

**INSPECTION UNDER SECTION 9 OF THE
EDUCATION (SCHOOLS) ACT 1992**

**ST JOHN SOUTHWORTH RC
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Lancashire LEA

Date of Inspection

18 - 22 March 1996

**ST JOHN SOUTHWORTH RC PRIMARY SCHOOL
LOMESHAYE ROAD
NELSON BB9 ODQ**

School Number : 923/3759

Date of Inspection : 18 - 22 March 1996

LOUIS CROUAN

Registered Inspector : Number T12044

Date : 26 April 1996

Under OFSTED contract number : 923/P/503791

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1. INTRODUCTION

This inspection was carried out under Section 9 of the Education (Schools) Act 1992 to report on the quality of education provided by the school, the educational standards achieved in the school, whether the financial resources made available to the school are managed efficiently, and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school. The findings of the inspection will contribute to the annual report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools to the Secretary of State for Education.

1.1 BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Name of School	St John Southworth RC Primary School
Type of School	Infant and Junior
Type of Control	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	4 - 11
Name of Headteacher	Michael Duckworth
School Address, postcode and telephone number	Lomeshaye Road Nelson Lancashire BB9 0DQ
Name of appropriate authority (governing body, LEA or proprietor)	01282 613906 The Governing Body
Local authority area in which the school is located	Lancashire LEA
DFE school number	923/3759
Name of Registered Inspector	Louis Crouan
Date of the inspection	18 - 21 March 1996

1.2 INTAKE OF PUPILS AND THE AREA SERVED BY THE SCHOOL

1. Most pupils who attend the school live in the parish of St John Southworth in Nelson and its surrounding areas. The catchment area is made up of a mixture of privately owned and rented accommodation. 19% of pupils are eligible for free school meals against an average in Lancashire of 22.5% and 25% nationally. The area has higher than average unemployment.

2. Most of the pupils are from stable homes in which the work of the school is valued and supported. A small proportion are socially disadvantaged and require regular support. There are 3 pupils who have statements of special educational needs.

3. On entry to school there is a mixed spread of ability and attainment.

4. Less than 6% of pupils are from ethnic minority groups and only 3 are from homes in which English is not the first language.

1.3 SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

PUPILS

Number of Pupils in Each Year Group

	Boys	Girls	Total
Reception	7	16	23
Year 1	17	12	29
Year 2	20	17	37
Year 3	15	16	31
Year 4	19	10	29
Year 5	12	15	27
Year 6	16	18	34
Total	106	104	210

Special Educational Needs

Number of pupils having statements of special educational needs 3

Free School Meals

Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals 19.5

Teachers and Classes

Full-time equivalent teachers 7.66

Pupil : Teacher ratio 27.4:1

Teacher : Class ratio 1.09:1

Average class size 30

Teaching time per week

	Hours	Minutes
Reception	23	05
Key Stage 1	23	05
Key Stage 2	23	30

Pupil Attendance

Percentage attendance figures from the Governors' Annual Report to parents and for the third week of the term prior to the term of the inspection.

YEAR	ANNUAL REPORT TO PARENTS	THIRD WEEK IN THE TERM PRIOR TO THE TERM OF THE INSPECTION		
	Unauthorised absence	Actual attendance	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
Year R - 6	0	94.3	5.7	0.0

Number of Exclusions in the last 12 months

YEAR	FIXED PERIOD		PERMANENT		NUMBER FROM ETHNIC MINORITIES	
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Year R - 6	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL (COLUMNS 1-4)	0					

Summary of Key Stage 1 (School and National data) National Curriculum Assessments for 1994

Number of registered pupils in the final year of Key Stage 1

30

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Tasks/Tests	School	National
	% of Pupils achieving Level 2 and above	
Reading		
Writing		
Number		
Teacher Assessments	School	National
	% of Pupils achieving Level 2 and above	
English	75	
Mathematics	81	
Science	81	

Summary of Key Stage 1 (School and National data) National Curriculum Assessments for 1995

Number of registered pupils in the final year of Key Stage 1

30

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Tasks/Tests	School	National
	% of Pupils achieving Level 2 and above	
Reading	70	78
Writing	66	80
Mathematics	67	78
Teacher Assessments	School	National
	% of Pupils achieving Level 2 and above	
English	70	80
Mathematics	70	79
Science	70	84

Summary of Key Stage 2 (School and National data) National Curriculum Assessments for 1995

Number of registered pupils in the final year of Key Stage 2

34

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Tasks/Tests	School	National
	% of Pupils achieving Level 4 and above	
English	66	48
Mathematics	62	44
Science	72	70
Teacher Assessments	School	National
	% of Pupils achieving Level 4 and above	
English	70	56
Mathematics	72	54
Science	79	64

Financial Information

INCOME (£)	Last full financial year 1994-95	Current year 1995-96
Balance brought forward	18,749	* 16,402
Transitional grant (for GM schools)	00,000	00,000
Recurrent income (LMS or AMG, fees)	270,869	252,553
Specific or special purpose grants for curriculum staff development	4,622	4,622
Other income managed by the school; lettings, funds raised etc.	1,081	3,000
TOTAL	<u>295,321</u>	<u>276,577</u>
EXPENDITURE (£)	Last full financial year	Budget allocation for current year*
Teaching staff	216,418	210,034
Other staff	43,907	26,405
Educational resources	5,394	6,785
Premises costs	11,729	11,228
Curriculum and staff development	4,662	4,662
Other expenditure	<u>5,167</u>	<u>9,072</u>
TOTAL	<u>287,277</u>	<u>268,186</u>
Total expenditure per pupil		1,277.08
	(£)	
Expenditure per pupil on educational resources		32.30
	(£)	

* including £4,985 contingency funding

1.4 RECORD OF THE EVIDENCE BASE OF THE INSPECTION

1.A team of five inspectors, including a lay inspector, spent up to four days in school and the standards of achievement, quality of education, efficiency and overall ethos of the school were examined in 68 lessons or parts of lessons. Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and teachers, pupils, governors and the local community. 15% of the pupils in the school were heard read and inspectors examined samples of pupils' work covering the full ability range undertaken during the current school year. The school's documentation was scrutinised; this included policy statements, schemes of work, curriculum plans, the school development plan, budget information, teachers' planning and record files, registers and pupils' individual records. Inspectors viewed photographic records of past events. They examined responses to a parental questionnaire and the Registered Inspector met 17 parents at the pre-inspection meeting.

2. MAIN FINDINGS AND KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

2.1 MAIN FINDINGS

Standards of Achievement

2.Overall standards of achievement are either in line with national expectations or better in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and in most of the foundation subjects. Pupils in some of the classes at Key Stage 2 often achieve standards in mathematics which are higher than the national expectation.

3.At Key Stage 2 standards are high in the foundation subjects of physical education and music. In these subjects almost all pupils achieve the national expectation and many achieve beyond it. Their standards are consistently high for their abilities in these two subjects and this is sometimes also the case in English and history.

4.When pupils' abilities are taken into account, there is also some underachievement, particularly amongst the more able pupils. This is evident in a majority of lessons in the infant classes in English, history and art and occasionally in science, design and technology and music. At Key Stage 2 there is occasional underachievement by some pupils in English, science and design and technology.

Quality of Education Provided

5.The quality of education provided by the school is variable and has both strengths and weaknesses.

6.The quality of learning was sound or better in 70% of the lessons observed and some of these lessons had particularly good features. Pupils were well motivated, consolidated their previous learning and made good progress in the acquisition of new knowledge and skills. In these lessons teachers had planned their work well, based upon their own subject expertise and had created a good, purposeful working atmosphere.

7.At Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress in mathematics, history, physical education and music. In three of the four classes they make good progress in English, developing their skills and competencies as learners and applying their writing skills well across other subjects.

8.At Key Stage 1 pupils' learning was sound or better in fewer than 50% of the lessons observed and the development of their learning skills has some shortcomings particularly related to continuity and sustained progress. In too many lessons pupils' approach to learning is confined to routine completion of commercial worksheets or exercises in textbooks. Whilst such exercises can make a contribution to pupils' learning, the over-dependence upon them results in pupils failing to develop as independent learners or undertaking co-operative tasks and open-ended investigations.

