

INSPECTION REPORT

Primet County Primary School

Colne

Lancashire

Unique Reference Number :119173

Headteacher : Mrs A. Clements

Reporting inspector : Mr M. Hardstaffe
5088

Dates of inspection : 11/01/99 – 14/01/99

Under OFSTED contract number: 704307

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school :	Infant and Junior
Type of control :	County
Age range of pupils :	4 - 11
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
School address :	Primet County Primary School Tatton Street Colne Lancashire BB8 8JE
Telephone number :	01282 864607
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Appropriate authority :	Lancashire Education Authority
Name of chair of governors :	Mr Trevor Walsh
Date of previous inspection :	23/05/1994 – 27/05/1994

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr Michael Hardstaffe, RgI	Special Educational Needs Areas of Learning for the Under-fives	Characteristics of the School Leadership and Management
	English Religious Education	Efficiency
Mr John Rowley, Lay Inspector		Attitudes, Behaviour and Personal Development Attendance
		Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare Partnership with Parents and the Community
		Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources
Dr. Kenneth Bryan	Science History Geography Physical Education	Attainment and Progress Curriculum and Assessment Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development
Mr Alan Hardwicke	Equal Opportunities Mathematics Design Technology	Teaching
	Information Technology Art Music	

[this table should list all team members and also indicate, in the subject column, the team member with responsibility for Under fives, Special educational needs, Equal opportunities and English as a second language]

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- care for and welfare of children
- partnership links created with parents and the community
- teaching of the Under-fives
- use of its learning resources and accommodation
- promotes the personal development of pupils

Where the school has weaknesses

- standards achieved in the core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science
- insufficient writing takes place
- checking up on what pupils have learned and then building on this
- taking practical actions to reach targets set for pupils' progress
- pupils' progress in History, Geography and Religious Education

The school has many strengths and pupils are well cared for as individuals. However, the school needs to do more to raise standards of achievement. The weaknesses 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 improved the quality of its written documents and now has a satisfactory development plan. It has improved its provision for pupils with special educational needs. However, it has not improved academic standards overall which remain below average, even when compared with similar schools. The quality of teaching has nevertheless improved since the 1994 inspection.

Standards in subjects

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1998 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	<i>Key</i>	
English	E	E	<i>well above average</i>	A
Mathematics	E	E	<i>above average</i>	B
Science	E	D	<i>average</i>	C
			<i>below average</i>	D
			<i>well below average</i>	E

The table shows that pupils at Primet scored well below the national average in 1998 in tests taken in English, Mathematics and Science. When compared with pupils in similar schools, performance was well below average in English and Mathematics and below average in Science.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
English	Good	Good	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Science	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Information Technology	Not seen	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Religious Education	Not seen	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Other subjects	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Teaching is at least satisfactory in 88% of lessons: in 36% it is good and in 4% very good. However, teaching is less than satisfactory in 12% of lessons. Teaching is generally good with the under-fives. In Key Stage 1 it is rather better than in Key Stage 2 where there is greater variability in the quality of teaching.

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	Satisfactory overall. In most lessons behaviour is good but in a minority of lessons behaviour is unsatisfactory.
Attendance	Satisfactory: similar to the national average
Ethos*	Most pupils are keen to work hard but a minority can disrupt others' learning. Relationships are generally good.
Leadership and management	Management of pupils, staff and relationships is good but monitoring of standards of attainment is not effective enough.
Curriculum	Sound and well-balanced; satisfactory number of clubs and sports activities; some weaknesses in assessment.
Pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory provision made; pupils are given good individual support.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Satisfactory in all areas, especially in moral and social development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory in all respects; staff keep up to date and learning resources are used well.
Value for money	Very satisfactory

* *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
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• standards of work• approachability of staff• good behaviour of children• prompt action by staff to solve problems• help and guidance available to children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• only a minority of parents support the• arrangements for wet playtimes• insufficient homework• not enough information from the school

Inspectors' judgements support parents views on the approachability of staff, the help offered to children and the prompt action taken to solve problems. Children's progress would be improved if more parents responded to the school's attempts to involve them in the education of their children. However, inspectors think that parents are over-estimating their children's attainments and while most children are well-behaved, a minority can be disruptive and spoil things for the others. The arrangements for wet playtimes are satisfactory and good information is supplied for parents by the school. Homework is satisfactory for those pupils who request it.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to move the school on to its next phase of development, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

raise standards in the core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science, by focussing on writing throughout the school, reading at Key Stage 2, the understanding and application of Mathematics, and Science generally (paragraphs 3, 6, 9, 14, 16, 108, 112, 119-121, 131-142)

raise standards of progress in History, Geography and Religious Education by ensuring that pupils are given greater opportunities to write about or otherwise respond to topics presented, thus reinforcing their learning and developing their literacy skills through these subjects (paragraphs 4, 108, 157-159, 163-164, 189-190)

ensure that the planned curriculum is delivered and assessed in such a way that pupils make more effective progress and the results of assessment are used to inform subsequent pupils learning (paragraphs 34, 42, 43, 44, 68, 117, 128, 141, 153, 165)

reflect more critically on what might be done to raise standards and to achieve targets set for pupil attainment by proposing practical actions which are carried through by staff and monitored by the governing body, with the support of the local education authority. (paragraphs 11, 17, 30, 44, 64, 65, 66, 192)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. Primet County Primary School is maintained by Lancashire County Council and is situated on the outskirts of Colne, a former cotton mill town in East Lancashire. It is a mixed school of 227 pupils (121 boys and 106 girls) aged from four to eleven years. There are nine full-time teachers including the headteacher and the school is organised into seven classes, one for each year group. The school admits four year old children at the start of the Autumn Term before their fifth birthday. Tests taken on entry to the school indicate that the majority are well below average in attainment compared with four year olds nationally. Six children in the school have statements of special educational need (2.6%), a proportion above the local authority and national averages. The proportion of ethnic minority pupils is 8.8%, similar to the national average of 10.1%. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is 35.7%, well above the national average. The proportion of adults in the area with higher education qualifications and high status jobs is low and almost half of the children come from single parent families. A significant proportion of pupils move schools.

2. In this context the school seeks to provide a caring environment where parents are welcome and where children have the opportunity to develop their potential socially and academically. Recently the school has sought to ensure that targets set for pupils' learning are achieved through the further development of links with parents and through enlisting their support as partners in the education of their children

Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	20	12	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	15	13	17
	Girls	10	9	10
	Total	25	22	27
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	78	69	84
	National	80	81	85

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	12	17	17
	Girls	8	11	8
	Total	20	28	25
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	63	88	78
	National	81	85	86

¹

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attainment at Key Stage 2²

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	19	17	36

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	5	9	12
	Girls	7	3	8
	Total	12	12	20
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	34	34	57
	National	65	58	69

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	N/a	N/a	N/a
	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	School	5.0
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised	School	0.9
	National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school
age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	1

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	4.00
Satisfactory or better	88.00
Less than satisfactory	12.00

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

3. Overall standards of attainment at both key stages are unsatisfactory in relation to national expectations. In the three core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science at both key stages standards are unsatisfactory.

4. In Key Stage 1 standards of attainment are satisfactory in Design Technology, Information Technology, Art, Music and Physical Education, but unsatisfactory in History, Geography and Religious Education.

5. In Key Stage 2 standards of attainment are satisfactory in Design Technology, Information Technology, History, Geography, Art, Music and Physical Education. Standards in Religious Education are unsatisfactory.

6. Taking into account progress made by the Under fives and by pupils in Key Stage 1, pupils' progress overall is satisfactory, but is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2 because limited progress is made in English, Science, History, Geography and Religious Education.

7. Although pupils enter Reception with well below expected standards of attainment, there is clear evidence of satisfactory progress being made by the Under fives.

8. The strength which has been identified by the present inspection is the good teaching received by the Under fives and the satisfactory progress they are making given their low levels of attainment on entry.

9. Weaknesses which are evident at both key stages are below average attainment in all core subjects and the failure to extend the performance of those pupils who are above average in attainment in all curriculum areas.

10. When the school was last inspected in May 1994 the inspectors concluded that standards overall varied from average to below average in relation to national norms. In relation to pupils' capabilities, standards were satisfactory in Science, Technology, Art, History and Physical Education at both key stages and in English, Mathematics and Geography at Key Stage 1. Standards were unsatisfactory in Music and Religious Education at both key stages and in English, Mathematics and Geography at Key Stage 2.

11. The governors responded to the 1994 report with an action plan designed to raise standards where they were unsatisfactory. This plan proposed revisions to schemes of work and to monitor progress. National Curriculum assessments show that improved levels of attainment have not been maintained consistently since then.

12. Taking together the three years, 1996 - 1998, attainment and progress have been variable across both key stages. In 1996 at Key Stage 1 pupils' average standards of attainment in reading and writing were close to the national average, but the improvement indicated in 1997 was not maintained in 1998 when results showed pupils' attainment was below national expectations. Similarly the improvement in Mathematics identified in 1997 has not been maintained: attainment in this subject was also below average.

13. The same three year period reveals for pupils in Key Stage 2 even more variability and unsatisfactory attainment and progress. In English standards of attainment have fallen steadily since 1996 while the national averages show a gradual rise in standards. Although there was a discernible improvement in Mathematics between 1996 and 1997, consistent with the national trend, standards in 1998 were well below those for the school in 1996 and the national average for 1998. Results in Science show an improvement between 1996 and 1997, with similar levels of attainment in 1998. Compared with national expectations standards were well below average.

14. When these pupils are compared with children in similar schools in comparable social contexts their attainment at Key Stage 1 in reading and Mathematics was close to expectations, but below expectation for writing. Making the same comparison at Key Stage 2 in 1998 pupils' attainment in English was very low, well below expectation for Mathematics and below expectation for Science.

15. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in accordance with their individual education plans. The monitoring of progress is carried out and recorded on individual education plans, but the periodic reviews are not always carried out on time.

16. Standards of literacy across the curriculum are just satisfactory in reading but unsatisfactory in writing, but there is evidence to suggest that the school's commitment to improving literacy standards will make a significant all round improvement. Numeracy is also satisfactory, but the application of data handling skills in other areas of the curriculum, especially Science and Geography, could be further developed.

17. The overall picture since the last inspection is that attainment remains below national expectations in both key stages and has deteriorated in some key areas. When compared with pupils in similar contexts, attainment generally is still below expectation. Progress has been inconsistent and unsatisfactory. The action plan adopted by the governors in 1994 has not been effective in significantly raising standards.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

18. The attitudes of pupils to their work are very satisfactory overall. Most are able to concentrate well and in particular, they listen carefully to most of the teachers. During individual and groupwork they develop their capacity for personal study and some pupils completed demanding learning tasks during lessons. In a minority of lessons pupils did not pay sufficient attention, nor did they concentrate on their work. The attitudes of pupils to their lessons are related directly to the skill of the teachers in securing their attention and in providing learning tasks which motivate them to concentrate, to persevere and to complete the set tasks. The pupils' capacity for personal study is well developed within the framework of a lesson but is not sufficiently extended over longer periods.

19. The behaviour of children is satisfactory overall. In most lessons pupils behave well, responding to teachers who clearly set out what kinds of behaviour are acceptable. In a minority of lessons some pupils challenge the teacher's authority and where the teacher is less skilled in securing and maintaining good behaviour, inattention increases to the point where almost half of a class is failing to get on with the required tasks. However, these instances are unusual.

20. Most parents are happy with the behaviour of children and the attitudes they show while at school. Observations of children at lunchtimes, break-times, coming to and leaving school, and while they move about the school confirm that most pupils are well-behaved. Lunchtime assistants who supervise children in the dining hall and in the playground speak supportively of the generally good behaviour of pupils, while saying that allowance should be made for greater exuberance than would be permitted in the classroom. Procedures for dealing with misbehaviour, including bullying, are well understood and when necessary pupils' names are entered into a discipline book which is effectively monitored and followed up by the headteacher.

21. Children respect school property and are polite and trustworthy. Some converse easily with visitors while others can be shy or unsure at first.

22. Children learn to form constructive relationships with each other and with teachers and other adults in the school. Adults set good examples of thoughtful and considerate behaviour, to which children respond well. Adults also positively encourage appropriate social behaviour, praising co-operative effort. The result is that the school succeeds in establishing a sense that all members of its community are valued, that their interests can be shared and that problems they face can be shared so that help and sympathy can be offered. The pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds are well integrated into the school and make positive contributions to its life.

23. The school succeeds in ensuring that most children develop a positive view of themselves by encouraging good work and effort and by rewarding achievements which represent good progress for the individual child. Although some pupils are from disadvantaged backgrounds, the measures in place to alleviate the effects of homes which do not offer strong support to the learning of the children are effective in promoting their personal development. For example, the periods of quiet reading time provided at the start of many sessions help pupils to learn to value books; and the opportunities structured into the lessons for older pupils to help younger children are successful in developing

responsibility and caring attitudes. Parents also recognise that the school has a caring atmosphere and a beneficial effect on the behaviour of their children.

Attendance

24. Attendance and punctuality at the school are satisfactory, registers are properly marked and absences are followed up. The education welfare officer is appropriately involved where children are persistently late or when non-attendance has not been explained.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

25. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall throughout the school, but this finding is made up of a wide range of teaching, especially at Key Stage 2. In the school as a whole, in 88% of lessons observed, teaching was satisfactory or better, with almost 36% being good, and 4% very good. 12% of lessons were less than satisfactory. Comparing these figures with those of the previous Ofsted Report, the overall judgement then was that teaching was satisfactory at both key stages. At that time 70% of lessons were satisfactory or better, whereas now the figure is 88%. This is a significant improvement, although there is still variation at both key stages.

26. At Key Stage 1 teaching ranges from very good to unsatisfactory, but is satisfactory overall. In 93% of lessons observed teaching was satisfactory or better, with 33% being good and 13% very good. 7% of teaching was unsatisfactory. At Key Stage 2 there is a greater variation in the quality of teaching. Some 82% of lessons are satisfactory or better, with just over 39% being good, but 10.7% of lessons are unsatisfactory, and a further 7% poor.

27. Very good teaching at Key Stage 1 includes some English and Physical Education lessons, while at Key Stage 2 good teaching is found in some lessons in all subjects except Religious Education. Poor and unsatisfactory teaching is found in some English, Religious Education, Mathematics, Science and Design Technology lessons.

28. Where the quality of teaching is good, this is accompanied by the following: confident teaching based on sound subject knowledge; the ability of teachers to communicate enthusiasm for the subject matter to their pupils; work which is well matched to the abilities of the pupils; high expectations and good class management. An example of very effective teaching occurred in an English lesson when the teacher used a pointer as children read the words from a Big Book, ensuring they were aware of the link between the spoken and written word by pausing and re-starting in a random fashion. This technique appealed to the sense of humour of the children and added both to their enjoyment and their learning. Most teachers expect their pupils to work hard, behave themselves well and do their best.

29. In lessons where the teaching is less than satisfactory, and even in some judged to be satisfactory overall, teachers sometimes fail to sustain the interest of their pupils for the whole length of the lesson. Such lessons often begin well but pupils' interest and attention gradually fade. In a minority of lessons seen pupils are poorly managed and this leads to poor behaviour. These lessons are often composed of activities which are poorly matched to the interests and abilities of the pupils, and are not planned in sufficient detail. There is also too little provision of different work for the higher ability, average and less able pupils.

30. It is a significant finding of this report that, whilst the overall standard of teaching is satisfactory, and has remained so since the last Ofsted Report, this has done little to raise standards of attainment, particularly in the core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science. The school needs to examine its current approach and seek to remedy this. Individual subject paragraphs of this report may provide starting points for this process.

31. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally satisfactory, except in specific areas of Science, Information Technology and Design Technology, where the school is aware of the need for continued in-service training and support.

32. The planning of pupils' work generally falls short of providing a clear path forward for individuals or groups. There is some confusion between medium and short-term planning, so that links back to the schemes of work are not clear. This means that the sequence of lessons in many different subjects is not progressive, but rather a series of disjointed learning episodes. These are usually worthwhile activities in their own right, but do not necessarily build sufficiently clearly on previous work, nor lead logically to the next.

33. Teachers' methods and classroom organisation are generally appropriate for the ages of their pupils, although in the minority of poorly taught lessons inappropriate organisational strategies are a significant contributory factor. Pupils are well managed in the large majority of lessons and classes, but again, in the minority of poor lessons disruptive behaviour is allowed to go unchecked, or is dealt with ineffectively. Time and resources are generally well used. Lessons usually start and finish on time and pupils move purposefully from one activity to the next.

34. Assessment of pupils' attainment is usually carried out informally, except in the case of periodic formal diagnostic tests and national curriculum assessments. These informal assessments are recorded in a variety of ways. Although teachers know their pupils well, they do not generally use assessment outcomes systematically to inform their next steps in teaching. Homework is sometimes given, and then is effective in supporting and extending classroom work, but practice varies from class to class and some opportunities are not taken up.

The curriculum and assessment

35. The curriculum is broadly based and generally achieves a sound balance across all subject areas. Pupils' intellectual and personal development is promoted throughout the school. There are appropriate policies for sex education and Religious Education. National Curriculum requirements are met for all subject areas.

36. Provision for the Under fives is of a very sound quality. Many children under five come from socially disadvantaged homes and start from low levels in terms of abilities and social competences.

37. The liaison practices between the school and its main receiving high schools are sound. Liaison teachers visit the school and Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to visit the receiving high school of their choice. One high school is adjacent to this primary school. Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to use the gymnasium and Information Technology facilities. This is much appreciated by pupils and helps foster positive attitudes towards transfer. Conversations with teachers, pupils and parent governors indicate that they are very satisfied with the quality and detail of information provided.

38. All the evidence made available to the inspection team confirms the effectiveness of equality of access for both boys and girls, and for pupils from ethnic minorities to all areas of school life. This is evident in the basic curriculum and the range of extra-curricular activities which includes sports clubs, dance and peripatetic music tuition.

39. The curriculum is planned and carried out to meet the requirements of all pupils on the school's Code of Practice Special Needs Register, including the additional requirements for Stages two to five. However, the governing body frequently expresses concern that the local education authority does not respond sufficiently quickly to requests for assessment of pupils with special educational needs. In general, though, assessment, recording and reporting arrangements satisfy statutory requirements.

40. The criticisms made in the 1994 Report have been addressed and provision and support for pupils with special educational needs are now much improved and quite satisfactory.

41. There are policy documents and schemes of work for most areas of the curriculum. In the two areas where commercial schemes are used, Mathematics and Music, these are not wholly satisfactory. Some are in the process of revision and others would benefit from editing to provide all teachers with precise programmes to ensure continuity and progression in children's learning.

42. Policy documents are not always dated and reviewed strictly in accordance with the schedule indicated in the school development plan. This is an important matter for the recently established curriculum sub-committee of

the governing body.

43. There is a whole school policy for assessment, recording and reporting. It is not always implemented as specified. The recently introduced 'tracking process' is commendable, but all data need to be entered as stated in the policy so that teachers can plan effectively for progression and continuity in children's learning.

