

INSPECTION REPORT

VICKERSTOWN SCHOOL

Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112209

Head teacher: Mrs M Gleave

Reporting inspector: Mrs M Lewis
22787

Dates of inspection: 4th – 6th June 2001

Inspection number: 192949

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Latona Street Walney Island Barrow-in-Furness Cumbria
Postcode:	LA14 3QS
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Walker
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

OIN	Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22787	M Lewis	Registered inspector	Science Art and design Music Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage Special educational needs English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9572	K Anderson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
10782	H Moreton	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Physical education	
1157	N Tongue	Team inspector	Geography History Religious education Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
27545	A Scott	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Vickerstown School is an average sized community primary school with 221 pupils (115 boys and 106 girls) aged between four and 11. Quite a high number of pupils (14 per cent) join and leave the school during the school year. The school serves an area of mixed, privately owned and local authority owned housing. It is in a designated Educational Action Zone. Pupils are all from white English speaking families. About 40 per cent of pupils travel to the school from outside the immediate area. The school provides facilities for the education of pupils in the wider area of Barrow who have a variety of special physical or medical needs. Seventy-five pupils are registered with special educational needs which is well above the average. Eighteen pupils have statements of specific educational needs. This is well above the average. Pupils' specific needs cover a wide range from severe physical disabilities, to moderate emotional and behavioural difficulties. Twenty-two per cent of pupils have free school meals. This is above the average. When children start in the reception class their attainment is well below the level expected for their age, especially in language and literacy, mathematical development and personal, social and emotional development.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is effective. It has many good features. The teaching of children in the reception class is good and so they make good progress. However, many children do not reach the standards expected for their age when they begin the infant stage of their education. Almost all of the teaching for pupils aged between five and 11 years is satisfactory and much is good. Pupils' learning is satisfactory. However, they do not reach the standards expected of them in English, mathematics and science before they leave for the secondary school. Pupils are often admitted to the school towards the end of the juniors. Many have special educational needs and some are admitted as a result of exclusion from other schools. The school has developed a rich curriculum which gives pupils a good breadth of learning opportunities and benefits all pupils. The school is inclusive in its policies and practices and keeps parents well informed. The school is led and managed well and takes good care in balancing its budget and in using it for the benefit of pupils in the best way. It provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching in the reception class is consistently good and provides children with a good start to their education.
- The provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral social and cultural development is very good. As a result pupils attitudes to school and behaviour are good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and it is very good for those with statements of specific need.
- All pupils have good opportunities to learn and make progress. The school makes very good provision for extra-curricular opportunities and for educational and residential visits outside of lessons.
- The school makes very good provision for ensuring the care and welfare of its pupils.
- The head teacher provides good leadership. She is well supported by the deputy head teacher.

What could be improved

- Standards at the ages of seven and 11 in English, mathematics and science.
- The governors' role for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school including the outcomes of financial planning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997. It has resolved the key issues identified at that time. There have been staff changes and the current management skills of teachers are no longer weak. The quality of presentation of written work has improved for the majority of pupils by the age of 11, including those with special educational needs. Subject co-ordinators are taking an increased part in managing their subjects. Curriculum planning has been refined and the school now uses or is developing the use of nationally recommended guidelines for nearly all subjects. It uses national guidelines for the foundation stage and the locally agreed syllabus for the teaching of religious education. Assessment procedures are more effective and the quality of teaching has improved in mathematics in the infants and is now satisfactory. Numbers of pupils with special educational needs and with statements of specific needs have increased. This has resulted in a fall in the standards in national test results over recent years.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	C	E	D	C
mathematics	E	D	E*	E*
science	E	E	E*	E*

Key	
well above	A
average above	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
lowest 5% of schools	E*