9.At Key Stage 2 there is some high quality teaching. In music and physical education especially, it is

sometimes outstanding. Good quality teaching also contributes well to pupils' successes in some lessons in English, science and information technology. Within the key stage, the quality of teaching is not consistently good in all classes and this results in periods of under-achievement in several subjects, including the core subjects, English and science.

10. Within the infant classes, (the reception class and Key Stage 1), there is an unacceptably high proportion of lessons in which there are shortcomings in the quality of teaching. In almost 50% of the lessons observed there were weaknesses. Some lessons lacked a focus, there was a lack of challenge and teachers did not address the differing needs of individual pupils and groups.

11. Teachers' skills in assessment and recording are underdeveloped. The school's approach to recording progress through the National Curriculum is unduly mechanistic and does not provide the basis for future planning.

12. The generally poor quality of teaching, in three of the school's seven classes, is a serious weakness requiring immediate attention.

Efficiency

13. The type of classroom organisation favoured by several teachers, especially but not exclusively in the infant classes, creates inefficiencies in the use of available accommodation. Pupils often work in small classrooms whilst spacious general purpose areas are relatively under-used. There is minimal use of almost half of the school's available teaching space.

14. The school's arrangements for self-monitoring and evaluation are helpful in determining resource needs and aspects of curriculum coverage. The school does not yet have a sufficiently rigorous approach to reflecting upon teachers' techniques of classroom organisation and management. The headteacher needs to lead the whole staff towards a shared, clearer and broader view of what constitutes effective teaching and learning.

15. The day-to-day routine administration of the school and the arrangements for administering the school's budget are efficient.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

16. The headteacher and governors are very successful in providing clear vision and leadership in terms of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. This has created a climate in which there is good behaviour, good working relationships and a spirit of co-operation and helpfulness in the school. Pupils develop well socially, morally, spiritually and culturally and this is an important area of success, of which the school should be justifiably proud.

2.2 KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

17. To improve the quality of education provided, to raise the standards being achieved and to enhance the efficiency with which the school uses its available resources, the Governing Body and the headteacher should take action in the following order of priority:

- Improve the quality of teaching, especially in the infant classes, by addressing the needs of pupils more closely. A review of teaching strategies and classroom management techniques should include developing approaches for differentiation, ensuring challenge, establishing consistently high expectations and the need to develop pupils' learning skills and competencies.
- Enhance the quality of curriculum leadership so as to provide guidance on teaching methodology alongside that relating to content and resources. Integral to a revised approach to curriculum planning should be the development of a whole school system for assessment and recording which informs planning and contributes to improving standards.

- Introduce a more rigorous approach to self-monitoring and evaluating so as to improve efficiency in detecting and acting upon development needs, especially where they relate to the standards of pupils' achievements, the elimination of underachievement, and the quality of education that pupils receive.
- Ensure that the available accommodation is fully utilised so as to broaden the range of learning opportunities available to the pupils.

3. STANDARDS AND QUALITY

3.1 STANDARDS OF ACHIEVEMENT

1. Throughout the school standards of achievement are in line with national expectations in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and in most of the foundation subjects.

2. Pupils in some of the classes at Key Stage 2 often achieve standards in mathematics which are higher than the national expectation. Some of the pupils have produced pieces of writing, at the upper end of Key Stage 1 and in most Key Stage 2 classes, which is of high quality. These standards of achievement are borne out by the school's results in the most recent national curriculum tests for 7 and 11 year olds.

3. In the foundation subjects standards are high in physical education and music, especially at Key Stage 2 in which almost all pupils achieve the national expectation and many achieve beyond it. In the small number of lessons observed, standards were low at Key Stage 1 in art and also at Key Stage 2 in design and technology.

4. At Key Stage 2 pupils mainly achieve standards that are high for their abilities in mathematics, physical education and music and this is sometimes also the case in English and history.

5. There is considerable variation in the standards achieved in different classes. In some lessons, when pupils' abilities are taken into account, there is underachievement. This was evident in a majority of lessons observed in the reception class and at Key Stage 1 in English, history and art and occasionally in science, design and technology and music. At Key Stage 2 there is underachievement by some pupils in science and design and technology. Underachievement is particularly evident amongst the more able pupils.

6. Throughout the school pupils demonstrate competence in applying and developing their key skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening, number and information technology in their work in different subjects. Their information technology work in English at Key Stage 2 is especially well developed.

7. Underachievement is usually directly related to the quality of teaching and learning and the school needs to ensure that underachievement is minimised by addressing shortcomings in these areas.

3.2 QUALITY OF LEARNING

8. The quality of learning was sound or better in nearly three quarters of the lessons observed but generally better at Key Stage 2 than in the reception class and at Key Stage 1.

9. There are good features in mathematics and history at Key Stage 1, in aspects of English, mathematics, science, information technology, history, geography, music and physical education at Key Stage 2. On occasions learning is of outstanding quality in music and physical education at Key Stage 2. There are shortcomings in some lessons in English, mathematics, science, design and technology and art in both key stages, and also in history and music at Key Stage 1. In most subjects the quality of learning is directly influenced by the quality of teaching and this has a significant effect on standards.

10. At Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress in mathematics when adequate opportunity is given to explore the properties of number, shape, size and measurement. In history and geography there are good lessons in which pupils use reference books and other resource materials to develop their research skills and investigate local and other environments. When given the opportunity, for example in science, pupils are able to develop

their own ideas and make good progress in developing concepts and skills. In physical education and music pupils respond well to challenges and are prepared to suggest ways to improve their own performance. They appreciate opportunities for active involvement and make clear gains in knowledge and performance. In three of the four classes they make good progress in English, and apply their writing skills well across other subjects.

11. At Key Stage 1, whilst there are good features in pupils' learning in mathematics and history, in too many lessons pupils' approach to learning is confined to routine completion of commercial worksheets or exercises in textbooks. The use of these materials can make a contribution to pupils' learning but an over-dependence on them results in pupils failing to develop independent learning skills. There are limited opportunities for co-operative tasks and open-ended investigations. In both key stages an inappropriate pace of learning is often set and skills are over-practised.

12. In both key stages learning has shortcomings when set tasks do not meet the needs of all pupils. On these occasions learning for the more able pupils lacks challenge and is inappropriate for pupils with special educational needs. Across the school there are limited opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in planning and designing their own investigative learning. Some use is made of the general purpose areas in both key stages but these areas are under-used in providing learning opportunities for pupils.

13. Pupils are generally well motivated and enthusiastic learners who demonstrate positive attitudes to school. In lessons which are well planned with clear learning outcomes they consolidate their previous learning and make good progress in the acquisition of new knowledge and skills. On occasions when teachers' own subject expertise and confidence is secure, for example in music and physical education lessons, at Key Stage 2, the quality of pupils' learning is often outstanding and standards of achievement are high. Pupils are attentive listeners and are able to respond to instructions. They are generally responsive and are willing to remain on task. When teachers' expectations are high they respond positively with good levels of motivation. When planning is less effective teachers set inappropriate tasks. This results in inattentiveness, lack of motivation and little progress and is more often the case in the reception class and at Key Stage 1. When required to do so pupils are well able to follow established routines and to accept responsibility for their own equipment.

14. Pupils are competent and make satisfactory use of their skills in speaking and listening and in number across the curriculum. Their learning skills in information technology are sound at both key stages.

4. EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

15. Financial planning is systematic and the headteacher, staff and governors have recently made good progress in moving towards the establishment of closer links between identified curricular needs and budget plans. The governing body has established a Finance Committee with agreed terms of reference. The committee meets regularly, receives monitoring reports from the headteacher and is active in ensuring sound budgetary control. The headteacher and school clerk have received appropriate budget management training and have introduced effective computerised support for the keeping and monitoring of accounts. The school has responded positively to the recommendations of the most recent auditor's report.

