school has developed a good resource base of large books, tapes, shared reading texts and other material for promoting and developing literacy and implementing the National Literacy Strategy. The provision of books to support literacy is good, they are well organised and in regular use. However, books that could be used to support pupils' other reading skills, such as research, are generally poorly presented and many are in an unsatisfactory condition. Resources provided for numeracy are of good quality, offer variety and are readily accessible to staff and pupils. A feature of the provision for numeracy is the significant quantity of good quality teacher-made material used in the school.

86 In mathematics, literacy and aspects of information technology, resource provision is good. For example, in information technology there is a good supply of software, most of which is stored on hard disk in the computers. Science resources are mainly satisfactory, but there is a shortage of reference materials. The provision of resources for all other curriculum subjects is satisfactory, with the exception of geography, where atlases are outdated and there is a limited number of maps and globes for the needs of the pupils. The school library fails to provide a sufficiently stimulating environment for pupils to develop their study skills. A significant number of books are old and in poor condition. However the school makes good use of the local library, which pupils in Years 5 and 6 visit regularly. The woodland area being developed by the school provides a good

resource for teaching in a number of curriculum areas. The school does not have a games field. Playground space is limited and was the subject of a concern in the last inspection report. However, the decrease in the numbers on roll has relieved the pressure at play-times and lunch-times to some extent. There is no large outdoor play equipment for the under-fives and Reception pupils, which restricts the progress that they make in their physical development.

- 87 The accommodation provides a satisfactory environment for the delivery of the National Curriculum. Classrooms and other teaching areas are sufficient in size and there are some good storage areas. The internal decoration of the school is of a satisfactory standard due to the efforts of the maintenance staff who have painted some of the classrooms and other areas. However, there are still areas that need attention in order to bring them up to an acceptable standard. The interior of the school is clean and in good order. Most of the toilet facilities provided for pupils are in good condition and well maintained. However, those in the Key Stage 1 building are in need of maintenance. Where displays of pupils' work are carefully mounted and labelled, they serve to enhance the school environment and stimulate learning. However, some work is not always shown to best advantage. The school car park is unpaved and presents a problem to those using it, particularly in poor weather. The exterior of the school is satisfactorily maintained. The school suffers from vandalism and does well to repair the damage as and when it occurs. There are, however, a number of broken or cracked windows. The school provides good facilities for pupils with special needs and they have almost full access to the accommodation. Disabled pupils do not have access to the library and one classroom that are reached by a flight of stairs. The school has been unsuccessful in its bids for funding to install a chair lift.

The efficiency of the school

- 88 Overall, efficiency in the use of finances and other resources available to the school is good and high standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Teachers are appropriately deployed and responsibilities are allocated in line with experience and expertise as far as possible. Support staff are effectively used and they make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress in lessons. The use of accommodation is mostly good, including the woodland area, which supports aspects of the curriculum such as science. However, the large spaces available in Key Stage 1 are underused for practical activities as a result of the introduction of a partial literacy and numeracy hour for Reception children. Learning resources are used well in lessons and a particularly effective feature of this aspect is the use by teachers of home-made aids to learning, such as mathematics games or answer cards for mental arithmetic sessions.
- 89 Time is well used. Sessions start promptly and pupils work through until the end of lessons with no time wasted. In some lessons, time targets are set for pupils to complete tasks. The day-to-day administration of the school is efficient, systems of financial control are good, and all the recommendations from the most recent auditor's report have been successfully addressed.
- 90 Financial planning is good with expenditure of funds closely linked to the school's priorities for development. The governing body has a clear strategic view of the school's long-term financial situation. Through its finance committee, it is well informed on the school's budget situation, and is closely involved in major expenditure decisions. In the light of recent falling roles, for example, the governing body has responded promptly and appropriately, by making plans to reduce overall staffing costs. This will contain a planned

deficit to manageable levels, and allow the school to return to a surplus position in the near future. Procedures for judging the value which the school is getting from its expenditure are not yet fully effective, as clear criteria to measure the impact of spending decisions are not established.

- 91 Funding has been used well to support the school's literacy strategy. This area is well resourced with group reading books and class readers, and these are used effectively to raise literacy standards. The school has chosen to allocate the funding attached to its non-statemented special needs pupils to its full-time teaching budget in order to provide increased attention through having smaller classes. These pupils are well supported and make very good progress. Funding provided for development of information and communication technology has been effectively targeted and has raised standards in this subject.
- 92 On entry to school, the overall attainment of pupils is average. By the time they leave, the majority achieve standards which are at least in line with most schools and better than similar schools. The quality of education is good, with a high proportion of good teaching in the main subjects, strong leadership, and pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good. This is achieved at a cost per pupil which is low in comparison with other schools. For these reasons the school is judged to provide good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

93 At the time of the inspection there were 14 children under five in two Reception classes. They start school in the August of the year in which they will become five. Approximately half of the children have attended some form of pre-school group. During their first half-term in school, children are assessed using a nationally approved test. The results indicate that the attainment of most of the children when they start school is average. The provision for children under five is good and remains broadly consistent with the comments in the previous inspection report.

35 Personal and social development

94 In their personal and social development, children make good progress and their attainment by the age of five is above the standard expected. They are happy and secure in school and the vast majority settle quickly as they adapt to the school routines and code of behaviour. Most children have good attitudes to their learning, and teachers place great emphasis on developing their self-esteem and their awareness of social conventions. Children's behaviour is mostly very good and they understand what is expected of them. All are confident when undressing and dressing for physical education, and they move quietly but confidently around the school, for example when going for lunch or to the hall for assembly. They work independently in pairs or small groups, once activities have been allocated. One mathematics group, for example, operated quite happily without teacher support during the numeracy session, as they played a dice game to reinforce number skills. Another group, when faced with an unfamiliar activity on shape, had the confidence to attempt the task on a trial and error basis until the teacher was available to give instructions. Teachers plan a good range of opportunities for children to choose their activities, and children respond well to these, observing classroom rules without fuss. Some of the teaching is particularly well organised to support the confidence of the younger children. They are given opportunities to contribute to practical, small group discussions and encouraged to learn when to have their say and when to give attention to others. The allocation of simple jobs around the classroom gives children the chance to take responsibility.

Language and literacy

95 By the age of five, the majority of children achieve standards which are above those expected of their age, and they make good progress. They are successfully encouraged to enter into conversations and to talk about their work both with their peers and with adults in the room. As a result, they are confident to share ideas and to offer responses to questions. They are taught correct terms whenever they undertake activities, such as baking. They listen well to instructions, which are clearly presented by teachers, and retain them as they move independently to attempt their tasks. Even the more hesitant children are successfully encouraged to take messages to other staff. When teachers are leading small group activities, such as matching games or counting activities, they are skilled at ensuring that all the members of the group have a chance to contribute full answers to their questions. This is effective in helping children to extend their speaking as they explain rules or give instructions to their peers.

96 Children make good progress in reading. They have access to a version of the literacy hour, which is effectively adapted to their concentration levels and provides opportunities to enjoy a range of stories at their own level. They are familiar with handling books and

follow story lines, talk about characters and make sensible predictions as to what might happen next. The more able children are already independent readers of the most basic books, and recognise many of the entries on the key words list. All use picture clues to help them interpret stories and most sound out initial letter sounds as they begin to use phonics to help them to read. Labels and displays are used well by the teachers to encourage children to respond to print. Although children do not often voluntarily select books when offered a choice of activity, their early reading and book skills are developing quickly as a result of the opportunities planned for them.

- 97 In writing, children make good progress as they engage in activities such as making their own story books. These are mostly picture stories, but children are attempting to write basic captions and labels. They confidently ask for spellings, for example, to help them write out booking slips in the 'travel agents corner'. Most children recognise their own initials. The majority of children display a correct pencil grip and they show good control as they copy shapes and letters to label their work. Through careful observation of children's progress, teachers present them with tasks that provide challenge at the right level and this contributes significantly to the good progress made.