In comparison with all schools nationally in 2000, 11-year-olds, pupils attained below the national average in English. Standards in mathematics and science were very low and were in the lowest 5 per cent of schools nationally. In comparison with schools having a similar number of free school meals, pupils attained the average in English but standards were very low in mathematics and science. Taking all these three subjects together, pupils' results at 11 have not risen in line with the national trend over the recent three years. This is because the school is a strategic facility for pupils with special educational needs which has increased in numbers. The numbers and levels of pupils with underachievement vary from year to year. This makes the comparison of results with national and similar schools unreliable. It contributes to, and adversely influences the school's performance in end of year tests. In comparison with all schools, pupils aged seven attained well below average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. Compared with similar schools writing results were average and reading and mathematics were below average. Inspection findings show that pupils aged 11 achieve below the national average in English, mathematics and science. This is an improvement on the 2000 test results for mathematics and science. An emphasis on literacy and numeracy is helping to improve standards at both seven and 11. Pupils' standards of attainment in information and communication technology are below those typical for their ages at seven but pupils make good progress and by the time they reach 11 standards are as expected. Standards in religious education are as expected for both seven and 11-year-olds. Pupils achieve well in art and design in the juniors and attain standards above those typical for their age. The school has set challenging, realistic school targets for English and mathematics for 11-year-olds.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and concentrate well on their lessons. A large number of pupils take part in extra-school activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in their lessons. Pupils with behavioural difficulties do not distract others from their learning. Behaviour in the playground and dining hall is good.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils have very good relationships with each other and with adults who support and teach them. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated very well in all activities and accepted by their peers.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

Older pupils take their responsibilities for supporting younger pupils seriously. Members of the school council are especially proud of their roles and responsibilities.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

In the 41 lessons seen teaching was satisfactory overall. Teaching was good in 41 per cent, and satisfactory in a further 51 per cent. It was very good in three per cent of lessons and unsatisfactory in the remaining five per cent of lessons. Teaching is consistently good for children in the reception class and there is a higher proportion of good teaching in Years 2 and 5. In these classes teaching is interesting with good organisation of pupils and resources. As a result pupils learn at a good rate and enjoy their work. Teaching and the support for special educational needs pupils is good. It is very good for pupils with statements of specific needs. These pupils make steady gains in their development of basic skills, particularly in language. Pupils with physical disabilities make good progress in their motor and social skills. Teachers and support teachers and assistants manage pupils very well including pupils who are still learning to manage their own behaviour. Teaching in English and mathematics is satisfactory although work does not always challenge the more-able pupils enough. Teachers do not always use suitable resources well enough in mathematics lessons. In English teachers do not always match tasks to what pupils already know to move pupils forwards enough in their learning. Teaching in science is good. In science lessons teachers are enthusiastic, make lessons interesting and plan them well with clear aims that show that they know exactly what they want the pupils to learn. Teachers and support assistants are confident in the teaching of information and communication technology and this is having a good effect on maintaining standards. Other subjects of the curriculum such as geography, religious and physical education teaching have a balance of sound and good teaching. The teaching of art and design at the end of the juniors is very good and gives all pupils a chance to shine. This results in higher standards than are usually found.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum meets statutory requirements in all subjects. It is rich, broad and balanced and pupils are offered a wide range of experiences to make learning relevant.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for special educational needs is good. Children are well cared for.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. There are valuable opportunities for pupils to explore their own responses to a variety of situations and to learn to manage their own behaviour. Pupils' social and cultural development is promoted very well and their spiritual and moral development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares very well for its pupils. It pays good attention to checking and supporting pupils' personal development. Assessment of pupils' academic progress is satisfactory.

The school has good links with parents and provides them with good information of their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Good. The head teacher leads and manages the school well and she is ably supported by the deputy head teacher. Subject leaders have taken on greater management responsibilities for their subjects. However, initiatives for raising standards are not indicated clearly enough in the school development plan.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Some members of the governing body are new and all places are not filled. Governors are keen and supportive of the school. They are developing a sound understanding of the work of the school and fulfil their responsibilities. They rely greatly on the head teacher to report information of the school's work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The head teacher does this satisfactorily. She has begun to check its performance against national and similar schools.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school uses its funding well for the benefit of all its pupils. Links with the Educational Action Zone are developing and the school is beginning to make use of the benefits the Zone has recently begun to offer schools.

The school has satisfactory accommodation and good levels of staffing and resources. Money is spent wisely and the principles of best value are applied satisfactorily.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children like school and the behaviour in the school is good.• The teaching is good.• The school expects the pupils to work hard and achieve their best.• The school helps pupils to become mature.• The extra-curricular opportunities provided by the school are interesting.• The school is approachable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of homework is not right.• Some parents do not think the school is well led and managed. They are concerned at the high turnover of staff.