16. The headteacher and staff have carried out audits of curriculum development needs and plans are matched to the allocation of GEST funding supporting the development of key areas. This is a good basis from which to strengthen the links between the development plan and budgetary decisions.

17. The school development plan is still in the course of construction and, in order to be an active working document, it would benefit from the inclusion of more precise details of tasks to be undertaken, matched to resource requirements and arrangements for monitoring and evaluation of success. Most monitoring and evaluation of the effect of developments upon pupils' learning is currently of a superficial nature and there are no checks on the cost effectiveness of spending decisions.

18. The school allocates an appropriate proportion of its budget to different resources, including human resources, and money is mainly used efficiently to provide staff and learning resources which promote pupils' achievements. There are three areas in which the efficient use of staff time could be improved:

19. In view of his relatively low timetabled teaching commitment for a school of this size, the headteacher could provide some curriculum release time for co-ordinators to allow them to take a more active role in promoting effective teaching of their subjects.

20. The type of classroom organisation favoured by several teachers reflects a limited range of teaching strategies and approaches to learning. There is an over concentration upon teacher directed and controlled whole class lessons and too few opportunities for pupils to engage in co-operative and independent tasks, especially activities requiring movement and practical experience. This leads to inefficiencies in the use of available accommodation. Pupils often work in small, cramped classrooms whilst spacious general purpose areas are relatively under-used. There is minimal use of almost half of the available teaching space.

21. Budget reconciliation, which is currently done jointly by the headteacher and clerk, could be carried out by one member of staff.

22. When account is taken of pupils' standards of achievement, their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development and the quality of education they receive, the school provides adequate value for money. The school could readily provide good value for money if it were to make the necessary improvements to the quality of education in those areas in which there are shortcomings.

5. PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND BEHAVIOUR

5.1 PUPILS' SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

23. The school's aims emphasise the spiritual and moral dimensions of school life and the ethos of the school reflects the stated aims. The school successfully promotes pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development and this is an area of strength of which all should be justifiably proud.

24. The headteacher and staff provide good role models for the pupils, encouraging a spirit of co-operation and helpfulness within an atmosphere in which individuals are appreciated and valued

25. Examples of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are regularly found as the various aspects of the curriculum are developed. Some of these are informal rather than planned, for example, work on woodlands and wood stresses the conservational responsibilities and the associated moral implications for people in Third World countries. Extra curricular activities such as dancing, music, choral singing, sport and theatre visits are strengths of the school, contributing significantly well to pupils' social and cultural development. Pupils are directly involved in fund raising events for the disadvantaged and for those with physical and other impairments.

26. Statutory requirements for the daily act of worship are met. Provision for the pupils' spiritual development takes place in assemblies where opportunities are given for individual reflection.

27. Other faiths and cultures are explored through history, geography art and other aspects of the curriculum. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed through the school routines. They respond well to the provision. The school recognises the need to promote pupils' understanding of the breadth of society and to maximise their awareness of the cultural richness of the full range of ethnic groups within the local community.

28. Pupils respond very positively to the high quality of provision in this aspect of the school's work.

5.2 BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE

29. The school is an orderly community in which pupils feel safe and secure. They relate well to each other and most obey the rules. The Christian ethos of the school underpins the behaviour of the pupils and most demonstrate the ability to distinguish right from wrong. When in class or around the school the behaviour of pupils is good and supports the standards of learning and achievement. Pupils move in an orderly way

respecting the safety and property of others.

30.The school has recently revised its behaviour and discipline procedures to emphasise a simple system of consistent rewards which are based on positive attitudes. There is no staged process of sanctions for poor behaviour but communication with parents, enlisting their support, is an important feature when pupil behaviour problems occasionally arise. Bullying is not tolerated.

31.There is no written behaviour and discipline policy but there is a set of rules which are published in the information for parents and the handbook for teachers. Parents express satisfaction with the behaviour and discipline within the school.

5.3 ATTENDANCE

32.The level of pupil attendance is good with absence limited to a small number of pupils. School registers are marked up to date and provide a correct record of attendance. Details of attendance are recorded in the school prospectus and in the governors' annual report to parents. The school complies fully with the requirements for recording attendance as detailed in DFE Circular 11/91.

6. SUBJECTS OF THE CURRICULUM AND OTHER CURRICULAR PROVISION

English

33.Throughout the school, in their work in class, the substantial majority of pupils achieve the nationally expected standards in English. In the 1995 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1, 7 year old pupils achieved standards slightly lower than the LEA and national averages. In the tests for 11 year olds, at the end of Key Stage 2, they achieved higher than average scores which were close to the national expectation. Standards of achievement are uneven across the school, being noticeably higher in some classes than in others at each key stage. When their abilities are taken into account, many of the pupils are achieving appropriate levels but, especially in the reception class and at Key Stage 1, a significant minority are underachieving. Underachievement is particularly evident amongst the most and the least able pupils, including those with special educational needs.

34.Standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory throughout the school with most pupils achieving the nationally expected levels. In the reception class pupils are encouraged to take part in class discussions, thereby developing their ability to formulate and express their ideas. At Key Stage 1 they are able to listen, understand and respond appropriately in speech. They understand and practise the conventions of discussion, take turns in speaking, and are beginning to appreciate some of the rules of standard English and language. At Key Stage 2 pupils develop their speaking and listening skills and, by the end of the key stage, the majority express themselves confidently and clearly.

35.Throughout the school the substantial number of pupils achieve the nationally expected standards in reading. Within the school there is a commitment to making early and sustained progress in the development of pupils' reading skills. Many of the pupils in the reception class are showing signs of good progress within the requirements of the Key Stage 1 programme of study. They can recognise letters and words and understand several patterns and letter combinations. These key skills are further developed through regular practice and instruction as the pupils progress through Key Stage 1, with pupils often receiving extra individual help during break times. Some of the pupils read for enjoyment and, in some cases, their reading has led to good quality written work. Whilst pupils make good progress in acquiring the key skills, some attention needs to be given to broadening pupils' reading so as to include the full range of types of text outlined in the National Curriculum programme of study. The generally poor quality of the library restricts this work and its expansion would help provide wider access to literature, including stories and poetry and sources of information.

36.At Key Stage 2 pupils are making good progress in developing as independent and reflective readers. They use their reading skills well in subjects other than English and are beginning to make use of a wide range of

texts for different purposes. Many pupils are members of the local library and frequently read for enjoyment. As with Key Stage 1, the poor quality of the school library means that their access in school to a wide range of texts is restricted and also means that their understanding of library classification systems, catalogues and indexes is underdeveloped.

37. Within the infant classes, most pupils achieve the nationally expected standards in the technical aspects of letter formation and spelling and they make early progress in understanding basic punctuation. Much of this is achieved through the use of workbooks or worksheets and there is insufficient differentiated work matched to pupils' abilities. This leads to underachievement by able pupils who are required to undertake tasks which do not extend their learning, and the less able who are presented with tasks which they find too difficult. Although there are some examples of good quality writing, especially by the older pupils in the key stage who have used a novel as a theme for their writing, pupils have insufficient opportunities to produce pieces of their own writing for different purposes and audiences. The "range" requirements of the Key Stage 1 programme of study receives insufficient attention.

38. At Key Stage 2 pupils in most classes have opportunities to develop their writing skills both in English lessons and in work undertaken in other subjects. They achieve standards which are in line with and on occasions exceed the national expectation. They learn to draft and re-draft their writing which is inspired by a wide variety of stimuli and directed towards varied audiences. They make good use of information technology to organise their ideas and to present their writing in attractive and varied styles. In a minority of lessons at Key Stage 2, the quality of writing is less good. In these lessons undue emphasis is placed upon routine practice of technical skills rather than upon developing those skills within the context of interesting and varied writing tasks. Overall at Key Stage 2, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve standards which are appropriate for their abilities.

39. In English the quality of teaching and learning provided by the school has both strengths and weaknesses. There is considerable teaching expertise and this results in the majority of the pupils developing their skills through a varied and interesting range of activities. However, in three out of the seven classes pupils achieve within a narrow range of experiences. There is a lack of breadth in the variety of approaches to classroom organisation and management. Teachers have limited perceptions of the range of strategies available to them. Restricted use of the general purpose areas constrains opportunities for language development through role play. Teachers over-emphasise teacher-directed tasks.