Mathematics

- 98 Children's attainment in mathematics exceeds the standard expected by the time they are five. There is a strong emphasis on practical opportunities for children to become familiar with numbers and their meaning. Teachers use very good strategies to make this learning enjoyable for the children. Most children recognise the numbers to 20 and form them correctly, although a few sometimes reverse digits. They count in order and say which numbers come before or after a number when they are set out. Teachers plan inventive games, such as spotting the numbers that 'Teddy' has turned upside down on the number line, successfully reinforcing their awareness of number shapes. As they make sets of sausages with 'play dough', children cut shapes in half accurately when asked how they would share them with a friend. Whilst much of their activity in mathematics is practically based, in their recording of number most pupils draw well proportioned digits and translate these into the correct number of articles with very few mistakes.
- 99 Most children recognise a square, circle and triangle, and some recognise a semi-circle. In their practical work, children make models of cuboids from building blocks and explain how they had to use the right number of blocks to get the correct shape. They place items in order of size accurately. Teaching in mathematics is good. Some of the best teaching includes opportunities to capitalise on play situations as, for example, when a teacher asked a group to organise a holiday from the role-play area. The children were expected to work out the number of tickets for a family, and were successfully encouraged to find prices in the brochures. Their positional vocabulary is developing well and they explain the location of objects using terms such as 'behind', 'underneath', 'in front of' and 'on top of'. An appropriate amount of time is devoted to whole-group activities with one of three ability level groups, and to smaller or individual mathematical activities. There is a clear link in teachers' planning between the teaching of early mathematical skills and the initial level of the National Curriculum and this enables children to make continuous progress.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 100 By the time they are five, most children achieve the expected level in this area of learning. They are provided with an appropriate range of activities to extend their understanding of

the world around them and they make satisfactory progress.

- 101 In the scientific area of investigation they are successfully encouraged to gain first-hand experience of mixing ingredients together as they make gingerbread men. They understand that it is important to use the correct amount of each ingredient and that the soft mixture will turn hard when put in the oven. Teaching of this activity is satisfactory. Whilst, on occasions, adult supervision is over-supportive in assisting children with tasks that they can, and would like to do themselves, questioning is effective in reinforcing their understanding of the ingredients they are using. Most children talk about common materials, such as wood, metal, glue and plastic and talk about where they might be used. In their sand play, children explain that dry sand behaves differently to wet sand. Opportunities are provided for children to use a good range of resources during activities such as sand and water play, but there is little to guide them in investigating the properties of the substances, or in using the experience to extend their play.
- 102 In work on living things, children choose the type of seed they wish to grow and teachers encourage them to plant, water and label their own specimens. They explain that seeds need water and compost to grow. Most children know that vehicles, such as a pram, can be pushed or pulled and they give reasonable predictions as to whether objects, such as wooden blocks or pens, will float. In technology, children build model houses and gardens with small-scale construction kits. They use straws, lollipop sticks and plastic blocks successfully to make houses for the Three Little Pigs. When using the computer, most children operate the basic keyboard functions well as they use software designed to increase their number and word recognition skills. Teachers select programs which are well matched to current work. For example, two boys played a number game which effectively developed their recognition of digits from one to ten. This helped them with their number task in the main lesson, as well as extending their skills in using direction keys.
- 103 Children understand the concept of past and present and talk confidently about how they have changed since they were babies. They talk about future events as they plan holidays for each other in role-play. Most children recall their house number or street name and some know their full address. A few explain how they come to school and recount what they see on the way. Their awareness of place is promoted effectively by teachers through the preparation and use of role-play areas, such as the travel agents. Questions are used well to challenge children to consider what distant places are like, and begin to build their geographical understanding.

35 **Physical development**

- 104 Most children make sound progress in their physical development, and attain the standards expected by the age of five. They successfully develop movement skills and spatial awareness as they work in the hall, running at different speeds, taking large and small steps in response to teachers' instructions and avoiding each other as they go. They are successfully improving physical control. Teachers highlight examples of good practice in balancing skills as children carry bean bags on their heads or shoulders or throw them in the air without losing them. Teaching of this aspect of physical development is sound. Teachers' plan an appropriate range of tasks to develop adequate skills. Some of the provision for under-fives is heavily influenced by National Curriculum needs at this stage in the school year and activities resemble the Key Stage 1 programme, concentrating upon developing specific skills rather than children's creativity. Good use is made of the large indoor climbing equipment to develop agility. Teachers provide a suitable range of activities and tasks to promote children's manipulative skills and, as a

result, make satisfactory progress in their use of small construction equipment to build models. Most use scissors accurately as they cut up pictures to re-sequence in literacy work, and they show good control of pencils and crayons as they write or colour pictures.

- 105 There is no provision for outdoor play, as the school has no resources such as wheeled toys or large outdoor equipment and this limits the progress that children make in their physical development.

Creative development

- 106 Children make sound progress in their creative development and attain average standards by the time they are five. They join in enthusiastically with hymns and songs and follow the tunes. They show satisfactory recall of basic number rhymes, such as 'One man went to mow' as they learn to sequence numbers in different directions. Teachers' plans show that they use a range of simple songs to effectively support learning in other areas of the curriculum. Most children explain how the musical instruments, such as chime bars, are played and know the names of shakers, drums and tambourines. In their role-play, children use their imagination successfully, and readily take on roles such as counter-assistant and customer as they discuss where to go for their holiday, and whether they will enjoy the beach or the mountains best. Teaching in this area is sound, and activities have been carefully chosen to give a good range of experiences. However, few children show initiative in extending their play beyond the outline provided. Creative artwork is of satisfactory quality. Children make bright pictures of flowers in paint and chalks, and their drawings of objects such as playground swings or an ice cream van are mostly recognisable. The introduction of more formal activities in literature and mathematics has reduced the number of opportunities available for children to explore creative materials in the practical area, and to express themselves through art, music and drama.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

- 107 In the 1998 statutory end of Key Stage 2 tests, results in English were close to the national average and to those achieved by similar schools. The percentage of pupils reaching higher levels was below the national average. The results attained in 1998 are below those of 1996 and 1997, largely due to a greater proportion than usual of pupils in the year group with below average speaking and reading skills. Inspection findings show that pupils in the current Year 6 are attaining standards which are average for their age. However, the percentage of pupils attaining higher levels, although still lower than average, is slightly higher than in 1998.
- 108 In the 1998 end of Key Stage 1 statutory assessments, the percentage of pupils attaining average levels in reading was well above the national average. In comparison with similar schools, the attainment of pupils in reading was very high and the percentage of those pupils attaining higher levels was well above average. In writing, attainment was above the national average and the percentage of those pupils attaining higher levels was well above the national average. In comparison with similar schools, attainment in writing was very high. Teacher assessments in 1998 showed that pupils' speaking and listening skills were in line with the national average. Taking the three years 1996 to 1998 together, despite the present high standards at Key Stage 1, attainment in reading is slightly below the national average. Attainment in writing during the same three years is above the

national average.