44. Similarly the marking policy (Responding to Pupils' Work) which contains operational guidelines is not implemented consistently across the school. Again, monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of this policy is a matter for the curriculum sub-committee. Annual reports to parents are suitably detailed and meet statutory requirements. Although the action plan formulated following the last inspection addressed the assessment, recording and reporting concerns, the monitoring process to which it refers has failed to identify the inconsistencies and omissions which became apparent during the present inspection.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

45. Overall the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children is satisfactory. Social and moral issues receive greater emphasis than spiritual and cultural.

46. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are encouraged and have the opportunity, and receive sufficient support, to participate fully in all school activities.

47. Statutory requirements for Religious Education and collective worship are met. Pastoral concerns have a higher profile in assemblies than worship. The atmosphere is quiet and reverent. In one school assembly the story of the three wise men was told and illustrated with role play. Pupils were encouraged to reflect on the rivalry created by the birth of a new king and the brutality of Herod's instruction to kill all boys under two years old. The point that not all leaders are good role models was stressed, and Hitler cited as a more recent example.

48. Examples of class and key stage assemblies were also seen. In one, the qualities of good friendship was the central theme and the story was accessible to all. On one occasion, the scheduled class assembly did not take place. Pupils are encouraged to reflect, but no examples of promoting awe and wonder were noted. Most assemblies included a concluding hymn and prayer. Care should be taken to see that these elements are an integral part of an act of worship rather than an obligatory concluding formula.

49. The school is very much concerned to develop a sense of right and wrong. This is apparent in both its policies and practices. The inspection team was impressed by the care and sensitivity which all staff, teaching and non-teaching, showed to all children. In their turn, children generally showed care and concern towards each other, responding positively to the good examples set and the guidance offered.

50. Social development is promoted by a range of merit awards for effort, courtesy and helpfulness. Many pupils were anxious to assist members of the inspection team both in the classrooms and on social occasions such as lunchtime. The importance of pupils helping each other is an integral feature of the school's routines. For example, for a short period each week a small number of Key Stage 2 pupils assist the younger pupils in learning their letter formation.

51. The school is actively involved in developing links with several groups within the wider local community. Educational visits broaden the outlook of the children, for example, to Bolton Museum as part of the Egypt topic. Cultural awareness for many of the pupils is otherwise limited to the wider locality of the school. All staff expressed their appreciation of the contribution made by many Asian heritage families to enriching the school's resources by providing artefacts to enhance pupils' understanding and appreciation of other faiths and cultural activities. The school provides a residential experience for Year 6 pupils to promote social as well as intellectual and physical development.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

52. The school's procedures for supporting and guiding pupils and demonstrating concern for their welfare are good, and are a strength of the school.

53. All staff are aware of the procedures for assessment which have to be followed before a decision is taken to refer a child for support for special needs. Appropriate provision is made for all pupils with special educational needs. Parents are fully informed and involved and good liaison takes place with external agencies. Records of progress are passed on to the next teacher and the next school so that further support can be continued where this is seen to be necessary. The few parents who attended the meeting with inspectors were knowledgeable about these procedures and appreciative of the care taken by the school and the approachability of staff in connection with any concerns they might have about their children.

54. Regular meetings are held by staff to consider the welfare of all children. As a result, the pupils are well known to their teachers and their social and personal needs are well catered for. The monitoring of their personal development, behaviour and attendance has very positive effects in all these areas. Monitoring of academic progress takes place in a variety of ways but is less effective in securing academic improvement than other forms of monitoring which secure wider personal and social development of children.

55. The headteacher is the designated member of staff responsible for child protection and liaison with Social Services and other external agencies. She has been trained in child protection procedures and carefully carries out all the requirements of this role. All staff have been made aware of the procedures to be followed in cases of suspected abuse and published material is readily available for reference. Mid-day welfare supervisors keep a close eye on children and are aware of those occasions when they should report incidents to the headteacher.

56. Supervision of children at breaks and lunchtimes is good, with appropriate provision indoors when the weather is poor. Bullying is not a major issue in the school, but when it occurs, it is reported and the school's policy is applied appropriately and sensitively in order to prevent a recurrence. Parents confirm the effectiveness of the school's response to bullying.

57. Procedures to ensure the health and safety of children are good. Fire practices are held regularly and systems checked; six members of staff are trained in first-aid, the accident register is up to date and properly completed, cleaning materials are safely stored and good practices are followed. The School Nurse is a regular visitor. In general, a close eye is kept on children's health and their well-being is effectively promoted by the school which offers a safe, secure and caring environment.

Partnership with parents and the community

58. There is clear evidence of some parents supporting the school in class, but it is limited to an enthusiastic, loyal minority of parents. This confirms the view of those who attended the Parents' Meeting, that in spite of the school encouraging parents to play a more active part in the life of the school, most either cannot do so, or do not see it as their role to do so. The school consistently canvasses parental support and goes to considerable lengths to organise special courses for parents, but very few take advantage of these opportunities. The Parent/Teacher Association has ceased to function through lack of interest, yet at Christmastime, parents support the school's range of social activities, and at other times, buy books at the school's book sales. Class assemblies prepared by each class once per term are popular events for parents to attend, but such an event did not coincide with inspection week.

59. To provide pupils with a wider experience of day to day life the school makes good use of visitors, including the Community Police Constable and a local Anglican clergyman.

60. Parents are kept well informed about the full range of events, which take place around the school. Newsletters are of good quality and appear very frequently. These intersperse with more formal documents like the prospectus and the governing body's annual report to parents. A high proportion of parents do attend Parents' Evenings to learn about their own children's progress. The response matches the view held by those who attended the pre-inspection Parents' Meeting, that 'one to one' contact with teachers is a strong feature of the school, which ranked alongside the

quality of school reports for parent interest value.

61. Children are encouraged by awards which they earn in competition with each other within their age group. An example of this, seen in action during inspection week, is the weekly Puzzle, which is set up in the library display cabinet. Winners earn a sticker and those with the most stickers over a given period of time are awarded a small prize. This was creating a lot of interest amongst the children, all of whom clearly enjoyed the search.

62. Another example is connected with the 'friendly' badge all adults wear when they come into the school. Children win stickers every time they spot and challenge a visitor not wearing the badge. This obviously raises awareness amongst the children to any strangers in their school, which is good, and then rewards those that are alert to the stranger, thus clearly personalising the value of the child's attentiveness and gives value to the school in knowing that there is raised awareness of security. Another value is the sense of responsibility the child feels as a result of the action taken.

63. Effective links exist with the local community. The school is active with visits to places of educational, cultural and commercial interest and puts a high value on those positive links it has been able to make with the wider community. The school has nurtured valuable business support, which now leads to participation by children in visits to places and events linked to themed and technological project studies.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

64. The leadership of the school is satisfactory overall though of uneven quality. The governing body takes a strategic overview of the school's development and governors are conscientious in carrying out their duties and concerned to support the school. The headteacher and governing body relate well to each other and the headteacher offers clear and effective leadership in her management of staff, of pupils, of links with parents and in keeping an eye on children's work and on staff planning. Curriculum co-ordinators have appropriate job descriptions and carry out their responsibilities satisfactorily. Staff work well together as a team. However, with reference to the academic standards achieved by pupils, managers and governing body do not reflect critically enough on the poor results achieved by pupils in national tests and other forms of assessment. Nor do they propose sufficient measures to improve these standards.

65. The previous Ofsted Report of May 1994 indicated that the school lacked effective educational leadership and criticised the school development plan for not enabling the school to deploy or develop its resources to maximum effect. The first key issue proposed in that report was the production as a matter of urgency of a school development plan which set clear targets, indicated timescales, responsibilities, budget implications, success criteria and arrangements for monitoring. These points have been addressed and the school development plan now takes account of the required aspects in a way which is generally satisfactory. However, "success criteria" remain a weakness: the plan will frequently indicate, for example, that the production of the policy meets the success criterion rather than focus on its impact on standards and quality of educational provision. Thus while management has improved since the last report, it is most effective in managing links with the community and ensuring the well-being of pupils, but less effective in promoting high academic standards and pupil progress.

66. The second key issue in the 1994 Report invited the school to develop and implement effectively policies and schemes of work for those subjects where standards are unsatisfactory, ie. English, Mathematics, Geography, Music, Religious Education. The policies and schemes have been developed and implemented but standards have only improved significantly in Music. Science was not regarded as unsatisfactory in 1994 but is now judged to be below average. Thus the action taken has only gone part way towards ensuring that pupil standards of progress improve and further action is needed to monitor the implementation of these policies and to raise standards.

67. The support and monitoring of teaching and curriculum development are patchy and variable in its effects. The headteacher is involved in the classroom, knows what goes on there and is aware of strengths and weaknesses in the teaching staff. Similarly senior staff monitor pupil work. However, the impact of this monitoring of staff and pupils has not been sufficiently effective to ensure satisfactory teaching quality in all classes and to note the deficiencies in

written work and take action to improve it.

68. The school's aims, values and policies are appropriate for the school. The aims are well worked out and take good account of the catchment area of the school. Staff were involved with governors in working them out, understand them and seek to reflect them in the daily life of the school. Occasionally policies are not implemented fully as when pupils misbehaviour goes unchecked or when curriculum implementation and the assessment of pupils are superficial.

69. The school's development planning and the monitoring of its implementation are patchy. For example, the preparations for and implementation of the national literacy hour have been effective and enhanced by local authority support and expertise. However, the implementation of schemes in most other subjects in the current year has revealed limitations in the coverage of topics or aspects (see each separate subject report).

70. The ethos for learning in the school is generally positive. Attitudes to learning are satisfactory, as are relationships in the school.

71. All pupils have equal opportunities. A member of the governing body has responsibility for this aspect, and, while it is often concerned with employment matters, she does also maintain an overview of curriculum and everyday matters relating to this area. Most of the school's subject policies make reference to Equal Opportunities, even if this is often only in a brief and general way. However, discussions with subject co-ordinators showed that there is an awareness of the need to ensure equality of access and opportunity in day to day classroom life and work.