Inspectors agree with parents on most positive points, except that inspectors find teaching to be satisfactory overall. Parents are right to be pleased with the range of activities outside of lessons. Inspectors agree that the amount of homework is similar to that in most primary schools. However, the school needs to review the organisation of project homework for pupils of differing abilities. Inspection findings show that the school is well led and managed.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Standards have dropped since the previous inspection and this has shown in the school's test results for the previous three years. This reflects the increasing numbers of pupils with special educational needs, which depresses the school's performance in tests. However, the head teacher has a good understanding of what is happening in the school and where improvements are needed. The school and local education authority carefully track and analyse the results of pupils' statutory tests at Year 2 and Year 6 and the regular annual non-statutory tests in English and mathematics for pupils throughout the juniors. This information is used well to target pupils for extra support and to raise their level of performance. It has been used less well to target the performance of more able pupils although some successful initiatives have been undertaken to raise their writing ability. In mathematics, previous results in 2000 were analysed and an increased emphasis put on the introduction part of the daily mathematics lesson. This has also raised standards in mathematics. Results of the tracking of pupils' results in English and mathematics show that most who reached the national average at seven made steady progress and also reached the national average at 11, although few reached the higher levels. Those who joined the school later have mostly maintained or improved on the levels they started with. The school has realistic but challenging targets in place for English and mathematics. These have been based on the analysis of pupils' previous attainment and should result in an improvement in standards.

2 Current inspection findings show that although pupils at the end of the infants and the juniors are not attaining at the national average in mathematics, science and English. Standards have improved since the results in 2000 in mathematics and science. In the juniors pupils' levels of attainments have risen in writing and numeracy. In science, inspection findings show that although Year 6 pupils are performing below the national average overall, standards are improving and the average and more able pupils in the current Year 5 class are attaining at the expected level for their age.

3 Test results in 2000 for 11-year-olds showed that against all schools nationally pupils attained below the average in English and were in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally in mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools with the same number of pupils having free school meals, standards in English were average but in mathematics and science they were low and in the lowest five per cent of schools.

4 Comparisons with similar schools do not take into account the numbers of pupils with special educational needs or statements of specific needs. In the group of pupils who sat the tests at the age of 11 in 2000, 46 per cent of pupils were registered as having special needs and of these over a half had statements of specific need. No pupils have statements of special educational needs in the current group of Year 6 pupils although almost 30 per cent are on the register of special educational needs.

5 Since the previous inspection the number of pupils admitted with special educational needs and with statements of specific learning needs has increased. The school is a strategic facility for pupils in the wider area of Barrow. The local education authority directs many pupils with statements of special needs and special educational needs towards the school. It accepts many pupils on transfer from other schools. Some of these pupils have been excluded from other schools and the majority of incoming pupils also have learning problems. Parents of pupils with learning problems and physical disabilities choose to send their children to the school. There is a high rate of movement amongst the pupils in the school and most of those who come into the

school have lower levels of achievement than those who leave. For instance, 19 per cent of pupils in Year 6 who sat the tests were not in the school through the infants and joined in Year 5. Of these 85 per cent had levels of attainment below that usually found for their age. This high proportion of pupils with special educational needs has adversely affected the results for the year 2000.

6 Pupils begin in the reception class with levels of attainment that are well below those usually found for their age in language and literacy, mathematical development and personal, social and emotional development. They make good progress but a significant proportion do not reach the levels expected for their age when they transfer to Year 1. Many pupils have speech difficulties and receive specialist support for this. Pupils do their best and are well supported in the infants by teachers and learning assistants. They make steady progress in numeracy and in writing. Many pupils are hampered in the development of reading and spelling because they learn their letters and sounds slowly. Pupils with special educational needs in the infants make good progress in their learning and do well in comparison with their prior attainment and the targets they are given in their individual educational plans. Pupils in Year 2 find it hard to work independently on their scientific enquiries and need a high level of support. Inspection findings show that standards in English, mathematics and science are below the average levels expected nationally for their age but show an improvement in writing and mathematics. This is better than in the 2000 test results when standards in reading and mathematics were well below the average for schools nationally. Compared with similar schools in the 2000 test results, pupils aged seven attained the average in writing but below the average in reading and mathematics.