- 109 There has been very little improvement in standards since the last inspection, but there is evidence to show that the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is beginning to have a positive impact on standards. This is particularly evident in Key Stage 1 and to a lesser extent in Key Stage 2.
- 110 At the end of Key Stage 1, attainment in reading is above average. The whole-class focus on literacy during the literacy hour is having a positive effect upon standards. In Year 2, the majority of pupils have good basic reading skills. They effectively use a range of strategies to help them read unfamiliar words. The higher attaining pupils read with fluency and expression, taking note of punctuation such as speech-marks. They discuss the story and make simple predictions as to what is likely to happen next. They know what an author, illustrator and title are and show examples in their books.
- 111 By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment for the majority of pupils in reading is average. The difference in attainment between the two key stages is partly explained by the implementation of the literacy hour, which is having a greater impact in Key Stage 1 as Year 2 pupils have experienced it throughout virtually all of their school life. Another factor is the lack of spoken language skills and strong linguistic background of many of the Key Stage 2 pupils, which the literacy strategy will take longer to develop. Also, reading in subjects other than literacy is not strongly promoted at Key Stage 2. Home reading is not an integral part of the reading environment and the library and classroom book corners are not stimulating and inviting resources for learning. Pupils' skills in the use of reference and non-fiction material are under-developed, due to the lack of opportunities for personal research provided by the school. Year 6 pupils are for the most part competent readers who read with fluency and accuracy. Higher and average attaining pupils read with expression, discuss the text and draw conclusions from it. Many of them are developing their reading skills through a range of fiction and non-fiction, which they obtain from school or the local library. Many pupils express pleasure in reading and most say that they read at home. Pupils use a number of strategies for choosing books, such as skimming text, reading back cover summaries and looking for favourite authors. Pupils are familiar with the use of a dictionary and an index.
- 112 At Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in their reading. A marked feature of their reading is pupils' enthusiasm for books and this has a significant impact upon the good progress that they make. In Year 2, pupils share their reading using Big Books, such as 'Voyage into Space'. They discuss what they have read and share ideas. During these sessions, pupils are successfully encouraged to read with expression by taking note of punctuation and the feelings of the characters in the story.
- 113 Pupils in Key Stage 2 make satisfactory progress in reading. The implementation of the literacy hour is having a positive effect upon the progress made by pupils, and that of boys in particular. They are beginning to develop the ability to discuss and draw conclusions from the text used in the lessons. In Year 4, during a lesson using text from the book 'Diary of a Killer Cat', pupils successfully developed their skills in discussing and understanding the characters because they were motivated by their enjoyment of the story. Pupils in Year 6 made satisfactory progress during a lesson based on 'Why the Whales Came', developing their ability to express thoughts about the text. However, progress is sometimes hampered by the lack of appropriate language skills which pupils need to make new learning easier. A limiting factor in the development of reading skills is the inconsistent provision of suitable reading records. Consequently, teachers and pupils do not have the opportunity to set targets or closely monitor progress.

- 114 By the end of Key Stage 1, attainment in writing for the majority of pupils is above average. They write stories that are organised, imaginative and demonstrate accurate spelling and use of punctuation. They are developing the ability to engage their readers' interest, for example, the Year 2 pupil who wrote: 'Sam was terrified, frightened. He tried to stop it falling', at the beginning of a story. The majority of pupils write successfully in different forms, such as recipes, instructions, poems and stories. For example, Year 2 pupils wrote instructions on 'How to Make a Snowman'. They set their work out in logical sentences and punctuated them for the most part accurately. The vocabulary used in their stories is interesting and demonstrates an attempt by them to make their stories more interesting. Handwriting is joined, well formed and easy to read.
- 115 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils attain average standards for their age in writing. They write satisfactorily in a number of different forms, for example, stories, poetry and factual writing. Descriptive writing is particularly well developed. Higher attaining pupils are aware of the power of writing to evoke emotion, for example, a moving poem which contains the line: 'Wait for the sadness and wait to grieve'. Written work is generally neat and handwriting is clear and of even size. Most pupils use complex sentences well, are familiar with, and use, a range of different punctuation. Spelling for some pupils is a weakness, due to the fact that pupils are not always expected to learn the correct spelling after errors have been identified.
- 116 Progress in writing is good overall at Key Stage 1. The level of progress made is largely due to pupils' enthusiasm, good classroom organisation and imaginative presentation of lessons. As a result, pupils are successfully extending their use of vocabulary and punctuation. Due to careful teaching during whole-class literacy hour lessons, pupils are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of story openings and endings. They are making satisfactory progress with their handwriting and much of it is neat, joined and of a uniform size. Pupils are developing the ability to write imaginatively with a good awareness of the importance of the reader.
- 117 Progress in writing is satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Pupils begin to write with increasing thoughtfulness and awareness of the reader. For example, a Year 5 pupil, who wrote a poem on depression, used the phrase: 'Depression lasts like stale bread'. Pupils are developing a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the different forms which writing can take and their ability to choose the best one for their purpose. Work is well matched to their levels of attainment and this makes a positive contribution to their rate of progress. Pupils become increasingly aware of the importance of the correct use of grammar. Standards of presentation are satisfactory with some good examples of handwriting in all classes. The progress of pupils in spelling is slower than in other areas of their literacy work.
- 118 The majority of pupils in both key stages are attentive listeners and they are developing satisfactory speaking skills. Overall, attainment meets national standards. Pupils are eager to take an active part in class and group discussions during the literacy hour. The majority express their ideas clearly and are willing to listen to the opinions of others. They show confidence when speaking to adults, both informally and in the classroom. Year 5 and 6 pupils engage in discussions and debates of high quality, for example in some religious education lessons. Pupils are quick to volunteer to share their work with the rest of the class at the end of lessons.
- 119 Pupils at both key stages make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening due to the wide range of opportunities presented to them in classrooms through group work, and in

the general life of the school. However, opportunities for pupils to express themselves through drama are few in other subjects, and this limits the progress that pupils make in developing their speaking skills further. The good relationships which exist between teachers and pupils are a significant factor in the development of speaking skills, as pupils do not feel inhibited when they speak in front of others. Pupils are attentive listeners, particularly during the literacy hour.

- 120 The school's provision for pupils with special needs ensures that they make good progress in reading and writing. Activities are carefully chosen to meet their needs and they are well supported by adults. They work towards specific targets and receive a great deal of encouragement.
- 121 Overall, pupils' attitudes throughout both key stages are good. They clearly enjoy the structure of the literacy hour and most pupils are keen to produce work of good quality. Pupils are well behaved and enthusiastic about what they do. They remain on task and are willing to discuss their work. They concentrate and persevere with what they are doing and try to produce good work. Through the shared classroom work in literacy, pupils work well together and listen to each other.
- 122 The quality of teaching is generally good. Sixty per cent of the lessons seen were good, including ten per cent which were very good. The remainder were satisfactory. The National Literacy Strategy is being enthusiastically implemented throughout the school. Teachers have a sound understanding of how to develop pupils' skills in writing, the use of grammar and speaking and listening. They are not so secure in their use of methods to teach spelling or in ensuring that pupils learn those words spelt incorrectly in written work. Pupils are well managed and teachers have high expectations of their behaviour. A number of imaginative strategies are used to further literacy work and resources are well chosen to create interest and enthusiasm, for example, the use of story boards in a Reception class lesson to retell the story of the 'Ginger Bread Man'. The systematic assessment of pupils' work overall is used effectively to identify the learning needs of pupils and to help teachers in planning work that provides challenge and motivation. Work is well marked and comments are written which help pupils develop their skills. The needs of different ability groups are well catered for and pupils with special needs receive the specialised help required. The use of home-school reading records is not consistently applied throughout the school. In Key Stage 2 particularly, records are not effective in supporting a dialogue between teachers, pupils and parents. The use of homework is satisfactory. Information technology is used well in all classes to support the development of writing in a range of styles.
- 123 The school is working hard to maintain and improve standards in literacy, especially at Key Stage 2. A useful development plan for literacy has been drawn up that covers all areas of this subject. Particular attention has been given to the development of reading skills amongst the boys and a more positive attitude towards it amongst all the pupils. The subject is well managed. Through the provision of good quality in-service training, the co-ordinator has made good progress in the implementation of the literacy hour throughout the school. The co-ordinator is well aware of the areas of weakness in provision and attainment and has suitably formulated plans to improve them. The governor responsible for literacy is well informed about current developments. Resources available to teach the subject, particularly literacy, are good and well managed.