40. The co-ordinator has produced a curriculum document which forms a useful basis upon which to develop a whole school scheme of work. The school could continue to raise the quality of teaching and learning in English by paying closer attention to scheduling the programmes of study and by clarifying ideas about teaching methodology and approaches to learning.

41. The school invests relatively heavily in commercial textbooks and consumable workbooks to support pupils' work in English. Teachers also retain a large assortment of different texts, many of which are dull, dated in their approach and poorly matched to the requirements of the National Curriculum. The library facilities are split between the two key stages, are poorly stocked and contain many books which are past their best. The school needs to carry out an audit of resources, review its balance of provision between texts and library books and introduce a systematic policy of replenishment and retention.

Mathematics

42. Throughout the school most pupils achieve standards at or beyond the national expectations although in some lessons a significant number of pupils achieve below expectations. In a majority of lessons the majority of pupils achieve appropriate levels for their abilities and sometimes, including half the lessons observed at Key Stage 2 and a third at Key Stage 1, standards are high in relation to pupils' abilities. In a smaller but significant proportion of lessons at both key stages, there is underachievement. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Key Stage 2, most are competent in a wide range of mathematical skills consistent with the requirements of the National Curriculum. They are confident in making calculations and with the associated application of mathematics to everyday life. The 1995 National Curriculum assessments indicate achievements at Key Stage 1 that are slightly below national expectations. At Key Stage 2 achievements are close to the national

expectation but higher than the national and LEA averages.

43.The overall quality of the pupils' learning in mathematics is at least sound with some lessons showing good features. In the reception class pupils are making significant progress in the recognition of numbers and are developing an understanding of their use in everyday life. At Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' learning is good where adequate opportunity is provided for them to explore the properties of number, shape and size. Pupils recognise the need for accuracy when manipulating numbers and for insight when addressing mathematical problems. They enjoy applying their knowledge to practical situations when engaging in a range of counting and measuring activities. Pupils take pride in the presentation of their work. There are shortcomings in a few lessons at both key stages. In these lessons there are important gaps with respect to pupils' understanding of some mathematical terms. This occurs where learning is not reinforced or extended by practical activities and meaningful discussion.

44.The quality of teaching observed was sound with some good features in two thirds of the lessons seen. In the best of these lessons work is carefully planned and worksheets are appropriate for the range of pupils' abilities. Clear introduction of the topic is followed by good support to individual pupils by the teacher. Good use is made of support staff and parents who work with pupils outside the classroom in the resource areas. There are clear teaching goals and appropriate levels of expectation. Number and practical measuring tasks are matched to pupils' abilities. Teachers are confident in their knowledge of mathematics and how it can be taught effectively to pupils with a range of abilities. The pupils are responsive to high teacher expectations, particularly in the use of the language of mathematics and the application of numerical and problem solving strategies to everyday life.

45.In one third of the lessons observed, there were a significant number of shortcomings. Teachers did not use appropriate mathematical vocabulary and questioning to explore pupils' knowledge and understanding. Poor use was made of support staff.

46.A broad and balanced curriculum is planned to cover the requirements of the National Curriculum. This is outlined in a policy document. At Key Stages 1 and 2 work is largely based on a commercial scheme, the use of which is currently under review. In carrying out a review the co-ordinator should have regard to the need to provide guidance on a repertoire of teaching strategies and learning approaches which promote high standards in mathematics. This is especially necessary for those teachers who are less confident when teaching the subject.

Science

47.Throughout the school pupils achieve overall standards which are in line with national expectations. Most pupils achieve appropriate levels for their abilities in most aspects of science. At present the investigative nature of scientific enquiry is under developed and many pupils underachieve in this aspect, particularly in the infant classes. Investigative work is too frequently teacher directed with little opportunity for pupils to plan, design and develop their own investigations. When pupils are given such opportunities they achieve standards which are good in relation to the national expectation and appropriate to their abilities. In 1995 the National Curriculum assessment results for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 identified a lower proportion of pupils attaining Level 2 than the national (72% against 84% nationally). Results for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 indicate standards close to the national average.

48.In the reception class and at Key Stage 1 pupils are developing their understanding of seasonal change. They explore the effects of light and are beginning to appreciate the importance of food on their bodies. At Key Stage 2 pupils show a greater understanding of their own bodies and are developing the concepts of change and growth. They can describe and explain physical phenomena, for example when working with electric circuits, and are beginning to understand the impact of science on their lives. Good opportunities to develop health education are planned as part of this subject.

49.The quality of learning is sound overall with good features at Key Stage 2 and with some shortcomings at both key stages. Pupils have positive attitudes to this subject. They listen attentively and most work well with good levels of concentration. When given the opportunity, they are able to develop their own ideas into

achievable investigations and make good progress in developing concepts and skills. In some lessons there is an over reliance on worksheets which represent a lack of challenge for many pupils. In these cases learning is less than sound. For some pupils difficulty in reading a worksheet leads to inattention and underachievement. Pupils are beginning to appreciate the concept of a "fair test" but this awareness is not consistently developed as pupils proceed from class to class.

50.The quality of teaching in the reception class and at Key Stage 1 is generally sound but there are some shortcomings. At Key Stage 2 teaching frequently has good features but also has some shortcomings. There are good lessons in which teaching is good. These lessons are well planned and utilise sufficient, good quality resources. Tasks are related to previous work and challenge pupils. Teacher interaction with pupils is positive and good use is made of open ended questions to further pupils' thinking. Pupils are given opportunities to plan their own experiments. Teaching is less successful in those lessons in which the emphasis is on the completion of a worksheet and there is insufficient guidance to pupils. Teachers' understanding of the development of the concepts and skills involved is not secure and this leads to missed opportunities to extend pupils' learning to enhance the standards they achieve.

51.Considerable progress has been made in adapting the scheme of work to meet the requirements of the new orders for the National Curriculum. The co-ordinator has ensured that the programmes of study are now in place. Teachers plan their work but many plans place emphasis on the content of lessons whilst under-estimating the concepts and skills to be developed. This limits opportunities for on-going assessment and contributes to superficial comments in pupils' records. Consideration should be given to including the development of concepts and skills in the scheme of work. The role of the co-ordinator requires further development so as to assist others in the teaching and learning of science. This would contribute to overcoming present inconsistencies

Technology

Design and Technology

52.In the reception class, there was limited evidence available of design and technology upon which to make judgements. The evidence available indicates that most pupils achieve national expectations. At Key Stage 1, whilst some pupils achieve national expectations, a significant minority are achieving below this level. Pupils are able to use simple tools and make choices, for example in an activity related to designing and making wheeled vehicles. They produce simple drawings to demonstrate what they would like to make. Pupils are achieving less well in their designing activities. At Key Stage 2, whilst some pupils achieve national expectations, many are not achieving the expected standard. Their designs are too often superficial and, although they take care with their making, their skills are restricted.

53.When pupils' abilities are taken into account a significant minority are underachieving in design and technology at both key stages. Pupils sometimes achieve satisfactory results in their making despite being provided with inappropriate tools and materials. Their skills, especially at Key Stage 2, are generally underdeveloped and too often they do not achieve successful results.

54.Pupils' learning in design and technology is sound in some lessons but there are also some shortcomings at both key stages. Most pupils are consistently well motivated. They have good attitudes to their work and persevere when given opportunities. However, they do not make sufficient progress in developing designing and making skills. Their designing work is often too superficial to enable them to realise their work in a wide range of materials. Whilst some account is taken of quality finish, they make too little progress in their making to enable appropriate achievement. This lack of progress in learning and under-achievement by some pupils can be directly related to the quality of teaching.