7 In English, inspection findings show that pupils in Year 6 have satisfactory skills in speaking and listening and writing although they do not use a wide range of vocabulary for either. Pupils' skills in reading are below average. Pupils do not read aloud fluently and expressively or have knowledge and experience of a wide enough range of reading. There are indications that the able and more able pupils' comprehension skills in reading are improving. In mathematics pupils' skills in mental arithmetic are improving but they find it hard and do not tackle a sufficient range of problems involving investigations in mathematics.

8 Pupils with special educational needs make good gains, in relation to their earlier learning, in skills knowledge and understanding. By the age of 11 they mostly achieve standards that are below those expected for their age but are satisfactory in relation to their identified needs and specific targets.

9 Pupils learning and standards of attainment are improving in information and communication technology (ICT) and standards are still at a satisfactory level. Pupils have good attainment in art and design in the juniors and attain standards above those usually found. In music, geography, history and physical education, standards match the levels expected for pupils' ages. Standards in religious education are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus adopted by the local education authority.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10 As found in the last inspection, most pupils throughout the school continue to show good attitudes to their learning. This is particularly impressive considering the increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs. The majority of pupils arrive on time. They like coming to school and enjoy the work, extra-curricular activities and out of school visits. They talk enthusiastically about what they have been doing. An example of this was when two pupils in Year 6 took pleasure and pride in showing a visitor around their classroom and explained some of the work that was displayed on the walls.

11 Behaviour in and around the school is good. Pupils are friendly, responsive and polite to visitors. At the start of the day pupils settle quickly in their seats and begin their morning work immediately. Movement between lessons and at break times is calm and purposeful. Pupils keep classrooms, corridors and cloakrooms tidy. There is no evidence of graffiti or vandalism.

12 Behaviour in class is always at least satisfactory but often good and occasionally very good. For instance in a Year 4 music lesson, all pupils were fully involved in reading and tapping out four different rhythms. As a result of good teaching, they maintained concentration well and were keen to take part in playing a range of instruments. Behaviour at lunchtimes is good. Pupils help each other and are polite and friendly. In the playgrounds, although lively, pupils generally play well together.

13 Pupils know the school rules and have a clear sense of right and wrong. They understand the school's system for rewarding good behaviour and take pride in the praise they receive. Pupils whose behaviour falls below the standard expected are carefully supervised and monitored. The positive handling of these pupils is effective. There has been one exclusion for a fixed period during the last year.

14 Pupils work well both in a group and individually. In the reception class wet -play area when four pupils were filling up bottles with water, one child was heard to say, 'I know, let's work together to make drinks'. Pupils respond well to the opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning. They record their own homework, tidy up after lessons and, when asked, select their own resources. Pupils answer teachers' questions with enthusiasm and confidence. They are willing to listen to others. The care which pupils demonstrate to others is impressive. On many occasions during the inspection pupils helped disabled pupils. This was always undertaken in an unaffected and thoughtful manner and is clearly part of the ethos of the school.

15 Pupils respond extremely well to the wide range of responsibilities given to them. They carry these out with diligence and pride and often volunteer to extend them. A number of pupils take part in the school council which meets regularly to discuss issues within the school. Pupils in Year 6, take part in the "Buddy system" where they are available to discuss with and help younger pupils. These and many other duties are very effective in developing pupils' initiative and personal responsibility.

16 Relationships with each other and between pupils and staff are very good. No incidents of harassment were observed. Special needs pupils are very well integrated into the school and there is no evidence of sexist or racial tension.