Mathematics

- 124 In the 1998 National Curriculum assessments for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, the percentage of pupils who attained Level 4 or above (66%) was above the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving a higher level (20%) was also above average. Results were very high in relation to those achieved by pupils in similar schools. The performance of girls and boys was equally good.
- 125 When analysing results over the past three years, there has been a satisfactory improvement in standards, with the exception of 1997, when standards decreased. The school identified several reasons for this decline, which included provision of inappropriate materials, over-reliance on commercial schemes and poor attitudes amongst pupils. The action subsequently taken by the school has successfully raised standards above those attained in 1996.
- 126 Inspection evidence supports teachers' assessments, indicating that attainment for the current Year 6 pupils is above the national average. Scrutiny of work and lesson observation of other year groups indicate that standards are improving since the last inspection as a result of the school's early implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy.
- 127 In the 1998 statutory tests for pupils aged seven, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 or above (94%) was above the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving a higher level (27%) was also above the national average. Again boys and girls achieved equally well and performance is better than in similar schools. The work of the current Year 2 pupils indicates they are likely to achieve similar standards when they take their tests. Their attainment is above average.
- 128 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils achieve their highest standards in using and applying mathematics, number and in some aspects of handling data. They are competent in their knowledge and understanding of shape, space and measures. Standards in numeracy are good and pupils are confident in tackling problems. They try different approaches and compare their strategies to find which of them is the easiest. They have a good knowledge of multiplication tables and are quick to answer mental arithmetic questions. For example, when asked if 324 is a multiple of 9, most pupils answer instantly by adding its digits. They know that £3.99 and £9.99 is the same as £14 take away 2p. They successfully use halving and doubling for working out multiplication of tens and units and break down complex calculations into more than one operation. They have a good understanding of place value to thousands and beyond and are confident in undertaking calculations with decimals to two places. The majority of pupils round numbers to the nearest hundred or thousand, and estimate sensibly. They supply the missing numbers to sequences and recognise patterns or explain rules. Most have a good grasp of negative numbers and understanding of fractions and percentages. Average attaining pupils know, for example, that $\frac{1}{4}$ is equivalent to $\frac{4}{16}$ whilst higher attainers can mentally reduce fractions such as $\frac{9}{27}$ to their lowest terms.
- 129 Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of shape and space. Most pupils, for example, identify shapes by their different characteristics and show understanding of rotational symmetry. In data handling, they record accurately using, for example, tally charts. They construct and interpret a range of graphs and successfully explain why which type of graph is best suited to presenting particular types of data. They know, for example, that a line graph is well suited to presenting continuous data, such as a rise in temperature. Pupils' mathematical language is well developed in all areas of the subject and they naturally use the language they know. For example, when talking about the meaning of 'median', one child described it as 'the middle number when put into size order' and

another 'the middle number in a range of numbers'.

- 130 By Year 2, pupils' numeracy skills are secure and their ability to apply those skills is already above average. For example, they use their knowledge of number to solve problems about shopping or decide on strategies for doing calculations. Most make sensible estimations, have a good understanding of place value and carry out simple calculations using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Higher attaining pupils round successfully to the nearest ten, add three two-digit numbers and work with simple fractions.
- 131 All pupils make good progress throughout the school. Their progress over time is well supported by the setting system, which has been recently introduced, and the school's early implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. The consistency with which this has been done is a strength of the provision. Pupils in all sets are given opportunities to practice mental arithmetic daily and the methods used are challenging. Regular practice helps them to improve their responses and develop their skills. However, the degree of emphasis on mental work in lessons has reduced the opportunities for recording and standards in this aspect are sometimes weak. The setting system supports good progress for pupils with special needs and for higher attaining pupils by reducing the range of levels of attainment for which teachers have to plan. There are a few occasions when, even within the sets, the range of attainment is very wide and work proves too difficult for some lower attaining pupils. Special needs pupils are often well supported in mathematics lessons through the help of an additional adult. At other times they receive close attention from the teacher. A number of pupils have individual education plans and well-matched work is provided to help them reach the targets. Fortnightly homework assignments make a valuable contribution to good progress for all pupils.
- 132 Most pupils respond well to the teaching in mathematics and they approach their work with enthusiasm. They particularly enjoy the challenges in mental arithmetic. For example, they try very hard to reduce the time they need to complete mental calculations in 'loop games'. Pupils in higher attaining sets co-operate well when working in pairs or groups. Pupils are well motivated by most of the teaching and they respond well to the way lessons are organised. As one Year 6 pupil put it, 'we don't just do sums any more; teachers ask us all the time to explain how we have done it'. Pupils particularly enjoy the mathematical games made by the teachers.
- 133 The quality of numeracy teaching is particularly good and contributes significantly to the good progress made in lessons. In both key stages, the quality of teaching in about one-in-five lessons is very good, two-in-five good and two-in-five satisfactory. There are a number of strengths across both key stages. Teachers give clear explanations to pupils and they encourage them to use correct mathematical vocabulary. As a result, some Year 4 pupils talk about using 'inverse operations' and Year 5 pupils are comfortable with the terms 'factor' and 'product'. Lessons follow the same structure, with regular mental arithmetic and speed work established from Reception classes onwards at the start of every lesson. Lessons finish with an effective whole-class summary. In the best of these, teachers check pupils' knowledge and understanding carefully against the objectives shown in the planning for the lesson. There are constant requests from teachers to pupils to explain how they have worked out answers to problems and a continual search for other ways of doing it. For example, pupils are regularly asked: 'Can you tell me another way to?'
- 134 The strongest teaching in Key Stage 1 is in Reception and in Year 2. Pupils are expected to work quickly in these classes and the level of challenge to pupils is high. In Year 1,

questions asked of pupils are not so searching and pupils are not always kept on task during activities. In Key Stage 2, teaching in Year 4 is particularly good. In one lesson observed, very good use was made of assessment to amend an activity, which had proved too difficult for the pupils the day before; pupils were given fewer and simpler numbers to work with. In the other class, the teacher's good subject knowledge was used particularly well to help the children to understand a range of mental strategies.

- 135 Planned opportunities for the use of numeracy in other areas of the curriculum are limited. Where this does happen, it is very valuable, but by chance rather than by design. For example, in their work on pulses in science, Year 6 pupils used mathematical skills in measuring, timing and presenting their data effectively. The use of information technology to support work in mathematics is satisfactory.
- 1 There has been an improvement in mathematics standards at the school since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator manages the subject well and the school has benefited from early implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. This is well established and the co-ordinator is beginning to evaluate its effectiveness in raising standards.

Science

- 137 The results of national tests for 11-year-olds in 1998 showed that, overall, pupil attainment was in line with that of all schools nationally. When compared to similar schools, results were above average. The percentage of pupils attaining the expected level was above average and the percentage exceeding it was close to, but just below, the average. Inspection evidence indicates that the performance of the current Year 6 is similar to that of last year. There is no consistent trend of results over the last three years. Pupil performance in 1997 was down on the previous year, but recovered in 1998.
- 138 Results of teacher assessments of 7-year-olds in 1998 showed that the proportion attaining the expected level was in line with most schools, but the proportion exceeding this was below average. Inspection findings indicate that the performance of the current Year 2 pupils is broadly similar, but the proportion of pupils showing the potential to exceed the average level is in line with that of most schools.
- 139 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils show that they have a secure understanding of the scientific method and they plan a logical approach to investigation. When preparing to study the effects of exercise on the pulse rate, for example, they confidently decide how they will establish a control, what they must measure, how to measure accurately and how they will record their results. In addition, pupils create fair testing conditions in which there is only one main variable. Pupils make sensible predictions in the light of what they know, and interpret their graphs of results to draw out key conclusions from the investigations. Year 6 pupils show sound understanding across the main strands of the curriculum. They have a good knowledge of plants and the human body. They explain, for example, the basic functions of main organs such as the heart, or the way in which a food chain is built up from green plants, to predators and most describe how to classify insects or plants according to their characteristics. In the study of materials, pupils give satisfactory examples of changes, which are both reversible and irreversible. They describe the water cycle using correct terminology, such as evaporation and condensation, and they understand how to recover substances, which have been dissolved in water. Most pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of forces and explain how friction and gravity play a part in everyday life. They describe the components of an

electrical circuit, explain how a switch operates and use the correct symbols in a circuit diagram.