55.At both key stages the quality of teaching in design and technology is unsatisfactory. Teachers work hard to plan appropriate lessons but often lack the knowledge and skills to enable pupils to make progress in designing and making. Designing skills are particularly under-represented in teaching. At both key stages, the designing and making activities are given to non-teaching assistants to supervise. Whilst they are usually briefed about the task and are diligent, they are not enabled to facilitate the most effective teaching and, consequently,

learning in design and technology.

56.The school has made progress in recent years in trying to implement the National Curriculum for design and technology. Teachers have had school based in-service training and advisory teacher support. However, there is still some lack of teacher knowledge about the nature of the subject and this has an adverse impact on the quality of teaching and on the standards pupils achieve. Pupils use a full range of materials but the appropriate development of knowledge and skills about them and the use of tools to manipulate them is not always evident. Too often pupils work with non-teaching support staff outside the classroom. More flexible use of the accommodation might better facilitate more appropriate teaching and learning strategies and so develop the subject. Opportunities for the co-ordinator to develop colleagues' skills and knowledge of designing and making would help to develop the subject in the school.

Information Technology

57.No evidence was available from the reception class to make judgements about information technology.

58.At Key Stage 1 standards of achievement in information technology are in line with national expectations. Pupils are able to develop their skills using a range of programmes, including word processing and programmes linked to language and number. They use the keyboard with increasing accuracy. At Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils are achieving national expectations. They build on previously developed skills and use and develop their word processing and graphics programmes to good effect in a range of curriculum areas. When pupils' abilities are taken into account, they are achieving appropriate levels at both key stages. Pupils show developing competencies with a range of hardware and software.

59.Pupils' learning in information technology is sound at both key stages. They make good early progress in becoming familiar with the keyboard and in developing their work, relating it well to other areas of the curriculum. Some good work was seen. Pupils make sound progress using graphics packages at Key Stage 2 and achieve effective results to illustrate some creative writing. Pupils are consistently well motivated when using the computer and, when working in pairs or groups, co-operate well. They display interest in their work and this contributes to the development of their skills and understanding.

60.The overall quality of teaching in information technology is sound at both key stages. Teachers use a focused range of programmes matched both to the experience of the class and to the range of curriculum experience offered. Activities are well planned and often develop pupils' information technology skills within other curriculum areas. Opportunities to check on pupils' progress are taken. Some good research work in geography was done by Key Stage 2 pupils using a CD ROM to valuable effect. Teacher intervention ensured that pupils progressed appropriately.

61.The school has made considerable progress in information technology in recent years. Hardware has been upgraded and the school is now in a position to deliver all aspects of the National Curriculum requirements. As yet pupils are working most often on word processing, graphics packages and programmes linked to language and mathematics. The school has plans to extend work on data bases, CD ROM and control as these areas are currently underdeveloped across the school. The co-ordinator has worked hard to foster the skills and knowledge of the teaching staff and to improve their confidence with information technology. This range of skill and expertise might now be further enhanced to ensure that pupils develop and maintain their progress across the range of information technology requirements.

History

62.Throughout the school the majority of pupils achieve standards in history that are appropriate for their ages and abilities. In the reception class and at Key Stage 1 pupils demonstrate an awareness of time and are able to understand the use and purpose of artefacts and describe the lives of the people who used them. Most are able to make comparisons between their own lives and those of children in the past. At Key Stage 2 pupils are able to give reasons for the actions of historical figures and can discuss issues in the context of historical facts and with respect to their moral implications.

63.The quality of learning is at least sound in most lessons. At Key Stage 2 the quality of learning has good features. Pupils use reference books and other resource materials to investigate local history and the changes that took place before and since the Industrial Revolution in the Nelson area. They use their writing skills to express their interpretations of the factual material. Pupils demonstrate an interest in each others' work and opinions. In the infant classes, pupils engage in useful activities which establish an understanding of time and explore several themes as these have evolved over time. Most show interest in their work and are well motivated but there are also occasions when some lose interest and are inattentive.

64.Most of the teaching of history is sound. Some lessons are especially good quality. In the best lessons teachers make good use of pictorial material to recall and explore previously taught historical facts. They use artefacts and other resources to illustrate ideas and the pace of the lessons maintains pupils' interest levels. Questioning technique is good and is directed towards individual pupils in order to elicit their knowledge and reinforce the knowledge and understanding of facts and events. In a small proportion of work at Key Stage 1, the teaching has shortcomings in important areas. Teachers use historical terminology which is inappropriate for young pupils, without explanation and without effective questioning to explore the pupils' understanding. It is on these occasions that the quality of learning suffers and levels of motivation are low.

65.The curriculum content, in history, is broad and balanced for most pupils. There is good choice of the units of study that are outlined in a comprehensive policy document which is currently under review. Plans have been developed by individual teachers are consistent with the requirements of the National Curriculum.

66.All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs have full access to the history curriculum. There is some differentiation of the work for pupils of varying abilities but this is not a strong feature of the subject.

Geography

67.Only a very small sample of geography lessons was observed during the inspection and these were exclusively in Key Stage 2. Judgements about standards are based upon this sample plus an examination of pupils' previous work.

68.Pupils in the reception class make a start to setting the context for future development of geographical skills and understanding. Teachers' plans indicate that they are encouraged to observe and reflect upon what they see in their own environment, learning something about they way in which they relate to the local community and environment. Their skills are developed as they progress through Key Stage 1, during which they begin to do some elementary map work. They describe and are encouraged to make judgements about their environment, enriching their ideas, where possible, with short outings to places of interest. Standards at Key Stage 1 are in line with national expectations and, in most cases, are well matched to pupils' abilities.

69.At Key Stage 2 pupils are able to further develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in geography, achieving standards in line with expectations and appropriate to their abilities. They study a range of locations, using large and small scale maps, textbooks and visits to help them make progress. Good use is already being made of the new computer and CD ROM to enhance pupils' research skills.

70.Overall standards of achievement in geography in the school are in line with national expectations.

71.Throughout the school the quality of learning in geography is more varied than in other parts of the curriculum. Pupils use a variety of approaches to learning, including listening to whole class presentations, using textbook exercises, mapping, research and fieldwork. They show interest in their work and communicate their ideas in different ways. At Key Stage 2 their work in geography makes a good contribution to the development of the key skills of literacy and numeracy and they are also beginning to apply their information technology skills to the study of the subject.

72.The small sample of teaching observed was sound and some lessons had good features. Teachers had a good understanding of the subject, moved the lessons along at an appropriate pace and communicated the learning objectives of the lesson well to the pupils. The school has planned a scheme of work which addresses the requirements of the National Curriculum and allocates different locations to the classes so as to avoid curriculum

overlap. There is no indication of special educational needs provision in the policy document other than by the outcome of the pupils' work. There is scope for developing different tasks for pupils of varying abilities.

73. The co-ordinator has been active in drawing together guidance on the subject, supplementing this with discussions in staff meetings and providing suitable resources for teachers and pupils. All teachers have been actively involved in in-house development of the subject.

Art

74.No lessons in art were seen in the reception class but pupils' previous work indicates that most can represent ideas using drawing, painting and other media with confidence and expression and achieve standards appropriate for their age and ability. At Key Stage 1, whilst some pupils are achieving the national expectation, many are achieving below it. Pupils are able to use paint and to mix colours well. Their previous work shows that they are able to do some simple collage work and they have experience of working in a range of media, including clay. However, they are not consistently achieving appropriate standards as they do not have sufficient opportunities to learn a range techniques and skills. At Key Stage 2, most pupils achieve the national expectation in art. They work in a range of media and are able to give an appropriate personal response. They develop sound observational drawing skills and a range of printing techniques. When pupils' abilities are taken into account, a minority of pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 are underachieving. This underachievement can be directly linked to the quality of teaching.

75.At Key Stage 1, pupils learning in art has some shortcomings. Pupils work confidently and they are able to use their previous knowledge, for example of colour mixing, to good effect. However, the purpose of the activities is not always clear to the pupils and too often existing skills and knowledge are rehearsed and practised rather than progressed through effective teaching. Pupils are consistently well motivated and work confidently even when teaching is less than sound. At Key Stage 2 pupils' learning in art is generally sound although there are occasions when it has shortcomings. Too often pupils are engaged in activities which do not extend their knowledge and skills, concentrating only on practising skills over which they already have mastery. Again, pupils are well motivated and concentrate well and enjoy art activities.