72. Lesson observations during the inspection also showed that teachers are generally aware of Equal Opportunities issues, and ensure that their pupils are shown good role models, and given full access equally to all curriculum areas. Some teachers are more actively aware than others, but no examples of unsatisfactory practices or procedures were observed. Group work is often done in mixed gender groups, and activities where one gender might be expected to dominate, as in the use of construction toys, were undertaken equally by both sexes. Discussions with pupils, as well as conversations in classrooms, the dining room and around the school in general, showed that everyday school life is typically free from gender, ethnic or other bias.

73. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make progress. All statutory requirements are met.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

74. Staff are appropriately qualified and well deployed. Nine full-time qualified teachers are currently employed in the school, including the headteacher. The range of qualifications represented by the teaching staff are broadly in line with curriculum requirements and each teacher's responsibilities. Teaching staff turnover has been insignificant; one teacher left at the end of the 1996/97 academic year. A temporary teacher who filled this position left mid-summer 1998 for budgetary reasons. The school's deputy headteacher recently gained promotion to a headship and left the school at the end of last term. This vacancy is currently in the process of being advertised.

75. Non-teaching staff are similarly hard working and loyal and turnover is also insignificant. One welfare assistant left last term and the very recent unexpected death of the caretaker ended a career of ten years at the school. This position has now been filled by a former member of the cleaning staff who has not only had a longstanding association with the school, but also has an understanding of the fabric and services of the school buildings and grounds.

76. The school has a good induction document in place to familiarise new and temporary teaching staff, students on placement and others who need to know about the day to day working practices of the school.

77. The school has a detailed Policy for Teacher Appraisal and a Staff Development Policy. These, together, provide the basis to develop the personal professional skills of each staff member, whilst heeding the school's changing needs. Staff regularly attend in-service training courses according to the requirements of the School Development Plan.

78. The two separate buildings which comprise the school are similar in age and both offer safe teaching and

learning accommodation. The two buildings are not physically linked, so children and staff transferring between the main school facilities and the classes for Reception children, Year 4 and Year 6 pupils, are obliged to go outside through two sets of security doors, braving the elements. Wheelchair access is via a ramped entry to the annex building, where the school's new disabled toilet facilities are located.

79. The school accommodation is adequate to meet the requirements of the school curriculum. The school premises are being kept in a satisfactory condition, and buildings reflect the care of some recent maintenance. The school buildings are, however, very old and in need of continuous maintenance, just to meet the basic requirements of satisfactory habitation. During the inspection week, when the weather was particularly poor, all the services managed to cope well with requirements. Classrooms were warm and dry and the playground was kept clean and tidy. However, though a number of the original windows have been replaced throughout the school, some still leak and others, which have not been attended to, appear to be in poor condition. The flat roof over the front right hand side entrance and cloakrooms to the main school buildings show signs of recent rainwater seepage.

80. Though the standard of interior cleanliness and overall freshness is being maintained to a very commendable standard by the cleaning staff, the decorative state of some of the classrooms is in need of attention.

81. The school's new playground facilities are impressive and imaginative with well considered and well constructed installations designed and used to stimulate structured activities at playtime. These play installations have a local theme to them by reconstructing important elements of the town's past heritage and current geographic features. Children, parents and staff have all had an active part in bringing this playground into being and the sense of pride and ownership is clearly evident from the children when asked to explain its features and purpose.

82. This development resulted from a successful bid for funding combined with much subsequent hard work. Further grants are being applied for and the project has attracted considerable attention, gaining desirable and deserved publicity for the school.

83. There is no evidence of teaching difficulties in either of the school buildings because of insufficient classroom space. Sufficient space is also available for the storage of teaching and learning resources, and there is an adequacy of lockable secure areas in both buildings for storing cleaning equipment and chemicals.

84. The library has recently moved to a new location following improvements in other parts of the school. It is now sufficiently roomy to provide for group work when necessary, whilst having the space for children to engage peacefully in their individual studies. In moving, a quantity of older books have been replaced with new stock, which is now satisfactory. Books are convenient to reach and use and attractively displayed. Children have regular access to this library resource and are encouraged to borrow books and take them home for personal enjoyment.

85. Resources for Information Technology are mostly good, but there is a need to replace some older computers which have been largely superseded by newer technology. Welcome additional computing support is provided by the nearby high school where Year 6 pupils currently attend some Information Technology classes. This, undoubtedly, assists the primary school to measure up to teaching and learning objectives at Key Stage 2, and eases the transition to secondary education in the current year.

86. Recent expenditure on books as part of the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has significantly enhanced learning resources in English. Music and Physical Education resources are good, as are those available to children for outdoor recreational activities and competitive team sports. Elsewhere, learning resources are adequate and sufficient for their purpose across the school.

The efficiency of the school

87. Educational developments are supported by sound financial planning and overall efficiency is satisfactory.

88. The previous Ofsted Report indicated that the school development plan did not identify resource requirements and that there was no evaluation of the impact of spending decisions on standards and quality. Since then the development plan has been completely revised and it now clearly identifies resource requirements though there are

still weaknesses in the methods of evaluating the effectiveness of resource decisions on standards and quality. At the point of making purchases, however, the school makes successful efforts at obtaining good value for money through negotiated discounts. The Governing Body operates effectively with the headteacher in maintaining a strategic overview of finances.

89. The most recent audit report (April 1998) concludes that the standard of day to day budgetary control is generally good. It makes a number of recommendations to improve financial administration, all of which have been implemented. The finance committee of the governing body now monitors the implementation of recommendations from the audit report.

90. The school's income and expenditure are about average in most categories. Where there are significant differences from average national costs, the governors have a good reason for this. For example, the above average cleaning and caretaking costs arose from dissatisfaction with a previous local authority system and the school now makes its own arrangements - which have led to a high standard of care and cleanliness. Below average costs for supply teachers arise from the willingness of staff to cover for colleagues before supply teachers are hired. The decision to discontinue the provision of a Nursery Nurse for the Reception class arose from a combination of declining intake numbers at a time when it was necessary to make budget cuts. This latter decision throws extra responsibility on to the class teacher and means that children do not receive as much individual help as might be provided.

91. In general, though, the school uses its staff appropriately and decisions on providing extra support for literacy and for pupils with special educational needs are producing beneficial effects. There are also plans to address weaknesses in one class so that strengths of teachers are used and limitations minimised. The use of learning resources and accommodation is good. Day to day administration is caring and efficient and all support staff feel themselves to be members of a team and are valued for the positive contribution they make to the life of the school.

92. The background circumstances of many pupils are less than favourable and their attainment on entry to the school is well below average. When they leave school their attainments are below average but in view of the satisfactory education provided, at average cost, they make sound progress in their learning - and their attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very satisfactory. Thus the school provides very satisfactory value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

93. Children are admitted to the school in the Autumn Term before their fifth birthday. Tests taken shortly after they enter school indicate that what most children know and can do is well below the national average. However, the children soon settle in and receive generally good teaching in a spacious and appropriately equipped Reception class. As a result they make very satisfactory progress and most are able to begin the programmes of study of the national curriculum by the age of five, though their standards of attainment remain below average.

94. The school, as part of its philosophy to involve parents as partners in the education of children, makes every effort to ensure that the move from home to school takes place smoothly. The reception teacher visits the children in their homes before the Autumn Term, issues helpful booklets on how parents can prepare their children for school and arranges for meetings to take place to explain procedures and to ease the change for children from home to school. For most of the week the experienced reception teacher takes sole responsibility for the class, with the help on four days per week of a classroom assistant for one and a half hours each day. Occasionally further help is available from students or volunteer parents. When extra help is available, the learning of the children is improved. When the reception teacher is on her own, those children under her direct influence learn more effectively than those who are given work to do on their own or in groups.

95. The school works effectively to develop the personal and social abilities of children who learn how to behave in appropriate ways and to develop generally good relationships with each other. They become aware of right and wrong and treat property with care and concern. Some learn how to take turns, to share and to work in groups and the school teaches children to become independent. Some children at this age find it difficult to work independently, to select activities and to concentrate and persevere, but staff are consistent in having appropriate expectations and in seeking to ensure that children adjust to the demands of school life. Thus the school effectively promotes the wider personal and social development of children.

96. The pupils' language and literacy skills are weak in some areas despite appropriate teaching since the children's backgrounds are in general not supportive enough for them to reach average national standards. They learn to listen attentively and are given encouragement to talk about their experiences but these experiences and the vocabulary in which to express them are limited. The children are below average in their ability to use and enjoy books, to recognise letters and simple words, and to write their own names. However, they are learning to associate sounds with letters and to build up words from sounds; they know that pictures and print convey meanings, and they learn to enjoy books read out to them. Some of the children can "read" their favourite books, picking up the story and words through repetition. Where children enjoy books at home and parents respond to the school's advice, their children make much better progress.

97. A similar pattern of strengths and weaknesses is evident in children's mathematical skills. They are learning to use language to describe shapes, sizes and quantities and are able to match objects and to recite sequences of numbers. Many recognise numbers but find difficulty in using the numbers 1 - 10 and in solving problems which require the addition or subtraction of a number or working out how many objects are present in a display. As for language and literacy, the teaching is effective in helping pupils to progress but by the age of five, most are below average for their age in their knowledge of mathematics.

98. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is variable but below average overall. Their ability to talk about their families and events in their lives has weaknesses, as does their knowledge of their immediate environment. However, effective teaching was observed which helped pupils to learn more about the environment around the school in connection with a topic on rubbish. When one child suggested that rubbish could be disposed of by being thrown into the river, the teacher gently indicated why this should not be done and indicated the location of the Council refuse collection point near to a local supermarket. The children respond well to the teaching and are gradually having their knowledge and understanding of the world extended but they cannot easily note similarities, differences, patterns or changes, nor record observations or ask why things happen or how things work. They are making satisfactory progress in using materials such as card and paper to cut, join, fold and build simple structures.