- 140 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good understanding of the basic requirements of fair testing and they explain the importance of 'keeping things the same' when investigating. They show good observational skills as they study and record the common plants and creatures in the school's woodland area. Pupils record their work well in different ways, using written accounts, tables and labelled diagrams. They talk about the properties of materials, such as wood and brick. In their work on homes and houses, they have had effective first-hand experience of building a wall during their trip to Keighley College. Pupils talk knowledgeably about basic forces, such as pushing and pulling, and the effects these might have on an object.
- 141 Pupils' progress over time is satisfactory at both key stages for all levels of ability. In Reception classes, they make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of change as they mix ingredients to make gingerbread men and observe changes that occur when the mixture is heated in the oven. Younger Key Stage 1 pupils observe 'mini-beasts', including fleas and water creatures and, as a result, successfully extend their knowledge of living things. Pupils are developing a satisfactory understanding of the factors they need to consider when setting up an investigation. In lower Key Stage 2, pupils extend the depth of their investigation skills. They consider, for example, how they might test a range of variables to explore the influence of water, light and soil in promoting plant growth. Upper Key Stage 2 pupils successfully develop their knowledge of the body as they study teeth and the functions of the different types. They extend their observation skills as they use mirrors to examine the features and characteristics of their own teeth and those of their peers. Progress for pupils with special educational needs is good. Their understanding is checked carefully by teachers and support staff and they are given additional support with their recording when necessary.
- 142 Progress is at least satisfactory in all lessons, and it is good in almost half of lessons. However, the current organisation of the curriculum is not fully effective in promoting continuous learning and this limits overall pupil progress to a satisfactory level. The main reason for this is that the planning of the topic system, around which the science curriculum is based, allocates the same activities to pupils in two successive year groups. Although the curriculum policy indicates that teachers are expected to adjust the level of science activities to meet the needs of their class, the lack of clear expectations for each year group makes this difficult. Consequently, teachers' planning is not always effective. There are occasions when pupils make only satisfactory progress because the lesson content is too similar to work they have done before. An example would be the repetition of testing the needs of plants for healthy growth undertaken in Year 4.
- 143 Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They are attentive to introductions by the teacher and they show good levels of co-operation as they share equipment or plan investigations in a group.
- 144 The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to good. Over two thirds of lessons were good and were seen in both key stages. The teaching of experimental and investigative science is of a particularly high standard. Teachers' own scientific knowledge is good and they prepare carefully for lessons. They provide a good range of practical activities. Teachers provide pupils with effective encouragement to consider how they will plan their investigations. Teachers use questioning well to probe their pupils' understanding, to draw out what they already know and to check that they are making progress in the lessons. A consistent feature of the teaching is the clear identification of lesson objectives. Where

teaching is less effective, the pace of lessons is slow when pupils are given too long on a particular task. For some pupils, this leads to restlessness and a reduction of motivation. In both key stages, teachers have established positive relationships with their pupils and this successfully promotes pupils' confidence to attempt tasks and respond to questions. In all lessons, teachers manage their pupils well and give appropriate attention to health and safety.

- 145 Assessment of pupils' attainment is satisfactory. Work is conscientiously marked and teachers test pupils' understanding at the end of each main topic. Results are carefully recorded. There are some variations between classes in the accuracy of assessment. This is because the school does not have sufficient guidance to help staff identify the features which characterise levels of attainment. Whilst teachers have a good view of their pupils' attainments, the results of the assessments undertaken are not always used effectively to plan work which consistently meets pupils' needs.
- 146 As standards in science were found to be at least satisfactory in the previous inspection, there has not been a substantial improvement. The subject is managed satisfactorily and the co-ordinator has recognised what is needed to improve both the assessment of work and the organisation of the curriculum. The teaching of practical science has been effectively monitored. Plans are in hand to introduce a science scheme, in line with nationally provided guidance, containing a progressive development of skills. This initiative has the potential to promote future development and improvement in science.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Art

- 147 The quality of the work seen in both key stages is in line with that expected of pupils of their age. Evidence from displays around the school show that standards vary within year groups, from work that is immature to some of a high standard. Standards have been maintained successfully since the last inspection.
- 148 Pupils at both key stages have a satisfactory knowledge of how to mix primary colours, effectively matching shades when working in the style of different artists. For example, pupils in Year 2 produced some illustrations in the style of Lowry, after studying pictures of his work and discussing them in a class session. They caught the style and colours used by the artist effectively. Pupils successfully describe some of the features of Lowry's work, for example, that his figures were tall and thin and he used dark colours. They recognise that the pictures are very detailed. Key Stage 2 pupils make effective use of colour and successfully work in a number of different media, such as watercolour, pencil, chalks and collage. They produce effective pencil drawings of figures in action and sitting still. Some watercolour paintings produced by Year 6 pupils are of a good quality and have won prizes in a local show. Pupils talk about their work critically and suggest ways in which it can be improved.
- 149 Progress is mainly satisfactory. Pupils in Key Stage 1 respond well to the teaching of specific skills and make satisfactory progress in observational drawing, drawing from memory and brush techniques. Knowledge of the work of famous artists develops well across both key stages. Some of the work of older pupils shows that they have made good gains in visual perception and the use of line and tone in their sketches. Pupils' skills of working in three dimensions are satisfactory. Pupils with special educational

needs respond well to many of the activities and make satisfactory progress.

- 150 Pupils' attitudes to their work are good. They are enthusiastic, work hard and concentrate well on tasks. Behaviour is very good. They enjoy opportunities to be creative. Pupils take care with their work and are proud of their achievements. For example, some pupils in Year 4, working on mosaics using pictures generated either at home or on the school's computers, expressed pleasure at their own efforts as they had not previously tackled this skill. Pupils co-operate well with each other and share materials without fuss.
- 151 The quality of teaching is satisfactory in about three-quarters of lessons, and the rest are good. Expectations are realistic and the work provided is challenging and this makes a significant contribution to the standards attained. Lessons have clearly defined outcomes and resources are well used. Teachers adopt a positive approach, using praise effectively as a means of motivating their pupils. Explanations of methods and the teaching of skills are clear and effective. The work on display throughout the school indicates that pupils are given the opportunity to experience a wide range of art forms. Art is linked well to other subjects. For example, the portraits of Tudor monarchs displayed in the hall significantly enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding of that historical period. However, opportunities are missed in art lessons to use the subject to support pupils' spiritual development.
- 152 The subject is well managed and the expertise of the co-ordinator is good. There is a useful scheme of work, which helps teachers to plan appropriate activities for pupils in lessons. Advice on assessing pupils' work is limited and assessments made by teachers are largely informal. However, the co-ordinator is developing a folder of pupils' work, which is providing some help to teachers in judging levels of attainment.