17 Attendance figures, as reported by the school, are below the national average, however rates of unauthorised absence are satisfactory.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18 The quality of teaching is broadly satisfactory and in 41 per cent of lessons it was good. Teaching was satisfactory in 51 per cent of lessons and very good in 3 per cent of lessons and unsatisfactory in 5 per cent. Based on the evidence of the previous inspection report this represents an improvement in the quality of teaching. The significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching at that time has now been much reduced. This is due to improved practice in the teaching of mathematics resulting from in-service training. It can also be attributed to regular monitoring of teaching undertaken in mathematics and English lessons by the head teacher and deputy head teacher. Teachers and classroom assistants have also had further training in ICT which is raising the levels of pupils' attainment in the juniors. Lessons in science and music were consistently good and the teaching of art and design is good throughout the school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The school employs a music specialist to teach in

the juniors and uses the creative subjects of art and design, and music well for promoting pupils' speaking skills. In other subjects of the curriculum such as, geography, religious education and physical education, the quality of teaching is well balanced between satisfactory and good.

19 There is a higher proportion of good teaching in the reception class, and in Years 2 and 5. In these classes lessons are made interesting and usually concentrate carefully on what the teacher wants the pupils to learn. Pupils and resources are well organised and children benefit from good help from adults. As a result pupils learn well and enjoy their work. A small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching was seen in both the infants and the juniors. In these lessons the teachers did not match work sufficiently well to the needs of all the pupils and insufficient learning took place.

20 Teaching in the reception class is consistently good. Teachers and classroom assistants show a good understanding of the children's needs and provide a warm and responsive atmosphere for their learning. Planning is thorough and based upon the early learning goals identified nationally for this age group. All adults communicate clearly and put an emphasis on children's personal social and emotional development. The classroom and children are well organised to give them meaningful and varied experiences. Staff work together well as a team and create a calm, quiet working atmosphere for children to learn and as a result they achieve well.

21 The teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory but there are some areas in which the school should improve to raise the levels of attainment for pupils.

22 In English, teachers follow the National Literacy Strategy well and have sound understanding of the subject. They assess pupils' progress satisfactorily over short and longer periods of time. They generally use what they know about pupils well for organising them into ability groups and providing additional help for the pupils with special educational needs. However, in lessons the planning and teaching of introductions and activities is not always matched carefully enough to pupils' understanding and does not always challenge pupils of higher ability in the class. Teachers work hard to encourage and develop pupils' speaking skills and use of vocabulary across subjects of the curriculum but this is less noticeable in question and answer sessions during the literacy hour. Teachers have worked successfully to raise the standard of pupils' writing and by the age of 11 this is satisfactory for many of the able and more able pupils. Teachers are aware of the need to develop writing further. This is particularly the case in the infants where pupils' progress is slower and needs an accelerated approach to spelling and handwriting in order that the pupils write more confidently and quickly. By the age of 11, although most pupils read accurately, many pupils have not developed the confidence to read a range of books with fluency and expression. Teachers are addressing this and have recently introduced reading tracking records to ensure that pupils have wider experiences in their reading and to raise standards.

23 Numeracy skills are taught well in the daily mathematics lesson. Teachers have given priority to developing the oral introductions to lessons over the past year and this is beginning to have an effect of raising pupils' standards of attainment in both the infants and the juniors. Teachers' knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy is still developing and is not consistent across all classes. Some teachers plan interesting activities and resources. For instance, good use was made of individual white boards for pupils in some lessons. However, in some lessons the use of resources is not carefully thought through and when resources are unfamiliar pupils quickly become confused. Teachers provide for all areas of the mathematics curriculum although they do not give pupils' sufficient opportunities and experiences to apply what they know to a range of investigative work in mathematics.

24 Teachers have a secure knowledge of teaching science and lessons are planned well to identify what pupils are expected to learn. This is shared well with the pupils at the beginning of lessons. It helps to motivate and interest pupils to take initiative in their scientific enquiry. Teachers are not consistent in ensuring that pupils' skills in recording scientific enquiries improve as they move through the school. More able pupils in the juniors do not always develop these skills to the level they could.

25 Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and frequently, especially in mathematics and English. They use the results of assessments well for organising ability groups and for moving pupils with special educational needs on in their learning but this is not so much the case with the more able pupils. Often teachers' expectations of these pupils in the juniors are not high enough and work is not matched sufficiently well to their needs. Teachers mark work regularly but often it rewards effort rather than being directed at moving pupils on in their learning. This is also the case when pupils are brought together at the end of lessons. These parts of the lesson are sometimes brief and do not always prepare pupils for the next step in their learning.