99. In the areas of physical development and creative development children make generally satisfactory progress. In

Physical Education lessons and around the classroom they move with satisfactory control, co-ordination and awareness of space. They use large and small equipment including climbing and balancing apparatus in a satisfactory manner and they learn to handle simple tools such as scissors and paint brushes with satisfactory control for their age. They explore colour, textures and shapes as they paint and make models such as rockets out of waste materials. Their co-ordination as they use pencils is well developed as a result of careful teaching. Children have access to a satisfactory selection of percussion instruments and to large play equipment. Their capacity to play and use imagination in the role play area, equipped at the time of the inspection as a vet's surgery, was at least satisfactory and sometimes good.

100. Overall, the teaching and efforts of the school to promote the learning of the younger children are good, even though actual standards attained by the age of five are below average.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

101. Standards of attainment in English are below the national expectation at the end of both key stages. However, by the end of Key Stage 1, when pupils are seven years old, standards of progress are satisfactory overall - and good in reading. During Key Stage 2 this progress is not maintained and standards are unsatisfactory by the age of eleven compared with levels reached at the age of seven. Nevertheless, there are recent signs of improved progress in reading as a result of the effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, though standards of writing are still low.

102. In the national tests taken in 1998 at the end of Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils reaching the national expectation in reading (Level 2) was 78%, similar to the national average of 80%. However, the proportion reaching the higher grade (Level 3) was 9%, well below the national average of 26%. When these results are compared with those obtained by pupils in similar schools, the proportion gaining Level 2 was above average but the proportion obtaining Level 3 was well below. Thus it would appear that at Key Stage 1 the school was successful in ensuring that most pupils reached the national expectation in reading, but not so successful in enabling the higher attaining pupils to push on and secure a higher grade.

103. A different pattern appears in the Key Stage 1 results for writing. 69% of Primet pupils attain Level 2, well below the national percentage of 81% and also below the proportion gaining this grade in similar schools. No pupils at the school attained Level 3, below the national percentage of 7%, but in line with results obtained in similar schools where writing is a typical weakness.

104. At the end of Key Stage 2 (when pupils are eleven years old) the percentage of pupils in 1998 who attained the national expectation in English as a whole (Level 4) was only 34%, a very low proportion compared with the national figure of 65%, though in this year group an exceptionally large number of pupils (17%) had statements of learning difficulty. The school's performance was also well below that obtained by pupils in similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher grade (Level 5) was 9% - below the national average of 17%, but this proportion was similar to the results obtained in similar schools. The pupils' standards in writing at this key stage were also lower than in reading.

105. When trends in results are analysed over the past three years, Key Stage 1 pupils have made good progress in reading and sound progress in writing; but Key Stage 2 pupils do consistently poorly, even in comparison with similar schools.

106. The school is successful in ensuring that younger children are given opportunities to listen and to talk and they make good progress during Key Stage 1. While children's speech may sometimes be imprecise and timid, they can usually be persuaded to say something in whole class oral sessions - and their fellow pupils listen carefully and with interest. Pupils speak most confidently when talking about their own interests such as their pets, about their immediate neighbourhood, or when they respond to stories they are reading as part of the daily literacy hour. They also develop confidence in speaking as a result of skilled teaching which ensures that quieter pupils are drawn out and that oral sessions are not dominated by the more confident speakers.

107. Children in Key Stage 1 read satisfactorily and many make good progress. Some pupils are fluent, accurate and enthusiastic readers who enjoy books and can discuss them in a mature way. More typically, pupils like reading, enjoy books during the time created within class and as part of the national literacy hour, but are limited in their ability to discuss the story, the characters and setting of a fiction book - and to offer predictions. These children do not receive sufficient encouragement from home to persist with their reading. A significant minority of pupils needs constant encouragement. Such pupils struggle with reading and are very limited in their ability to read accurately or to make sense of what they read. While they make some progress as a result of the school's efforts, they do not receive the sustained support from home which might lead to a significant improvement.

108. Standards of writing at Key Stage 1 are below average. Much of the pupils' writing is brief and they do not receive sufficient opportunity to write in a sustained way at the required length. Development takes place from copying the teacher's writing, under a child's drawing, of a few brief words supplied by the pupil to the pupil's independent writing but the speed at which this writing develops is too slow and the range of the writing is limited. In subjects such as Science, History, Geography and Religious Education opportunities are missed to provide children with writing tasks which would help to develop their literacy skills. Handwriting is of a satisfactory standard and children learn from the outset how to join up their letters. Spelling and punctuation are also taught systematically, though the standards achieved are below average.

109. During Key Stage 2 pupils generally listen carefully to the teacher and to fellow pupils during oral sessions. Their ability to talk and to answer questions is sometimes satisfactory but a significant minority do not sustain or develop their ideas into a sequence of connected sentences unless prompted by the teacher. Much of the discussion and oral language observed was part of the national literacy hour which was successful in securing the interest of pupils, as judged by their answers to questions about books being read and about word work arising from their reading.

110. While the standard of reading observed was below average, there was evidence of improvement during the current year as a result of the interest created by the literacy hour. During group reading teachers made appropriate and effective use of a wide range of clues to help pupils work out the words and to understand the meanings of the passages being read. Children are able to use dictionaries and thesauruses but rather more slowly in general than is typical of their age group. Reading is also being developed during a "paired reading" project when pairs of pupils take turns to read to each other and to assist each other for fifteen minutes each day. The impact of these initiatives is not fully apparent yet and the school intends to note with interest and act upon the results of the next national reading tests.

111. Pupils of lower ability are still reading very easy books which are associated with much younger children. Overall reading standards are low. However, teachers are ensuring that pupils are made aware of higher order reading developments such as the use of an index and table of contents, how to locate a book in the library on a specific topic, how to skim through a book and to scan a page to find a particular fact quickly. Some pupils are able to do all these things successfully.

112. The writing standards at Key Stage 2 are well below average. All the writing seen was brief and limited. The overall number of pieces of writing retained for inspectors to scrutinise was low and on the basis of this evidence was limited in the range of purposes covered (mainly narrating and explaining), and in the type of writing opportunity provided. The highest attaining children were writing at a national average standard but average and below average children in the school were writing at a standard well below national expectations, with the exception of handwriting which was satisfactory overall and often good. Exceptionally one pupil (not in Year 6) wrote in a fluent, often humorous way, using a good range of vocabulary, many subordinate clauses and punctuating his work accurately, though his spelling was only average. In this class the teacher had written helpful and constructive comments to which the pupil responded well and good progress was evident in his work. In general, though, teachers' comments were brief and did not suggest ways of improving.

113. Children are responding well to the introduction of the national literacy hour and benefit from the structured coverage of aspects of language. They enjoy the books they read and welcome the repetition of good quality material which allows them to consolidate their learning and to dwell on stories and characters which are meaningful to their levels of experiences. At the time of the inspection the national literacy hour was only at the start of its second term

but there were signs that pupils were benefiting, not least because they were enjoying the materials and approaches.

114. Teaching at Key Stage 1 is good. The methods and organisation used engage the interest and attention of children, as when a teacher uses puppets to bring to life the story "Five Little Ducks". Teachers are knowledgeable on the methods of teaching reading, they manage pupil behaviour well, adopting a calm, authoritative and caring manner - and the classrooms are well resourced and well ordered with an industrious atmosphere. Sufficient time is not always made available for writing, though.

115. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is more variable but is satisfactory overall. In the better lessons pupils are well managed so that they behave well and stay on task. Thus they are able to benefit from the planning which implements the national literacy strategy. In the better lessons teachers hold higher expectations of pupil learning and behaviour, challenging answers to extend and refine pupils' responses and insisting on high standards of behaviour. One lesson was poor because the teacher failed to secure and retain pupils' attention, lacking effective strategies to combat challenging behaviour and trying to continue when some pupils should have been referred to the headteacher, in accordance with the school's behaviour policy. Little learning took place in this lesson because the teacher was spending too much time on behaviour management and because a minority of pupils was allowed to disrupt the learning of others who wanted to work. All the teachers were aware of the requirements of the national literacy strategy and have benefited from in-service training to develop their subject knowledge and teaching skills.

116. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and the school has recently adopted the national literacy strategy as its scheme of work. The literacy action plan is being effectively implemented and the school is benefiting from the intensive support provided by the local education authority. The school's own policy documents which pre-date the national literacy strategy were due for revision and there is still a need to re-examine the policy and scheme of work for writing. The commitment and willingness of staff to work carefully through all the schemes in the light of current national guidance is a strength, and this is working well for reading. The literacy action plan identifies an increased emphasis in the period immediately following the inspection on monitoring children's achievements. This planning is well judged. The monitoring of this inspection identifies strengths in reading but weaknesses in writing. Strategies to develop children's writing are now needed to raise standards.

117. Children's progress is assessed in a variety of ways including informal observation during the process of a lesson, a range of internally produced tests and the use of external, standardised tests. The results of these tests are not always used as fully as they could be to target improvements in pupils' learning. Teachers record progress in a range of ways which are generally satisfactory and report appropriately to parents during specially convened evenings and in written reports.

118. The subject is appropriately co-ordinated by an experienced and enthusiastic teacher who is making a particular contribution in the current year by working alongside colleagues in implementing the national literacy strategy, having been relieved of class teacher responsibilities. She has also worked effectively in securing good value for the extra money made available for books and in liaising with staff, governors and the local authority to ensure that the school is well prepared to implement the national literacy strategy. Resources are well stored and accessible, and the library is pleasant, adequately resourced and spacious. A large percentage of books is lost each year because pupils fail to return them but the school operates appropriately in allowing open access, in encouraging pupils to take books home to read, and in doing its utmost to persuade pupils to return borrowed books.