Design and technology

- 153 Pupils' work in design and technology is similar to that found in other schools. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress overall. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
- 154 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have good knowledge of different materials, such as metal, wood and plastic. By observing swings, slides and roundabouts in the local park they are beginning to understand how metal gives strength and rigidity to frameworks. They begin to use simple drawings as a basis for making models and are starting to make choices about which materials to use. However, pupils' progress in understanding how materials can be fastened together is slower. Too much emphasis is sometimes placed on drawing designs, rather than giving pupils opportunities to experiment with construction kits to discover ways of fixing components together. Pupils are becoming aware of the characteristics of a good design. When drawing designs for a playground, Year 2 pupils successfully identify the characteristics that make the playground more exciting and more suitable for children to play in.
- 155 Much of the children's work at Key Stage 2 is typical of pupils of this age, and there are some good features. Year 6 pupils, for example, make interesting investigations into the possibilities of designing and constructing bird-feeders. They test the effects of using different colours, experiment with different designs of feeder mechanisms and give careful thought to food type, safety and positioning of the feeder, when completed. By thinking through these practicalities in-depth, they develop their ability to design in detail, evaluate

their work as they go along and modify the design and making accordingly. Pupils often incorporate the knowledge and understanding gained in other subjects to good effect. For example, Year 4 pupils make models of lighthouses, using simple electrical circuits for illumination, and incorporate electric motors to power the rear axle of wheeled vehicles. Pupils make sound progress in designing and evaluation, but progress in making is sometimes unsatisfactory when pupils are not taught the skills needed to make a good quality product. This is partly due to the system of planning. Design and technology tasks are based on a series of topics. Whilst this provides a purpose for work, teachers do not benefit from being able to refer to a scheme of work giving guidance on how skills should be developed and assessed.

- 1 Teaching overall is broadly satisfactory, but with some strengths. Introductions to design and technology projects often begin with visits. These are effective in broadening the pupils' experiences and make a valuable contribution to their understanding of the use of technology in everyday life. For example, during a visit to a college of higher education, Reception pupils experienced mixing mortar and helped to build walls. Photographs taken during visits form the basis of productive class discussions. This helps pupils to recall their observations and positively influences their designing. On rare occasions, teaching is unsatisfactory. This happens in Year 1 when the aims of the lesson are not clear. This sometimes results in too many different activities being organised for the teacher to oversee. Whilst pupils' attitudes to design and technology are usually good, concentration and application suffers when they do not see the purpose of the activity. Teachers generally have a secure understanding of the subject and ensure that attention is paid to designing before making. A wide range of materials is provided from which pupils can select and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their work and make improvements as they go along. These strategies are apparent in the good quality completed projects on puppets, bird-feeders and lighthouses.

Geography

- 157 Standards in geography are similar to those found in other schools, and have been maintained since the last inspection. There are some significant weaknesses within the subject. Only one full lesson was observed. Other evidence was drawn from work samples, testing pupils in both key stages, scrutiny of planning and discussions with staff.
- 158 Some aspects of pupils' knowledge and understanding are well developed, such as local knowledge and understanding of the weather. Other elements of the curriculum, such as pupils' awareness of the nature of different places, are not fully secure and work is sometimes undertaken at a basic level which does not sufficiently challenge pupils.
- 159 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a good understanding of why their local settlement grew up where it did and explain the derivation of its name. They give examples of ways to improve an environment, such as removing litter and restricting access to cars. Most talk confidently about the nearest cities and where they are located, but have little idea of the population or scale of settlement. Through their study of weather, they have a good knowledge of features which are regularly measured, such as cloud cover or wind speed and direction, and explain how these are recorded. In their work on climate, upper juniors have studied the broad climatic regions of the world, but not all pupils use the correct terms to label maps. Pupils' work on differing environments has enabled them to identify rain forest and desert areas on a world map. They describe features of the landscape, its vegetation and animal species in detail, but their insight into

the nature of life for humans in such environments is limited.

- 160 Key Stage 1 pupils have built up a satisfactory knowledge of their locality and talk in detail about main features, such as shops, the park and the petrol station. They explain that a piece of waste ground was once the site of a factory and that it is now proposed to build a large number of houses there. Most pupils talk about their route to school and some draw a sketch map to illustrate their journey. Early mapping skills are developed satisfactorily in Year 2, as pupils build on recent work in sketching the school's woodland area. Effective teaching in the Year 2 lesson observed, helped the pupils to understand the concept of using a symbols key to represent the area, and the majority were able to produce a well scaled and recognisable map. Pupils' attitudes to their work in the lesson were good. They were attentive to the teacher's introduction and showed good levels of concentration and perseverance as they co-operated over their tasks.
- 161 Progress for all groups of pupils, particularly at Key Stage 2, is satisfactory overall but is inconsistent between year groups. There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, the elements of the subject are split up to be taught as part of school topics and this results in a fragmented approach to providing skills and knowledge. Secondly, when two-year groups are set the same tasks, it is left to individual teachers to find ways of stretching the older pupils sufficiently. This does not always happen, as teachers' planning does not clearly set out expectations for what each year group should be able to achieve. Also, some of the geography resources are old and in poor condition. There is a need for more maps and aerial photographs and better quality globes and atlases. These resource limitations were featured in the last report, and there has been no significant development within the subject since then.
- 162 Assessment of pupils' attainment in geography is unsatisfactory and consequently the planning of future work for groups or individuals is not always appropriate to meet their needs.
- 163 The newly appointed co-ordinator has produced an outline plan for the subject's development. This acknowledges the current shortcomings within the organisation and resourcing of the subject, and provides a realistic framework for future improvement.

History

- 164 Standards in history are similar to those found in most schools, and have been maintained since the last inspection.
- 165 Older pupils in Key Stage 2 have a good knowledge of their local area. They successfully recount why Barrowford grew up in the place that it did, and that its name is connected to burials and a river crossing. They talk confidently about changes which have taken place in local industry over the last hundred years. For example, they suggest reasons why some factories are no longer there. They have a satisfactory recall of some of the periods in history they have previously studied, for example, describing accurately some of the features of the Spanish Armada or the Reformation.
- 166 Younger Key Stage 2 pupils show a growing understanding of the passing of time and know that it is divided into distinct periods. Some Year 3 pupils know the meaning of BC and AD. Year 4 pupils describe similarities and differences between the Romans and Ancient Greeks, for example, that 'Romans invaded other countries, whilst the Ancient

Greeks only fought when it was necessary'. Throughout the school, teachers make good use of time-lines to help pupils develop their sense of chronology.

- 167 All pupils in Key Stage 1, including those with special needs, make satisfactory progress over time. They show a good understanding of life now and in the past. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to make satisfactory progress as they begin to develop research skills. Younger Key Stage 2 pupils show understanding of how clues can be found in writings and objects from the past, whilst older pupils understand the importance of reliable sources of information.
- 168 Pupils' attitudes to history are satisfactory. They are keen to answer questions and present their own ideas. They listen well, show interest and most persevere with written tasks.
- 169 In the lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was satisfactory in all lower junior classes and good in a Year 2 class. There were no history lessons time-tabled in Years 5 and 6. Teaching in the Year 2 lesson captured the pupils' imagination by involving the class in asking questions of another pupil who was acting out the role of an orphan. Interesting storytelling was followed by activities well matched to pupils' differing abilities, which promoted good progress for all. Whilst lessons observed in Years 3 and 4 were well prepared, teaching was satisfactory. Some average and lower attaining pupils in Year 3 made little progress in the activities because of a poor match of task to ability. Many of the research books and articles provided were the same for both year groups and proved to be too difficult for them. Better progress was made during the introductions to the lessons, particularly in one Year 3 class, where the teacher's thoughtful explanations helped improve pupils' knowledge. At other times, particularly in Year 4, the introduction served only to set the task. Teachers make good links between subjects, for example in art, with Tudor portraits by Year 6 pupils and Roman mosaics in Year 3.

Information and communication technology

156

- 170 Attainment in information technology is in line with standards expected of pupils aged seven and eleven, and progress is satisfactory throughout, including that of pupils with special educational needs. Standards were judged satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection. The school has more than kept pace with national developments and the subject has a high priority. Determined efforts are being made to make the best use of the current national initiative and standards are rising sharply.