76.At Key Stage 1, teaching in art has shortcomings. Teachers plan art activities diligently, but these plans focus on the outcome of the activity rather than on the development of skills and techniques. Too often, the majority of pupils worked with the teacher on a low grade sticking or simple colouring activity whilst another adult worked with small groups on focused activities. Although the helper was well briefed, the main teaching of the art activities was not done by the class teacher. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching was sound overall but had some shortcomings. Some sound teaching of painting techniques was seen which enabled pupils to develop their knowledge of colour mixing and of applying paint to develop an approach to landscape. The teacher had a sound grasp of the technique required and through direct teaching was able to encourage pupils to refine their work and achieve good quality results.

77.Art is valued within the school and pupils' achievements in art are celebrated in displays. Pupils have access to a broad art curriculum which is enhanced through visits. Some good work was seen as a result of a visit to Grizedale Forest by Key Stage 2 pupils. There is an emphasis on work in paint and drawing although some three-dimensional work was seen. Pupils make progress in drawing skills although not all teachers are sufficiently knowledgeable and confident to build on pupils' skills in this area. The work of other artists is referred to in teachers' plans and some good work was seen relating to the natural landscape. The school should now consider improving the knowledge and skills of teachers to enable a more systematic approach to the teaching of art to be developed. This will build on the skills and capabilities of some teaching staff and develop more consistent achievement in art for all pupils.

Music

78.Overall standards of achievement in music are good with many pupils achieving standards that are higher than the national expectation and high for their abilities.

79.During the period of inspection there was no opportunity to observe the teaching of music in the reception class. Judgements on standards for these pupils are made on observation of assemblies and on evidence from teachers' plans. Standards of achievement for these pupils and for those at Key Stage 1 are mainly in line with national expectations and pupils achieve appropriate standards for their abilities. They enjoy singing and many achieve good standards but there are indications that there are insufficient opportunities for them to play musical instruments. Most pupils are able to respond well to questioning, sing in time and can clap rhythms.

80.

At Key Stage 2 music is a strength of the school. It contributes to the development of pupils' self-esteem, their cultural and social development and plays a positive part in many aspects of school life. At this key stage, pupils' achievements in relation to national expectations and their abilities are frequently good and singing is of a high standard. Pupils sing expressively and with confidence from a range of materials in a variety of styles and moods. Most pupils have good voice control, pitch and rhythmic awareness. They demonstrate technical control in the playing of instruments and can play in groups of varying size. These abilities are used well in school assemblies and are reflected in the standards achieved by the school choir which has won prizes in a number of competitions.

81.The quality of learning at Key Stage 1 is variable with some strengths and some weaknesses. Pupils are generally enthusiastic, apply their listening skills and respond with interest. They can discriminate loud and soft sounds and appreciate differences in tempo. Learning is unsatisfactory when pupils fail to build upon present concepts and skills, particularly in the playing of instruments. At Key Stage 2 the quality of learning is usually good and often of a high standard. Pupils make good progress in their ability to use their voices and play instruments. They appreciate active involvement and sustain interest. The quality of performance reflects the strong commitment to the subject and pupils make clear gains in knowledge and with respect to the quality of their performance.

82.The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is variable with both strengths and weaknesses. When teaching is sound there is an acceptable pace with an understanding of the musical elements involved. Explanations are clear and there is a balance between teacher explanation and pupils' involvement. Teaching is less than sound when knowledge of the subject is not secure and pupils rehearse skills with little development. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching undertaken by the specialist teacher is always good and at times of a high standard. There is a confident understanding of this subject, particularly in the development of singing. Lessons are well planned and the enthusiasm of the teacher influences pupils and contributes to the standards achieved.

83.At present the school does not have a co-ordinator for music. There is a scheme of work, based upon commercial materials, which ensures coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study. The limited support available to teachers of the infant classes contributes to variable standards in music at this stage and the school should now consider strategies to overcome this. Resources are generally of good quality but consideration should be given to increasing the number of tuned instruments to support music across the curriculum, particularly in the infant classes.

Physical Education

84.Standards of achievement in physical education are one of the strengths of the school with the majority of pupils achieving or exceeding the national expectations.

85.Pupils under five and those at Key Stage 1 generally achieve nationally expected standards in physical education. In relation to age and abilities, they achieve appropriate standards with some at Key Stage 1 achieving high standards in gymnastics. At Key Stage 2 the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve good and frequently high standards in relation to national expectations and with regard to their abilities. At this key stage, achievement in swimming is good and pupils' high standards in gymnastics are an important feature of the school. All pupils are encouraged to take a full part in lessons and do so with enthusiasm and skill. The school gives a priority to this subject and this is reflected in the range of extra curricular activities available for Key Stage 2 pupils. Success in a variety of inter-school events motivates pupils and contributes to the standards being achieved.

86.The quality of learning for the infant pupils is sound. Most pupils are motivated by these activities. They listen when required and enjoy opportunities to demonstrate their ideas and skills. With help and guidance they are beginning to take responsibility for the organisation of their equipment. At Key Stage 2 learning is often good, especially in swimming. In gymnastics learning is of a high standard in all classes. Pupils work hard and are fully committed to these activities. Most are eager to demonstrate their own achievements and can appreciate the skilled performance of others. They respond well to challenges and are prepared to suggest ways to improve their own performance. All pupils are familiar with and adhere to established routines. They are dressed

appropriately for the activity, are aware of their own safety and that of others.

87. Across the school the standard of teaching is at least sound. At Key Stage 2 there are good features in the teaching of swimming and high standards in gymnastics. Teachers are generally confident in their understanding of the required skills and account is taken of pupils' experience and ability. When teaching is of high standard there is an excellent grasp of the technical aspects of the activity including the development of the relevant skills. There is an emphasis on quality of performance with high expectations of every pupil. Lessons are well managed. There are good relationships between teacher and pupils.

88. The management of this subject is good and the school fulfils the requirements of the National Curriculum. The co-ordinator has produced a policy statement and scheme of work which includes detailed guidance for all staff. The requirements of the National Curriculum are in place. Teachers assess and record progress in this subject but the quality of records is inconsistent and they do not always reflect the standards achieved by pupils. Resources are good and effectively stored.

Early Years

89. The term 'Early Years' is applied to those pupils in the Reception Class who are below statutory school age. Pupils are legally required to attend school from the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday. The inspection took place towards the end of the second term of the school year. At the time of the inspection, approximately two thirds of the pupils in the reception class were still below statutory school age.

90. Pupils in the Early Years have settled well into school, having had the benefit of a well established induction programme. They are confident when mixing with adults and with each other. They are generally attentive and are willing to undertake the tasks assigned to them with ability and enthusiasm. They are making sound progress in developing the basic skills of literacy and numeracy through a range of activities. They take part in class discussions and undertake written exercises related to the development of the technical skills involved in forming letters, words and numerals. There are planned opportunities for pupils to use a range of tools and equipment, including physical education apparatus, and for them to express themselves through music, drawing, painting, modelling and drama.

91. In most areas of learning their achievements are in line with normally expected standards for pupils of this age but they are often achieving within a fairly narrow range of experiences. The quality of education that they are currently receiving is adversely affected by the discontinuity caused by long-term absence and superficial guidance to supply staff about the school's curriculum requirements.

7. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE FINDINGS

7.1 QUALITY OF TEACHING

92. The quality of teaching is sound or better in the majority of lessons observed but is variable across the school. At Key Stage 2 a high proportion of lessons observed had good features and some of these were outstanding. Within the whole school there were also many lessons in which there were shortcomings. These were mainly, but not exclusively, in the reception class and at Key Stage 1. Nearly half of all lessons in the infant classes have shortcomings, some significant, and this is a serious weakness of the school which requires immediate attention.