26 A strength of the teaching in the school is the good and very good teaching and provision made for pupils with special educational needs to learn and make progress. Staff identify pupils early. From the reception class onwards, pupils with statements of special educational needs receive very good care and help from teachers and learning support assistants. The school ensures that pupils get all the help they need, both in school and from outside specialists. Pupils with special educational needs and statements of need are well supported within the mainstream classes and fully involved with school life. Teachers check pupils' progress and revise targets thoroughly and frequently. Individual education plans are of a good standard. Targets are well devised and precise, particularly for language. This is less so in mathematics where fewer educational plans target pupils' mathematical needs. In most lessons tasks are made easier and understandable for pupils with the additional adult help that they receive and this enables them to learn well and make good progress based on their previous attainment. These pupils make good gains in their learning over time. The tracking of their progress shows that the majority of pupils have increased their achievement markedly from the end of the infants to the time they reach the end of the juniors.

27 Teachers and other adults have good management skills of pupils and in particular for those pupils who have difficulties in managing and taking responsibility for their own behaviour. They apply the school policy well and build good relationships with pupils which ensures that they are given respect and pupils do as well as they can in lessons.

28 Teachers give pupils regular homework mostly for English and mathematics. In addition the school has a policy of setting individual topic homework each half term for developing pupils' independent learning. This is good but teachers need to review carefully that homework is well matched to the needs and abilities of the pupils ensuring that it benefits them and does not become too onerous for those who find learning difficult.

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

29 The curriculum is rich, broad and balanced. It is good and effectively meets the needs of the pupils. It is planned well and based on the appropriate programmes of work that have been put into place in all subject areas. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Exceptions to this are geography which is currently being developed and is at the draft stage and design and technology, which does not yet provide sufficient details to support teaching of the programme satisfactorily. An overall curriculum map describes the location of topics within subjects across the school. In addition teachers plan well for the medium and short term, with detailed learning activities and objectives for lessons. Work is planned well in blocks of time.

The quality and range of learning opportunities, is good. Pupils have stimulating learning opportunities in art and design, history and geography.

30 The curricular needs of children with special education needs is a strength of the school. Support staff are fully involved in meeting the needs of their pupils. Pupils have carefully formulated individual educational plans that state clearly and concisely what they need to learn to make progress. The targets they set are achievable and realistic and the teachers and classroom assistants take these into account when planning their lessons. Plans are regularly reviewed and the progress of children evaluated. There are good links with a wide range of experts in the local education authority and health authority, who provide effective support through their joint intervention. However, identification of special educational needs and the provision of educational plans for numeracy are less well developed than in literacy and could benefit the raising of standards. Parents express strong support for the school's aims and their confidence in the effectiveness of the school's practice.

31 All the elements of the National Literacy Strategy are in place and implemented well with the additional initiatives of booster classes and similar initiatives. Pupils develop their literacy skills across the subjects of the curriculum such as, history and geography and this is helping to support an improvement in standards of pupils' writing.

32 A similar picture occurs in mathematics. The elements of the Numeracy Strategy are in place and some development of pupils' numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum occurs. Science is an area identified for development but has been deferred in preference for improving standards in mathematics.

33 The curriculum for children in the foundation stage is well planned to include a range of stimulating activities that give a sound foundation for their work in the infant stage.

34 The school provides a curriculum in which pupils enjoy a high degree of equality and opportunity. The inclusion of all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and a range of disabilities, has high priority in the school and contributes significantly to the social development of all pupils.

35 The provision of extra-curricular activities is very good. An extensive and comprehensive range of provision is offered and includes sport, cultural activities and special interests. Cricket, swimming, football, netball, rugby, and riding for the disabled are some of the sport activities arranged for pupils. Science, art and history clubs, musical and drama events all combine to provide enriching opportunities for pupils. The school makes very good use of a cycle of planned educational visits for many elements of the curriculum both in respect of the immediate environment and at some distance, such as Manchester, Heysham and Conishead Priory. Provision for pupils' residential experiences is outstanding. Each child in each year group of the juniors is given an annual opportunity to take part in a residential visit during the year. These include experiences in outdoor adventurous activities such as orienteering, expeditions under canvas, forest studies and fieldwork and a religious educational two-night visit to Bradford. Pupils with special educational needs have a five-day residential specialised outdoor activity visit to Bendrigg Lodge.