- 171 By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils understand that computers help them to express their ideas in different ways. They type in short pieces of information, including stories and accounts, and understand how to use the cursor key to delete or change words. With very little support from the teacher, they save and retrieve their work. Most pupils understand how computers store and sort data. They know how to select different programs and run them from the program menu. They conduct surveys of favourite foods, feed the information into simple data processing programs and successfully print out bar graphs of the results. Most pupils are beginning to use computers to help them solve simple problems, for example, to locate the correct European country by referring to clues, such as the currency used. To do this they draw on their reading skills to good effect. Progress through Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and often good in Year 2, where pupils are specifically taught keyboard skills. Frequent opportunities to use computers in all classes are successful in developing pupils' confidence and independence, but when

three pupils work together on one machine, opportunities for all of them to operate the program are limited and they make slower progress.

- 172 By the end of Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils have a good appreciation of the purpose and value of information technology to society. They know that computers are used not only to store information but also send messages and control actions. Most pupils are competent in word processing. They use drop-down menus effectively to select, open print or save files. They combine text and pictures by cutting and pasting in order to create different presentations. Most pupils understand how to build a database, for example, to classify different food products according to their fat or salt content. They are beginning to make systematic searches by framing precise questions to recover the information they need. Pupils make sound and consistent progress through Key Stage 2 and progress is accelerating now that specific teaching of information technology takes place in every class. Pupils remember previous work well and build on it successfully from year to year. Pupils often use information technology as a learning resource, for example, CD-Roms to research information on historical periods, such as Ancient Egypt and Romans. Progress in controlling events is weaker. Although younger pupils operate programmable toys competently, older pupils are unfamiliar with processes such as sensing and displaying physical data. However, the school is aware of this and plans to remedy the weakness are in place.
- 173 Pupils have good attitudes to using information technology and demonstrate confidence and purpose when given tasks to complete independently. For example, they follow planned rotas and organise themselves to use the computer at the appropriate times without having to be reminded. They derive enjoyment from the tasks set and develop confidence. They work together well and show patience explaining to others the skills they have learnt. All pupils show respect for equipment. They take pride in their own achievements and those of others and persevere in the face of difficulties, usually resolving problems themselves eventually.
- 174 The teaching of information technology is satisfactory overall. There are instances of good teaching in both key stages. Most teachers are confident in the teaching of this subject and information technology has a secure place in most classrooms. A particular strength of the teaching is the planning and organisation of lessons. Information technology is taught to the whole class, with the teacher using the computer to demonstrate how programs operate. These lessons build effectively from week to week. Questioning is very well used to help pupils to link new learning with previous work and helps teachers to gauge the pupils' level of understanding. Another successful strategy is the system of pupils teaching each other. This is done under the careful guidance of teachers, where projects are organised to enable pupils to pass on their skills. Instructions are often displayed next to the computer to remind pupils of the skills taught earlier in the week or term. Planning is done in twin year groups and skills and knowledge possessed by one of the team are shared effectively with others. Expertise is available and used well to support the teaching. For example, a carefully constructed scheme of work has recently been provided incorporating software specifically selected for each age group. Information technology is used effectively to strengthen the teaching of English through word processing. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from spelling and sentence writing programs, but currently software is insufficient in this area.
- 175 The subject is well led and the recently appointed co-ordinator fully understands the school's current needs and is planning effective strategies to develop the subject further. Time to monitor and evaluate the work being done has been made available. This has helped the co-ordinator to focus on the specific needs. Assessment procedures are not

yet in place to ensure that pupils' progress is carefully tracked from year-to-year. However, the co-ordinator is developing checklists of skills for pupils or teachers to tick off as they are acquired. New machines have replaced dated unreliable computers and specially selected software has been loaded on to the main drive to reduce loading problems.

Music

156

176 Standards of work seen throughout the school are in line with those expected of most pupils of their age. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. There has been a satisfactory improvement in standards since the last inspection at both key stages in the number of pupils attaining standards that are in line with national expectations.

177

Pupils make satisfactory progress in composing and performing in all classes. Pupils are successfully encouraged from an early age to compose and play different rhythms using percussion instruments or by clapping and, as a result, pupils at both key stages show a satisfactory awareness of rhythm, beat and tempo. For example, Year 3 pupils were observed clapping different rhythm patterns they had identified in an American folk song. They then effectively combined the various patterns to perform an accompaniment to the song. Year 4 pupils successfully performed an accompaniment to the same folk song using untuned percussion. Most pupils successfully follow simple non-standard notation and play percussion instruments confidently. Reception pupils were observed playing and resting percussion as their teacher pointed to non-standard symbols on a sheet of paper. These young pupils showed a growing awareness of performance as they successfully followed the symbols. Pupils in Year 5 were observed following rhythm patterns, consisting of quavers, crotchets and minims, printed on cards. They effectively transferred these skills to patterns of their own composition, based on food names, pop groups and personal names. They then performed their compositions confidently in front of the rest of the class. Progress in singing is good. Diction is often clear. Pupils at both key stages sing tunefully and with confidence in lessons and assemblies as they respond positively to the many opportunities they receive to sing hymns and songs. Pupils in all classes know a satisfactory range of nursery rhymes, songs and hymns from memory, some of which they perform with actions.

178

Pupils have good attitudes to learning and show commitment to extra-curricular opportunities. Many pupils show enthusiasm and confidence in music. They participate well and enjoy their lessons. They often work with concentration and collaborate well in groups. Reception pupils are excited by the prospect of playing percussion instruments but wait patiently for their turn. Pupils treat instruments with respect.

179

The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory. About three-quarters of lessons are good. In the best lessons, teachers use their good subject knowledge and expertise to plan several activities within lessons, so that lessons are interesting and motivating for pupils. They stimulate pupils with their own enthusiasm and enjoyment of the subject. Teachers use praise effectively to encourage reluctant pupils and to achieve high standards. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to consolidate and practise skills. Where lessons show less progress, this is usually due to teachers lacking confidence in teaching the subject and consequently lessons have a slower pace and expectations are low. Opportunities are missed to draw pupils' attention to musical elements, such as dynamics or phrasing.

- 1 Music is taught to all classes on a regular basis but does not figure strongly in the life of the school. This significantly reduces the opportunities available for pupils for their spiritual and creative development. For example, there are very few occasions for pupils to take part in a wide range of musical events. Visits by musicians to the school to demonstrate live music or to work with pupils are infrequent. The new co-ordinator is aware of this and has formulated a useful development plan to raise the status of the subject. She has successfully started a school choir, which meets regularly, and has increased the numbers of pupils learning to play the recorder. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and is working hard to develop and maintain high standards of music. The subject is supported by a helpful policy and commercial scheme of work. However, there is currently no opportunity for the co-ordinator to monitor progress of the subject or to work with other teachers. There is limited evidence of assessment being used to identify pupils' levels of attainment and build on knowledge and skills acquired in general music lessons.

Physical education

180

- 181 Standards in physical education are similar to those found in most schools and pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. During the previous inspection, many pupils were found to be underachieving, particularly in dance and games. This is no longer the case and standards have now improved. By the time they leave, most pupils are confident swimmers. All Year 3 and 4 pupils have swimming lessons during the school year and make good progress. Most pupils swim at least 25 metres by the end of Key Stage 2.

- 182 Key Stage 1 pupils are developing appropriate levels of body control and co-ordination. For example, they use space well to skip, leap and jump without colliding with others or overbalancing. They move rhythmically to music and interpret themes imaginatively. For example, Year 2 pupils create different landscapes, such as mountains, and form effective group configurations of skyscrapers. Pupils are beginning to develop an understanding of sequences by adding new movements to those learnt previously. Satisfactory progress is made in most lessons because teachers usually explain the tasks carefully and give pupils time to practice and refine their movements. However, little progress is sometimes made in Year 1 when there is no clear purpose in the lesson and pupils merely carry out a set of tasks without any specific teaching or learning. Despite this, safety awareness is prominent in all lessons and pupils make better progress in this area than they did during the last inspection.