93. High quality teaching takes place in music and physical education at Key Stage 2. Characteristics include the considerable expertise and thorough understanding of the development of the subject by both specialist teachers, lessons which are well planned and challenging activities carefully matched to pupils' abilities. There is an excellent understanding of the technical aspects of the activity and an emphasis on quality performance with high expectations of every pupil. A feature of these lessons is the creation of a positive supporting environment and there are good relationships between teachers and their pupils.

94. In the poorer lessons at Key Stage 1 the pace of work is slow, the focus of the lesson is not always clear,

tasks lack challenge and work is insufficiently closely matched to pupils' abilities. The emphasis on whole class teaching, though regularly used in these classes, is often an inappropriate strategy. At times, an over-long exposition and teacher-dominated discussion results in inattentiveness on the part of some pupils and stifles opportunities for their language development. The lack of planned opportunities for pupils' own investigative learning restricts progress and the development of skills in some subjects. There is also some good teaching at Key Stage 1. In these lessons teachers have clear learning objectives and appropriate levels of expectation for all pupils and appropriate use is made of accommodation outside the classroom.

95. Teachers work hard in planning lessons but too often the emphasis is on subject knowledge and the resources to be used with less attention to learning outcomes. There are examples of good planning, especially at Key Stage 2, in which lessons build upon previous learning and objectives are communicated to the pupils. Teaching strategies are well matched to the purpose of the lesson. There is a good pace in these lessons and pupils make gains in concepts and skills. When planning is less effective activities are chosen without adequate consideration of the desired learning outcomes. There is a lack of pace, especially with the more able pupils, some disengagement of pupils and missed opportunities to extend learning. The lack of detailed planning reduces the effectiveness of non-teaching staff in making a contribution to pupils' activities.

96. Teachers' subject knowledge and confidence is not yet secure in all subjects. The absence of detailed guidance in the development of concepts and skills for some subjects contributes to weaknesses in planning, to inappropriate teaching strategies and to inadequate assessment of pupils' progress.

7.2 ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING

97. Teachers make good use of informal assessment in day to day responses to pupils, including praise to motivate pupils and help raise standards. However, more strategic assessment to inform and enable the effective planning of work for the whole class is less evident. Pupils' work is diligently marked by teachers. However, the marking policy is not always consistently applied throughout the school.

98. Whilst some analysis of standardised test results is undertaken in order to diagnose areas of weakness, assessment is not systematically used to inform teaching and learning and to improve individual pupil performance. Opportunities for the assessment of pupils are not routinely built into teachers' plans and teachers do not identify learning objectives for activities against which each pupil's performance can be assessed. There is a mechanistic approach to assessment and recording using tick lists based on level descriptions. This approach is not in line with SCAA recommendations nor does it provide much useful information to promote higher standards for pupils. Some good work was seen in information technology where older pupils were involved in recording their own achievements and progress. This practice could be extended to other subjects and year groups.

99. The school complies with the statutory requirements for recording National Curriculum assessments. Arrangements relating to pupils with statements of special educational needs meet statutory requirements both in terms of procedures and annual reviews which are found to be useful to parents. Parents receive annual reports on their child's progress in the summer term and these are considered to be useful and informative. However, they do not always describe pupils gains in knowledge and skills in the subject.

100. All staff have received training and the school now needs to develop and document a systematic approach to assessment. This should be based on effective planning to meet individual pupils' needs and should emphasise the need to identify assessment opportunities and techniques.

7.3 THE CURRICULUM

(i) Quality and range

101. The school seeks to provide a broad curriculum which includes the subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education, health education and personal and social education. Staff have been rigorous in considering the curriculum content required to implement the revised orders for the National Curriculum but have not yet

given sufficient attention to how it is to be delivered. This has resulted in a curriculum which, at Key Stage 1, is variable in quality and narrow in focus in some aspects of English, science, history, art, design and technology and music. This is also the case, at Key Stage 2, in some aspects of English, science and design and technology. The aspects of the curriculum which require attention include increasing opportunities for pupils to experience practical and investigative learning, including role play, research and problem solving. The present curriculum results in inconsistencies in the quality of education provided. Underachievement in several classes means that pupils' do not all reach the very high standards which the school is capable of achieving.

102. Although co-ordinators have provided guidance to colleagues on curriculum content through policies and schemes of work, present documentation offers limited guidance in some subjects. Teachers, especially in those classes in which the quality of teaching is poor, would benefit from more explicit guidance about classroom organisation and management. The quality of the curriculum is not monitored or evaluated on a whole school basis. In lessons which had been well planned, are based upon the subject expertise of the teacher, the quality of the curriculum was good and pupils made progress in the acquisition of new knowledge and skills. The role of the co-ordinator is insufficiently developed to assist colleagues less confident in their subject and present lack of non-contact time inhibits opportunities for in-class support of other colleagues in improving their delivery of the curriculum.

103. Provision for pupils under five is generally well managed with effective induction procedures which enable pupils to settle into school routines. The curriculum for this age group includes all areas of learning but some areas need to be planned more rigorously, for example practical experiences in science.

104. Time allocations to subjects are generally appropriate and valuable use is made of time not devoted to the basic curriculum in enhancing work in music, physical education and the education of pupils for personal relationships. Homework is given on a regular basis and contributes to pupils' overall knowledge and understanding.

105. The curriculum is enhanced by a number of well planned educational visits and by pupils' involvement in inter-school events. A good range of extra curricular provision including music clubs and physical education activities contribute to pupils' learning, the standards they achieve and to developing the ethos of the school.

106. The governing body has made good progress in being involved in the development of the curriculum. Governors recognise and fulfil their role in monitoring and evaluating this work.

(ii) Equality of opportunity

107. Whilst there is no formal policy for equality of opportunity a commitment to equality is implicit in other documentation. The ethos of the school promotes equal opportunities in its broadest sense. Boys and girls mix well together in classrooms and share responsibilities around the school. Equal demands are made on boys and girls when contributing in lessons. Equal access is given to all pupils in physical education activities, including team games and some inter-school events. The school has determined to continue the practice of segregating boys and girls when lining up or recording names in class registers.

108. The headteacher has ensured that all recently drafted curriculum documents contain a statement of equality of opportunity. Staff are aware of the issues and demonstrate a sensitive approach based on their knowledge of pupils. However, planned tasks in lessons do not always meet the needs of the full ability range. This is especially evident in the case of the more able pupils and also those with special educational needs in lessons in which there is no support. The use made of support is not always as effective as it could be and should be reviewed. Governors have ensured that the school's charging policy recognises the needs of all pupils and should now consider developing a written policy for equality of opportunity.

7.4 PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

109. Across the whole school the overall standards of achievement of pupils with special educational needs are generally appropriate to their abilities. There is support for the small number of pupils with statements of special

educational needs and the arrangements for statutory review of their statements meet the requirements. The school has a broad policy for special educational needs which is modelled on the Code of Practice. There are effective arrangements for operating the staged process of assessment which conform to the Code of Practice and include a register, individual education programmes and target setting.

110.The quality of teaching and learning provided for pupils with special educational needs reflects that provided more widely in the school. A small number of pupils with special educational needs receive additional support, either individually or in groups. However, there are occasions upon which work in class, without available support, is not sufficiently differentiated and where insufficient account is taken of individual pupils' learning difficulties. The overall quality of support teaching should be monitored more closely so as to ensure that is well matched to pupils' needs. There are both strengths and weaknesses in the quality of provision in all parts of the school. A whole-school review of teaching and learning strategies should also reflect the requirement to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs.

111.The governors with responsibility for special educational needs is actively involved and a regular report is received by the governing body. The need to give financial support to identified areas of special educational need is reflected in the current school development plan.

112.The headteacher is also actively involved in the arrangements for pupils with special educational needs, through arranging diagnostic assessment of individual pupils, dealing directly with parents and writing individual reports. The role of the special educational needs co-ordinator could usefully be developed to include monitoring the quality of curriculum delivery.

113.External services are used appropriately to support pupils with statements and make an important contribution to ensuring that the requirements of statements are met.