Mathematics

119. Pupils' attainment is below the national average at the ends of both key stages. These findings broadly reflect the outcomes of the most recent national curriculum assessments for Key Stage 1, where attainment in 1998 was low in comparison to the national average. At Key Stage 2 the inspection outcome is also below the national average, but not as low as the outcome of the most recent national curriculum assessments, where performance in the 1998 tests was found to be well below the national average. Discussions with pupils, and scrutiny of their work, show that by the time the current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils reach the ends of the key stages their attainment, on the basis of their present performance, can be expected to be below the national average.

120. The trend in national curriculum test results over the last three years also shows a continuing decline in attainment at both key stages. In comparison with similar schools, the performance of pupils at Key Stage 1 is average for the numbers of pupils reaching Level 2 or above. When the percentage of pupils achieving Level 3 or above is compared, however, it is well below the average for schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. At Key Stage 2 pupils' performance is well below that of schools with pupils from similar backgrounds at all levels. These results suggest that the school should expect to do better in Mathematics at both key stages, and the inspection finding that attainment at both key stages is below the national average supports this conclusion.

121. The use of a commercial Mathematics scheme ensures that all areas of the Mathematics curriculum are covered, but the structure of the chosen scheme, and the way it is used, is such that there is an imbalance between the different attainment targets. Whilst basic computation is given very good coverage, and also shape, space and measures are adequately dealt with, there is insufficient coverage at present of data handling and, particularly, using and applying Mathematics.

122. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall throughout the school. Good progress is made in the early stages of Key Stage 1 and there are periods of unsatisfactory progress in the lower part of Key Stage 2. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. They are given effective support, both by class teachers, and by support staff.

123. Throughout the school pupils' response to their work varies from good to poor, but is satisfactory overall. Teachers generally are able to communicate a sense of enjoyment of Mathematics. Pupils are often absorbed in their activities, and can concentrate well and work co-operatively when required. Behaviour is generally good, and most pupils are able to sustain their interest even when the teacher is not nearby. In most Key Stage 2 classes pupils respond to their work in a satisfactory manner. They are generally well behaved and attentive, and, although there are occasions when unchecked chatter leads to distraction, most find the work interesting and absorbing. In a minority of lessons seen, however, noisy and disruptive behaviour prevents pupils from concentrating, and in these lessons pupils quickly become bored and are unable to get on with their work.

124. The teaching of Mathematics is satisfactory overall at both key stages. At Key Stage 1 there is some good teaching, while at Key Stage 2 teaching varies between good and unsatisfactory. Where the teaching is good the activities are well matched to the ages and abilities of the pupils, an engaging teaching style is used, and the pupils are well motivated. Well taught lessons are accompanied by effective organisational strategies, so that pupils move effectively from one phase of the lesson to the next, and groups are organised so as to maximise involvement and progress. Positive features of good lessons observed at both key stages are: a lively pace of work which promotes involvement and enjoyment; clear explanations of mathematical ideas; and good attention to basic mathematical concepts and methods.

125. In a Year 5 lesson on fractions a lively pace of work is set, and the teacher has clear expectations as to the quality and quantity of work expected. Pupils' work is marked in a helpful way, with discussion of strengths and weaknesses, and ways to improve. In the Reception class pupils make a large pictorial graph on the classroom floor, showing their pets. The teacher assesses pupils' understanding informally as they work, and has high expectations. Pupils are expected to do their best and behave well.

126. Where teaching is unsatisfactory pupils are allowed to waste time, poor behaviour is tolerated, and the work is too heavily focussed on basic computation practice.

127. As they move through the school pupils develop their numeracy skills. By the age of eleven pupils have encountered mathematical experiences in the context of many other subjects. They have measured distances in Geography, weighed and measured in Design Technology, carried out a variety of basic mathematics operations whilst working Science activities. They have also drawn graphs both by hand and on the computer, as a way of representing mathematical information and relationships. All these activities contribute to the development of pupils' repertoire of computational skills.

128. The role of the subject co-ordinator is under-developed at present. Although the basic organisation of resources is given attention, the monitoring and evaluation of the subject is not given sufficient emphasis. There has been no systematic analysis of pupils' attainment, the relative strengths and weaknesses in the different attainment targets, nor the implications of previous years' national curriculum test results, and no attempt to address the issue of under-performance in ways which will bring about improvement. The recent introduction of a 'tracking' system has not yet had any effect, and there is a lack of clarity about how assessment information can be used to inform teaching. There is also a need for a better sense of direction for the subject, so that future developments can be planned according to an overall strategy for improvement.

129. The school has sufficient resources to support the teaching of the subject, although some are old and in need of replacement. Statutory requirements for the teaching of the subject are met.

130. Since the last Ofsted Inspection standards in Mathematics have declined and the school has not kept pace with national trends particularly at Key Stage 2.

Science

131. Overall standards of achievement in Science are below average in relation to national norms and in terms of pupils' ages and abilities. In both key stages pupils' levels of recall and understanding are restricted to a basic range of knowledge and are below expectation.

132. The 1994 inspection evidence reported that standards of achievement in Science were average in relation to national norms and satisfactory in terms of pupils' ages and abilities. In both key stages pupils showed satisfactory recall and understanding of an appropriate range of knowledge.

133. Since then pupils in Key Stage 1 have performed below expectation in relation to both national averages and compared with children in schools in similar contexts. In Key Stage 2 taking the years 1996 to 1998 together pupils' attainment has been well below the national average, with girls performing less well than boys. In 1998 at Key Stage 2 when pupils' performance in the Science tests was compared with children in similar schools with comparable social contexts their performance was below expectation.

134. For example, the current inspection evidence has shown that in Key Stage 1 pupils were able to identify a range of sources of light, but their ability to describe their similarities and differences was often restricted to restating the light source. Most pupils were unable to compare the brightness of different light sources and suggest reasons for this.

135. Minimal documentary records of pupils' work in other areas of Science made detailed assessments of pupils' attainment and progress difficult. Discussions with pupils indicated a very limited coverage of life and living processes and materials and their properties.

136. In Key Stage 2 pupils knew how to make a circuit and some are developing an understanding of the function of switches. Few have grasped the interchangeability of diagram symbols and real components. While most pupils could name the main parts of a plant, only a few could explain the function of these parts. Most pupils could describe the difference between absorbent and non-absorbent materials and give examples of each, but few could explain what is happening during absorption.

137. At both key stages pupils lacked confidence and competence in conducting scientific investigations. The use of appropriate scientific vocabulary by pupils during practical investigations was limited to a few pupils and little

evidence of fascination was seen.

138. The quality of learning varies from satisfactory to poor. The attitudes of some pupils to Science are good but their concentration was distracted on several occasions by noise and disorder. Most pupils worked satisfactorily individually, but collaborative group learning was rare.

139. The levels of teachers' subject knowledge varied from satisfactory to good and this is reflected in the quality of their teaching. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but varies from good to poor. The requirements of the national curriculum are being met, although there is evidence that some aspects of the subject receive more emphasis and attention than others.

140. The curriculum planning for Science is currently under review. The scheme now being piloted is intended to improve the progress of higher and lower attaining pupils.

141. Most teachers' records of what pupils have achieved are satisfactory, but how this information is used to plan for pupils' future learning is not clear.

142. The co-ordinator is fairly new to the role. Other responsibilities and more recent priorities in the school have meant that Science has not been a main focus of attention. Resources for Science are adequate but would benefit from updating to cover all aspects of the subject.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Art

143. Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations at the ends of both key stages. Attainment is restricted at present, however, by the limited range of media and techniques covered. Whilst drawing, painting and colour mixing are given appropriate attention, the use of 3D techniques and work with a wider range of media are needed. Some good examples of clay work were seen, such as where Year 3 pupils made writing tablets and canopic jars in connection with their topic on Ancient Egypt. The use of this approach is, however, too restricted at present. Opportunities to compare artefacts and images, and look for similarities and differences in approaches and methods should be extended. Pupils should also be given more opportunities to appraise their own and others' work, using appropriate art vocabulary.

144. Progress is satisfactory overall throughout the school. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make equal progress. Girls and boys are given equal access to all activities, and staff are aware of gender bias and take steps to avoid it.

145. Pupils generally enjoy their work in Art. They are taught to appreciate the work of famous artists such as Leonardo da Vinci and Van Gogh, as well as to develop their own understanding of the techniques and media of art.

146. It was only possible to observe a small amount of teaching of Art during the inspection. However, other evidence, such as scrutiny of previous work, discussion with pupils, and displays around the school, was sufficient to support the judgement that the teaching of Art is satisfactory throughout the school. Although pupils in most classes have sketchbooks in which to practise and refine their artistic skills, the use of these books is at present not regular enough and all pupils would benefit from opportunities to practise a wider range of both techniques and media. There is also a need for the school to approach the teaching of Art skills in a more systematic way, so that they are taught, practised frequently and regularly, and then used in meaningful contexts, as pupils move through the school.

147. The school could do more to display pupils' work more effectively, so as to enhance the quality of the learning environment in all areas of the school.

148. The subject is well co-ordinated and a range of appropriate resources is available to all staff. The school is aware of the need to continue to develop its collection of examples of the work of different artists.

Design Technology

149. Attainment at the ages of seven and eleven is in line with national expectations. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils can assemble and join materials in a variety of ways, and can handle tools safely. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils can gather information and generate their own ideas. They can demonstrate increasing accuracy in measuring, marking out and cutting materials. More time needs to be given, however, to developing pupils' understanding of the whole design process, including the stages of designing in relation to the purpose, making with appropriate materials, and evaluating the product according to its effectiveness. Opportunities need to be further developed for pupils to discuss their work, explaining to others the reasons for their decisions and evaluating their own and others' work.

150. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall as they move through the school. At both key stages, however, the current provision for Design Technology is often in the form of short, isolated experiences, which, whilst being valuable in themselves, are too widely spaced in time for pupils to build and consolidate their skills and understanding in a progressive manner. The teaching of Design Technology skills, such as methods of joining, is also sometimes done in isolation, so that the relevance of the skill is difficult for pupils to understand. The present progress of pupils is restricted by both these approaches, and a closer integration of Design Technology with other curriculum areas would help to ensure a more consistent approach and greater continuity in their learning.

151. At Key Stage 1 pupils enjoy their work in Design Technology. They are given activities which enable them to use appropriate tools and techniques, and which give them opportunities to share and co-operate as they work. At Key Stage 2 there are occasions when the teaching approaches used are less well suited to the interests and abilities of the pupils, and here pupils' attitudes towards their work are less good. In other lessons at Key Stage 2, however, stimulating and interesting activities are provided, and here pupils' interest and enthusiasm is maintained.

152. The teaching of Design Technology is satisfactory overall throughout the school. At Key Stage 1 it varies between satisfactory and good, while at Key Stage 2 there is greater variation, between good and unsatisfactory. A Year 2 lesson on how shoes are made involves pupils learning technical terms such as 'footwear' and 'manufacture'. They are taught to relate the construction of various shoes to their different purposes, and to evaluate their effectiveness. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils investigate the mechanisms of clocks, watches and mechanical toys. The workings of gears and cogs are explained, and correct language explained and used. Appropriate software is provided on the computer for pupils to develop further their understanding of aspects of rotation. These approaches promote effective learning. Where teaching is unsatisfactory this is associated with ineffective class management and poor choice of materials and activities which lead to pupils losing concentration and interest.

153. Assessment procedures are under-developed and teachers do not always use assessment information on pupils' overall Design Technology capability in one activity when setting more challenging targets for the next.

154. The subject is effectively co-ordinated. Resources are well managed and systems are in place for the replacement of consumable items. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to continue to provide support for some members of staff who lack confidence in the subject. There is generally good attention to safety by all staff, although the large numbers of pupils and restricted space in some rooms mean that the working environment is not ideal. The school has an adequate range of resources, which are efficiently organised, and readily accessible to staff.

Geography

155. The standards of attainment and of progress are unsatisfactory at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2 standards of attainment are satisfactory, but progress is unsatisfactory. Only one Geography lesson was seen at Key Stage 1 and one in Reception. No lessons were seen at Key Stage 2. The small amount of display material, the very limited record of pupils' written work and discussions with pupils provide the evidence base for this subject. The 1994 inspection report concluded that standards of attainment were satisfactory at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2 standards of attainment and progress were unsatisfactory. Thus there has been a decline in standards at Key Stage 1, but some improvement in attainment by the end of Key Stage 2.

156. The one Geography lesson seen at Key Stage 1 was unsatisfactory. The planning was imprecise and the subsequent development too wide ranging and unstructured. These young pupils were required to sit for too long. The extent of illustrative detail from Colne, to Tenby and then to Pakistan was inappropriate to their level of geographical understanding. Very little written work was produced by the children during the lesson.

157. At Key Stage 2 there was just sufficient occasional written and oral evidence relating to aspects of the European Economic Community, local environmental study and map work to demonstrate that pupils are achieving satisfactory standards at this key stage. There was insufficient evidence to demonstrate continuity in their learning and progressive understanding of geographical concepts and issues.

158. The current policy document for Geography describes the essentials of Geography and geographical enquiry and indicates how national curriculum targets are met through the associated schemes of work which operate over a two year cycle. At Key Stage 2 particularly, the level of detail given for the specified themes varies considerably.

159. At both key stages teachers' files and plans showed little evidence of using pupils' prior attainment for planning subsequent learning; their records focussed more on topics covered than concepts understood. Some social and cultural considerations which are central to the study of settlements were noted in the display work on Italy and individual work on Pakistan, but the evidence seen was insufficient to conclude that this aspect is developed in a systematic way.

160. The co-ordinator is appropriately qualified for her role and is enthusiastic. She sees the need to ensure a more focussed use of the adequate resources. Currently she is developing a suitable range of topic boxes. Additionally the restoration of procedures for the monitoring of teaching and marking of pupils' work is needed.

History

161. Standards of attainment and of progress are unsatisfactory at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2 standards of attainment are satisfactory, but progress is unsatisfactory. The 1994 inspection report stated standards of attainment and progress were satisfactory at both key stages. No History teaching was seen during the inspection as the subject was not being taught this term. Insufficient examples of children's work were available to the inspectors. However, interviews with pupils about their work, observations of limited display material, and discussions with the History co-ordinator and other teachers, provided the evidence base for this subject.

162. The current History policy document, which is undated, describes the essentials of History as a subject and lists the aims and objectives which the school seeks to achieve in this subject. Reference is made to a two year rolling programme which will be taught on a topic or thematic approach where appropriate. Guidelines for judging appropriateness are not given. The associated schemes of work provide suitably detailed evidence as to how the key elements and units of study will be approached at both key stages.

163. At Key Stage 1 the concept of change is taught through comparing the difference between old and new toys and household equipment, and exploring events 'within living memory'. Discussions with pupils revealed that they could describe some old and new toys, but questioning on what criteria could be used to put them in chronological order indicated a limited grasp of relevant features, for example, materials of which old and new toys are made. The sample of pupils was unable to explain why certain people, for example, Guy Fawkes, were regarded as famous in British History.

164. In the early stages of Key Stage 2 there was limited written evidence of studying Egyptian hieroglyphs and gods. Mostly this work involved copying and colouring worksheets, but interesting related craft work and writing on canopic jars was also seen in one class. In the later years of Key Stage 2 some examples of good extended writing on aspects of life in Roman Britain were noted. Some pupils were able to explain how conditions in schools and factories had changed over the past two hundred years. The extent of pupils' historical understanding and knowledge, together with an appreciation of a limited range of historical sources, for example, local newspaper reports concerning the opening of the school in 1907, is sufficient to conclude that standards of attainment are satisfactory at Key Stage 2. There is insufficient evidence to demonstrate continuity and progression in pupils' understanding of approaches to History and historical evidence.

165. The co-ordinator has no specialist History qualifications, but she has undertaken a local education authority in-service course for co-ordinators. She is enthusiastic and committed to her role. Overall resources are satisfactory. There is an inventory, but this is undated. Colleagues are encouraged to use the Project Loan Boxes. In earlier years provision was made to enable the monitoring of teaching, but this has not taken place recently because of other pressures. The current inspection has identified the need for this to be reinstated and for written records to be maintained.

Information Technology

166. By the end of both key stages pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations. By the age of seven pupils are able to store and retrieve their work, with appropriate help. They have experienced a variety of software, including simple word-processing and graphics packages, and programmes which allow them to consolidate their learning in basic number and reading/writing activities. In a Year 2 Mathematics lesson, for instance, pupils work on coin recognition and simple addition of money, using appropriate software for their ages and abilities.

167. Year 6 pupils are also given appropriate activities, for instance, where they visit the neighbouring secondary school to use the Information Technology suite as part of a structured programme. This allows pupils to gain experience of routine computer skills, such as logging on, retrieving and saving work, as well as simple formatting of text using a word processor. The good ratio of one computer between two pupils in this facility enables pupils to gain maximum involvement in the activities.

168. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school, but this progress is sometimes irregular, and systems for recording it are often informal. In order to ensure that all pupils have regular involvement in a structured and progressive programme of activities, a more effective method of recording progress is needed. As pupils move through the school they show increasing confidence and independence in using Information Technology, and in handling and interpreting data.

169. At all stages pupils enjoy their work in Information Technology and show interest and enthusiasm. The recent acquisition by the school of new multi-media computers, largely through the efforts of pupils, parents and friends in collecting supermarket vouchers, means that up to date software is gradually replacing that available on the school's older computers. The result of this is that pupils are able to work with more sophisticated software which is more engaging and which better stimulates their interest.

170. The teaching of Information Technology is satisfactory overall. Some teachers, however, lack confidence in the subject, and there is a need, which the school acknowledges, to continue to provide in-service training. Most teachers use the computer to support the work of the class in other subjects, but in some classes the use of the computer is insufficiently structured, so that some pupils do not spend enough time using it. In some cases this is because pupils are only allowed to use the computer when they have finished their other work, and so some slower pupils rarely have a turn. In using the computer pupils are introduced to the correct language, and can see when it is better to use Information Technology and when it is not. In a Year 3 class, for instance, pupils work in groups to collect data about themselves. They then enter this data into a database on the computer, after discussing with the teacher how Information Technology is the best way of handling this information.

171. The school has a good overall ratio of approximately one computer per 14 pupils. However, many of the

computers are old, and so the software which they use is restricted. A programme of gradual replacement is under way, and is planned to continue as finances allow. However, better use could be made of some of the computers currently available, so as to ensure that all pupils have regular and progressive experiences throughout the school.

173. The management of the subject is carried out effectively on a day to day basis, although there is a need to develop a clearer strategic view so that the future development of Information Technology can be planned, present attainment analysed, and impact of present and future hardware and software maximised.

Music

174. Pupils' attainment at the ends of Key Stages 1 and 2 is in line with national expectations. By the time they are seven pupils have experienced a range of music, including singing and instrumental activities. They have had opportunities to create simple compositions, and have begun to use elements such as dynamics and timbre. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils learn about different ways of making sounds, both by striking, shaking and blowing various instruments and by using their voices in yodelling, echoes and other effects. They are learning to listen carefully to sounds and pieces of music, and to appraise them, using correct musical language. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils can perform with increasing confidence and accuracy, both using their own voices and a range of percussion and other musical instruments, for example, where a Year 4 class practise and perform songs about the Vikings, using the 'Sea Thunder' programme.