- 183 When they reach the Key Stage 2 classes, pupils are competent and disciplined in the way they handle equipment and show control in their movements. Gymnastics skills are well developed, as demonstrated by Year 4 pupils. They practise, improve and refine their performance, for example by increasing their muscle tension to execute well-controlled jumps and stable landings. Pupils work well with each other, as demonstrated in Year 6 when they help each other to set up equipment, test and record fitness levels in terms of stamina, suppleness and strength. They sustain energetic activity across a range of tasks and explain correctly why the heart-rate increases during exercise and why it is important to warm-up and cool-down before and after activity. Progress through the Key Stage 2 is satisfactory, and often good in Years 4 and 6, where teachers' knowledge of the coaching of specific skills is more secure.

- 184 Good teaching is seen in several classes, but is best in Year 2 and in Key Stage 2. Teachers generally approach lessons with enthusiasm and good organisation. This helps

pupils to develop good attitudes, understand the value of teamwork and value the comments made about the quality of their work. Attention is paid to the teaching of skills, particularly in Key Stage 2, and pupils are given plenty of opportunities to practise and improve them. However, lessons do not always build systematically on skills learnt in previous years. Physical education lessons are planned in two-year cycles from the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. This ensures good coverage of all aspects, but the skills to be taught are not set out in a carefully sequenced scheme of work with clear assessment procedures. In Year 2, teachers make good use of taped radio broadcasts and stop the tape to emphasise the important teaching points. Almost all teachers have a sound knowledge of the subject and ensure their lessons follow a clear structure. For example, from an early stage in Key Stage 1, pupils are introduced to warm-up and cool-down exercises and the reasons for them, so that by the time they reach the junior classes, they have become routine. Good teaching was seen in Year 6 lessons on health related exercise. The teacher's planning identified the development of key skills. Particular strengths included clear instructions and well timed interventions to improve quality and to correct technique. Whilst the teaching of skills receives appropriate attention, creativity is often under emphasised, particularly in the junior classes. This sometimes results in a lack of originality.

Religious education

- 185 Standards of attainment in religious education by the end of both key stages are satisfactory and are in line with the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The school has improved the quality of discussion in lessons since the last inspection. Progress is satisfactory throughout the school.
- 186 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a satisfactory awareness of the importance of belonging to a group, such as a family or a school. They know the importance of respect and value for others. They know some Bible stories, for example, the story of Moses in the bullrushes, and appreciate that the Bible is a special book for Christians. They know that other religions have different special days and books and call their God by a different name. They understand that people have different beliefs and worship in different ways. For example, following a detailed account, supported by artefacts from their teacher about the life and worship of Muslims, a class of Year 2 pupils had a good factual knowledge of the traditions surrounding the reading of the Koran and the reasons for the use of prayer mats. Pupils show a satisfactory knowledge of festivals from other cultures and religions. Pupils generally have a satisfactory knowledge and appreciation of the major faiths and know some stories associated with them. For example, pupils in a Year 1 class related with considerable accuracy the story of Ganesha, the Hindu god.
- 187 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils understand the meaning of a symbol and know that Sikhs often use the symbol of Khanda. They show a satisfactory knowledge of the life and ministry of Jesus, together with stories from the Old Testament. These stories are used effectively to promote a good moral code and to foster a belief in the power of God. Pupils regularly express their own feelings, belief and values. The quality of discussions is often of a high standard. For example, a class of Year 6 pupils talked openly and confidently about a range of themes, such as race relations, the death penalty and cruelty to animals, as they gave reasons for placing the themes in priority order. Many pupils showed a mature understanding of world problems, such as the troubles in Kosovo, as they talked about their beliefs. Scrutiny of work shows writing of a good standard about 'My Perfect World' and 'Miracles'.

- 188 Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress throughout the school in developing an understanding of some of the religious traditions of the world. They make satisfactory progress in planned elements of Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism in addition to their main focus of Christianity. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 often make good progress in the development of spiritual awareness as a result of their confidence in talking in front of others about their feelings and beliefs. Values and beliefs to enhance pupils' lives are being satisfactorily established during their time in school.
- 189 The attitude of pupils in assembly is mainly good and often very good. They move to and from their classrooms in an orderly manner and enjoy taking part when given the opportunity. In religious education lessons, pupils' attitudes are nearly always good. They listen attentively, participate enthusiastically and enjoy stories and the activities planned for them. In Key Stage 2, a small minority of pupils with behavioural problems sometimes spoil the good atmosphere for learning established by teachers in lessons, especially when the lessons involve talking personally about feelings and beliefs and this reduces the effectiveness of the lessons for others. However, the regular good behaviour in all classes contributes significantly to pupils' learning.
- 190 The quality of teaching in assemblies, which relate to the provision for religious education, is at least satisfactory and often good. It is best when teachers give appropriate amounts of time for pupils' personal reflection. However, this is sometimes not long enough. In lessons, the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory, with examples of good teaching, at both key stages. Teachers use appropriate stories and activities, which relate to their own lives. For example, pupils in a Reception class fully understood their teacher's message about the importance of belonging to a group as she sensitively related this to the situation of a pupil who had recently joined the class. Resources, such as artefacts from other religions, are used effectively. Teachers have a satisfactory subject knowledge, and this means they make relevant teaching points as the lesson progresses. Class sessions at the end of lessons contribute effectively to consolidating and extending pupils' learning. Teachers use questions well and this leads to many pupils contributing during lessons. Pupils' contributions to discussions are encouraged and valued by staff. This is also an effective tool for assessment, but other forms of assessment are insufficiently addressed.
- 191 Discussion time, called 'circle time' is provided for the development of personal and social skills. It contributes effectively to pupils' self-awareness and the acceptance of differences between people. The daily acts of worship make a satisfactory contribution to the acceptance of other people's values.
- 192 The detailed Agreed Syllabus provides good guidance for teachers on the content of religious education. Teachers' planning is generally good and they often link religious education effectively to other subjects, such as English, history and geography. However, the practice of teachers from two-year groups planning similar themes sometimes results in a lack of challenge for pupils, especially those in the older year group. Resources are carefully chosen to support teaching. The co-ordinator manages the resources well and has organised the Agreed Syllabus into easily accessible units, which helps teachers with their planning.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- The inspection was carried out by a team of 6 inspectors over 24 days.
- During the period of the inspection, 109 lessons or part-lessons were observed, adding up to a total of just over 64 hours.
- Inspectors attended school assemblies and registration periods in all year groups.
- Samples of pupils' work were examined for each class for the current and previous academic year.
- A comprehensive range of school documentation including the school development plan, teachers' records, all curriculum planning documents, the records kept on pupils, sample reports sent to parents and the school register were inspected.
- In each class, inspectors listened to a sample of pupils read. Pupils were examined in their mathematical knowledge.
- Discussions were held with members of staff, governors, pupils, parents and administrative assistant.
- A parents' meeting held prior to the inspection was attended by 12 parents, at which they expressed their views about the work of the school.
- The responses to the 75 questionnaires completed by parents were taken into account during the inspection.
- The budget figures and the most recent audit report were examined.

DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR - Y6	339	8	16	65

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR - Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	15.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.16

Education support staff (YR - Y6)

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked each week	122.2

Financial data

Financial year:

1998

	£
Total Income	490,558
Total Expenditure	504,243
Expenditure per pupil	1,370.23
Balance brought forward from previous year	-13,685
Balance carried forward to next year	-17,655

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

350

Number of questionnaires returned:

61

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	36	56	2	0	3
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	46	46	3	2	2
The school handles complaints from parents well	11	52	21	3	2
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	30	62	7	2	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	33	56	7	5	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	31	56	5	7	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	38	39	16	7	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	31	51	5	5	8
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	31	54	15	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	34	56	8	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	62	33	5	0	0