7.5 MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

114.The school has established its aims and purposes, including a mission statement and lists of aims in the brochure and staff handbook. These emphasise the Catholicity of the school and its development as a Christian community. Curricular aims are indicated in the staff handbook.

115.The headteacher and governing body fulfil their legal obligations and their work is characterised by commitment and concern for the well-being and progress of the pupils. The leadership provided by the governing body and headteacher has strengths but there are also some areas in which developments are necessary.

116.The headteacher and governors are successful in providing clear vision and leadership in terms of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. This has created the climate in which there are good working relationships and a spirit of co-operation and helpfulness in the school. This positive ethos contributes to good pupil behaviour and to a unity of purpose within the school which is sensed and appreciated by parents. In this area of its work the school is very successful in meeting its stated aims.

117.Curriculum leadership is less strong. Staff, supported by curriculum co-ordinators, have spent time clarifying their coverage of the requirements of the National Curriculum. Insufficient attention has been given to establishing varied approaches to teaching and to ensuring that teachers adopt strategies best fitted to different purposes. The lack of leadership in this area of the school's work has allowed a prevalence of teacher directed exercises, often from commercial texts or photocopied worksheets. Teaching in several classes is too frequently characterised by activities in which pupils rehearse skills rather than apply them, and there is little opportunity for them to undertake activities such as role play and open-ended investigations. There are no arrangements for self-monitoring and evaluation of teaching within the school and too little reflection and self-criticism of approaches to classroom organisation. Good and on occasions outstanding teaching exists in the school and it is necessary to spread the influence of this good practice to those parts of the school where it is less evident. The headteacher needs to lead the whole staff towards a clearer and broader view of what constitutes effective teaching and learning.

118.Co-ordinators are effective in leading discussions and in providing written guidance on curriculum content but the role of the curriculum co-ordinator in managing the implementation of the curriculum is under-developed. This is exacerbated by the lack of non-contact time.

119.The school has begun the process of systematic development planning. It is now important that the good progress already made is extended so as to provide a plan by which improvements in the school can be brought about.

120.Routine administration and organisation are carried out effectively and there is an appropriate allocation of duties to different members of staff. Communications within and beyond the school are good.

121.The overall quality of management of the school is strong in terms of the ethos and positive working climate that it engenders. From this position of strength, the school is well placed to make the necessary improvements in its management of the curriculum.

7.6 STAFF, LEARNING RESOURCES AND ACCOMMODATION

(i) Teaching and non-teaching staff

122.The school has a loyal, long-serving staff. Although current class teaching and curriculum responsibilities do not match some initial phases and subject qualifications, in-service opportunities have had a positive effect on the teaching staff and consequently on the standards of achievement and quality of education provided. However, professional development opportunities have not been consistently applied across the school and significant post-entry training has not always been undertaken to meet teachers' needs. Teachers sometimes lack a sufficient range of pedagogical skills to facilitate pupils' learning and so raise achievement.

123.Where needs have been identified and met through whole school training, for example in information technology, this has had a positive effect on the standards of achievement and the quality of education. Training needs are more generally planned to meet individual teachers' curriculum responsibilities and are not always identified to meet whole school priorities through the school development plan.

124.The deployment and management of staff for the organisation of the curriculum is effective in relation to some staff but in other cases effectiveness is inhibited by poor quality curriculum planning. During the inspection the deployment of long-term supply staff, without adequate guidance on the school's established curriculum, has caused discontinuity and has hindered progression for some pupils.

125.The headteacher has a relatively small timetabled teaching commitment for a school of this size. A modest increase would enhance his ability to monitor the work of classes and would also facilitate the development of the role of the curriculum co-ordinator.

126.Job descriptions for teaching and non-teaching staff are available. The majority have been revised and signed within the past year. The school will complete its first round of appraisal by the end of the summer term.

127.Non-teaching assistants, students and other adult helpers are supportive and work hard. They are insufficiently involved in the planning of work with teachers and the learning objectives of activities for which they have oversight is not made clear to them. Consequently, although supportive of pupils, they do not always facilitate pupils' learning.

(ii) Resources for learning

128.Overall, the school has sufficient resources for the curriculum currently offered. Increased flexibility in teaching approaches, in the breadth of the curriculum, and in particular an increased range of practical and investigative work will require the provision of additional resources. This should help to increase the standards of achievement of pupils, particularly at Key Stage 1, and also the quality of learning.

129.The school has invested heavily in commercial textbooks and schemes. However, the majority of the books in the junior library are dated and are in need of renewal. In some subjects resources are accessible to enable pupils to make choices and to use them appropriately. In music and physical education where this has a positive effect on standards of achievement and in the quality of learning. However, in other subjects resources are not sufficiently accessible to enable pupils to make choices.

130.The school needs to introduce a systematic policy of replenishment and extension of resources and strategies for making them more accessible to pupils.

(iii) Accommodation

131.Internal accommodation is attractive and well designed. The large hall is appropriate for masses, assemblies, drama, social gatherings and a range of physical education activities. Displays around the school are colourful and many reflect the work of pupils in some areas of the curriculum. Pupils' achievements are celebrated in some displays but these are not consistently labelled.

132.The classroom bases are small in relation to the pupil numbers in some classes. However, there are large adjacent resource areas which are currently under-used. The predominant approach of employing whole class teaching means that these areas are not used to best effect to promote independent learning for pupils though practical and investigative activities. More flexible approaches to teaching and learning would facilitate more efficient use of these areas and would improve the quality of learning and standards of achievement of pupils. Currently these areas are sectioned off to provide small group areas with tables and seating. Appropriate practical activities, for example, role play, sand, water and construction activities are not provided either in these areas or in the classrooms for the younger pupils. The organisation of the teaching areas, and, in particular, the use of the resource areas, has an adverse affect on standards of achievement and on the quality of pupils' learning.

133.The grounds are attractive and the school has worked hard to develop a conservation area although this has suffered some damage from vandals. The playground, although of necessity terraced because of the geography of the land, is used safely by Key Stage 1 pupils. Key Stage 2 pupils have separate playground space which is well used. The school grounds are litter free and well maintained on a day to day basis by the site supervisor.

134.The school needs to develop more efficient use of the excellent accommodation. Current concentration of teaching and learning in the small class bases makes insufficient use of the general purpose areas and has a consequent impact on the achievement and learning of the pupils.

7.7 PUPILS' WELFARE AND GUIDANCE

135.The school makes effective arrangements for pupils' welfare and has agreed health and safety procedures. Class teachers share responsibility for the care and well being of pupils. Health and safety matters are dealt with promptly. There are established procedures for dealing with illness and accidents and for contacting parents. This is appreciated by parents and contributes to the good relationships that exist in the school. Present procedures which involve older pupils having some responsibility for younger pupils' welfare are worthwhile but require close supervision to ensure that they understand and adhere to their responsibilities. Governors take health and safety concerns seriously. This high priority is reflected in the detailed policies which guide staff in these matters. Recommendations of a recent health and safety audit are being implemented. Present practice for welfare and guidance should be monitored and evaluated to ensure that the school's provision is effective.

136.Effective arrangements are in place to support those pupils entering school for the first time and for those who are to transfer to secondary education. Specialist services, such as the school doctor and school nurse, are used to promote pupils' welfare and guidance.

137.The school provides guidance for personal and social development which includes aspects of health education and sex education. These are reflected in the school's practice but there is a need for clarity in the

policy and practice with regard to sex education. Teachers are aware of the need for child protection but as yet there are no established procedures to ensure that this takes place.

7.8 LINKS WITH PARENTS, AGENCIES AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

138. Good relationships have been systematically developed with parents, agencies and other institutions. These make a valuable contribution to standards and the quality of education provided by the school.

139. Parents are very supportive of the school and value the caring attitude of the staff and overall provision for the pupils. They are encouraged to help in school and become members of the Parent Teacher Association. The reporting system is good and staff are always willing to meet parents to discuss problems.

140. The arrangements for transfer to the associated secondary school are well planned and effective. There are good links with the parish, the local community, neighbouring schools and colleges and the various support services. Links with commercial/industrial outlets are being developed.

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