175. Pupils make satisfactory progress at all stages as they move through the school, although the use of music from other cultures is under-developed and so pupils' progress in this area is not so good. The regular use of taped material enables pupils in the classes of teachers without musical expertise to maintain their progress.

176. In most lessons pupils join in with enthusiasm, and those who take advantage of specialist peripatetic instrumental teaching show dedication and a sense of pride in their work. Music is used effectively in performances, festivals and other special occasions, but its use to enhance the special atmosphere of daily assemblies could be improved, so as to enrich the life of the school.

177. The teaching of music throughout the school is of a satisfactory standard. Reliance is placed on pre-recorded materials from a commercial scheme, but teachers generally use these effectively, allowing pupils to participate and gain the maximum benefit from their use. Although the school does not possess a music specialist, the taped programmes are used effectively to compensate for this. The work of the peripatetic staff makes a positive contribution to the development of music in the school. Opportunities should be increased, however, for direct teaching of musical terminology as a way of sharpening pupils' attention to, and understanding of, the language used in the taped programmes. Preparation for, and follow-up to, the taped sessions should both be given more attention.

178. The school has a wide selection of percussion and other musical instruments and these are well organised and easily available to all staff. The subject is effectively co-ordinated, the policy and schemes of work having been revised and up-dated, in line with the provisions of the School Development Plan, some two and a half years ago. Occasional visits by performing groups have also enriched the school's music provision.

Physical Education

179. Standards of attainment and rates of progress are satisfactory at both key stages. The 1994 inspection report also stated that standards of achievement in Physical Education were average in relation to national norms and pupils' capabilities at both key stages. During this inspection lessons for gymnastics and dance were seen at both key stages. The quality of learning is satisfactory at both key stages.

180. In Reception and the early years of Key Stage 1 pupils are beginning to model good movements and sequences. A significant number of young pupils are still insufficiently aware of space and others, but most side-step accurately and in time to rhythms. Pupils participated willingly and with apparent enjoyment; enthusiasm was controlled. In Key Stage 2 pupils in gymnastics showed increasing ability to extend their balance and control skills as part of linked sequences. In dance pupils demonstrated that they are learning to develop light, controlled steps as well as co-

ordinate dance sequences. In both key stages the range of activities enabled pupils to show that they can work collaboratively and in pairs.

181. In Key Stage 1 the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory and on occasion very good. When this was the case lessons were well planned and included a good balance of inter-related activities which were well sequenced. In Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching varied from satisfactory to good when it was refreshing to see the teacher's enthusiasm communicated to the children who responded warmly.

182. The teaching covers the areas of activity specified in the national curriculum. All children, irrespective of physical ability, are enabled to participate fully in the range of activities. Pupils in Year 2, as well as Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity to learn to swim. An inspector was able to accompany one group on the coach from the school to the local leisure centre. This was efficiently organised, pupils were well behaved and all safety procedures were followed fully. Outdoor adventurous activities are currently restricted to Year 6 pupils who participate in a residential stay arranged to promote both social skills and curricular integration. Plans are in hand to provide an orienteering facility in the school playground.

183. The school has a good balance of team games for boys and girls and has recently achieved considerable success in local schools' competitions. Both within and between schools, sporting activities and games enable all pupils, especially those who are not high academic achievers and may come from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, to develop self esteem and social skills.

184. The current Physical Education policy document needs refining to provide a more concise specification of learning objectives for pupils to achieve and the associated schemes of work require editing to provide greater coherence. Some teachers keep a detailed progressive record of pupils' developing skills, but this good practice is not disseminated across both key stages.

185. The co-ordinator has specialist qualifications, has regularly undertaken related in-service activities and fulfils the role effectively.

186. The accommodation difficulties identified in the previous report remain, but Year 6 pupils have the regular use of the gymnasium and sports hall in the adjacent high school and are able to use its school field and all weather sports pitch. The deficiencies in the school playground have been remedied. Overall resources are good, but the inventory requires updating.

Religious Education

187. Standards of attainment and of progress in Religious Education are below average at both key stages. The same judgement was made in the Ofsted inspection of 1994. That report indicated that pupils had little knowledge of the diversity of religion or the religious traditions of Great Britain; that their understanding of religious features and concepts was limited; and that their ability to reflect was under-developed. The report also indicated that the school lacked a policy and scheme of work, was short of materials and often omitted to teach the subject.

188. Since then there has been a considerable improvement in that a well written document has been prepared, the school uses the local education authority agreed syllabus as its scheme of work and a most thorough set of teaching notes has been prepared to support the teaching of each topic over both key stages. Good attention is paid to major world faiths with a study of Judaism and Islam alongside the major study of Christianity. The school has obtained appropriate resources and artefacts to support the teaching of the topics and statutory requirements are met.

189. However, pupils have failed to learn the material presented to them to any great extent and hardly any evidence was presented to inspectors of attainment in this subject. Some year groups had done no written work at all and others had done a minimal amount. Discussion with pupils indicated that they could not recall much of what they had been taught, despite being prompted. They knew about the ten commandments, the nativity, the crucifixion and resurrection (in outline) and a little about the life of Jesus (his baptism by John and his parable of the ten lepers). They could recall nothing, without prompting, of major world faiths, but Muslim pupils had a good knowledge of Islam, derived from their home background. In general, then, the teaching methods and emphases adopted had failed

to ensure that pupils learned about religious traditions currently represented in Great Britain.

190. Observation of three lessons was possible during the inspection week. These lessons had strengths but also weaknesses which go a long way towards explaining why pupils' learning in this subject falls short of acceptable standards. Teachers were successful in arousing pupils' interest in the topics (Eid ul Fitr; the Koran; and Shabbat). Very good resources were available and from a teaching and learning point of view the introductions to the lessons were satisfactory or good. The teachers had undertaken personal research to ensure they were knowledgeable about the topics. However, the lessons were weak in not providing pupils with activities which allowed them to work with the materials, to reflect on them and write about them in a way which would reinforce their knowledge and understanding. The lessons were too much dominated by teachers and pupils were at the receiving end of information for too long. When worksheets were used, they were completed mechanically and when a picture of a Muslim prayer mat was to be coloured in, pupils were unsure why and did not understand what the symbols and patterns represented because they did not link to the earlier part of the lesson.

191. The subject makes positive contributions towards the spiritual and moral development of pupils through the discussions which take place and the explanations given by teachers, though opportunities are lost to deepen its value. The subject also makes appropriate contributions to the cultural development of pupils and the willingness of staff to ask Muslim pupils to explain how members of their families fast, how Eid ul Fitr is celebrated and other aspects of Islam is a strong feature of the school. Muslim pupils took pride in explaining their faith and its practices and in two lessons observed other pupils listened with interest and respect.

192. The curriculum co-ordinator had left the school just before the inspection. He had worked hard to remedy the deficiencies identified in the last inspection, and successfully introduced a new policy and scheme, and arranged in-service support which was successful in increasing subject knowledge. The use of assessment of pupils to inform curriculum planning, though is weak and assessment procedures failed to detect that pupils had learned very little in this subject. The co-ordinator's planning indicated that the area of assessment was shortly to be reviewed. The support and monitoring of teaching was not successful in ensuring teaching methods would lead to effective learning. Resources for the subject are appropriate.

193. In general, the subject is well positioned for significant gains to be made in pupil attainment and progress if recent developments are built upon.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

194. The inspection was conducted by a team of four inspectors over a four day period (11 - 14 January 1999), the number of inspection days in school totalling 14. 50 lessons were observed for a total time of 40 hours and 18 minutes. In addition time was spent discussing work with pupils, hearing them read and scrutinising their work (an approximate total time of 10 hours and 30 minutes). 8 pupils were heard reading individually and many more were heard reading with their teachers during the literacy hour and during class reading periods. Groups of pupils at the end of each key stage were assembled to discuss Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Design Technology, Information Technology and Religious Education.

195. Professional discussions took place with all teaching staff on their curricular and management responsibilities, including special educational needs, and with two school support assistants and an outreach teacher. There were discussions with the school administrator, site supervisor and five welfare assistants. There was also a discussion with the previous deputy head who had moved to a promoted post immediately prior to the inspection.

196. The work of 21 pupils (three from each year group) collected over the past year was scrutinised, together with teacher records, a sample of reports and of individual education plans.

197. Inspectors met eight governors and discussed finance, buildings, management, curriculum, special needs, equal opportunities, literacy and numeracy. There were discussions with the Education Welfare Officer, the School Nurse, three adult volunteers, one student from a local college, two pupils from the nearby secondary school on a community placement and, informally, with several parents at the end of the school day.

198. School resources and equipment were examined, as was accommodation including the school library and the resources room. A wide range of school documentation was scrutinised.

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	227	6	89	81
Nursery Unit/School	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR - Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.2

Education support staff (YR - Y6)

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked each week	40.8

Financial data

Financial year:	1998
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	£
Total Income	360817
Total Expenditure	341105
Expenditure per pupil	1476.65
Balance brought forward from previous year	17387
Balance carried forward to next year	37099

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

227

Number of questionnaires returned:

22

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	40.9	50.0	9.1		
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	54.5	45.5			
The school handles complaints from parents well	27.3	59.1	9.1	4.5	
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	13.6	68.2	4.5	9.1	4.5
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	27.3	59.1		13.6	
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	38.1	52.4	4.8	4.8	
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	23.8	61.9	9.5	4.8	
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	31.8	45.5	4.5	9.1	9.1
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	33.3	57.1	9.5		
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	14.3	66.7	9.5	9.5	
My child(ren) like(s) school	45.5	50.0		4.5	