36 The programme for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. It includes appropriate attention to health and sex education and the misuse of drugs. Specific times for pupils to discuss a range of matters of interest to them provide valuable opportunities. They learn to explore their responses to difficult situations and how to manage their own behaviour by respecting others. Through the relationship of able and disabled pupils, individuals develop a sense of social responsibility. The school has an active School Council. Two delegates who keep a record of issues raised by their classmates represent each year group and these are

brought to the attention of the full council for action. Many of the issues concern matters of behaviour within the school and delegates take an active interest in solving problems. Last year they were provided with a budget, that they used to purchase outside play equipment. A Year 6 pupil chairs the School Council and issues raised are the genuine concerns of the pupils themselves.

37 Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good and is a strength of the school. This has been maintained as a strength since the previous inspection. Spiritual provision has improved and is now good.

38 Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good and prepares them well for living in a multi-faith world. Pupils are encouraged to think about their own uniqueness and care for the environment. The school places great emphasis on religious education. It provides pupils with the knowledge and the intellectual discussion to think about the great faiths of the world and their own personal response. Assemblies assist pupils in this process of personal response and reflection.

39 Provision for pupils' moral development is good both through the formal curriculum they experience and in the incidental discussions they have of right and wrong. Teachers expect pupils to behave well and the children themselves clearly know the difference between right and wrong. Pupils respect one another as well as each other's property and the school building.

40 The school makes very good provision for pupils' social development. Pupils have many opportunities to show care and concern for each other, which they do on many levels when either playing or working together. Pupils have opportunities to work co-operatively in lessons. All adults set good examples and pupils' work and achievements are highly valued and displayed.

41 Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. The local environment is used extensively and a considerable number of visits, including residential, provide opportunities for cultural development as well as extending the pupils' social development. Pupils understand many aspects of the cultural diversity of the world through work in religious education, geography, history, music and art and design. Displays around the school reinforce this aspect of school life well.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42 The school has built on the good level of support it was found to give to pupils' welfare, health and safety at the time of the last inspection. It has very good procedures in place for those areas and cares very well for its pupils. Child protection procedures follow local education authority guidance and are good. All staff are trained and aware of the relevant steps to follow should they have any concerns.

43 Staff and governors are committed to ensuring that pupils are safe. The governors and the deputy head teacher regularly monitor health and safety within the school. Equipment is checked regularly and fire drills are carried out and recorded. Satisfactory evacuation procedures are in place for all pupils including those in wheel chairs. Thorough systems are in place for recording and reporting of accidents, parents are informed promptly. The majority of staff and all midday supervisors have received up to date First Aid training. The school has implemented a very thorough system of recording children's medical needs. The beginning and end of the day, dinner times and play times are well supervised by support staff. Parents feel that their children are well cared for.

44 The systems for monitoring and promoting pupils' personal development are satisfactory. Staff knowledge of individual pupils is good. Staff are available so that parents can share

concerns or transfer information. Staff are sensitive to the differing needs of pupils. As a result, informal monitoring of each pupil's personal progress is continuously taking place. Furthermore, pupils are involved in monitoring their own personal development through their record of achievement files. The individual education plans for those pupils who have statements of special educational needs carefully monitor personal development. Pupils are given good educational and personal support and guidance. They are involved in setting their own targets. Their achievements are celebrated in praise assemblies each week.

45 Pupils with special educational needs are cared for well. The targets in their individual education plans are carefully devised and regularly reviewed. These targets include targets for pupils to improve and learn to manage their own behaviour. The level of care for those with statements that include a level of care is very good. They are given patient and kind but sensitive support to help them work and socialise with other pupils.

46 Arrangements for children joining the school are thorough. Induction meetings are held for parents and they are all given an introductory booklet. The majority of pupils settle quickly and happily to the school routine. At 11 pupils transfer to several secondary schools but mostly to the local comprehensive school with which the school maintains close contact.

47 Procedures to monitor and promote good behaviour are well established and effective. For instance, last year parents and governors were involved in discussing behaviour management in school. Through the home/school agreement and behaviour booklet parents and pupils are aware of school rules and the standards of behaviour expected. All staff are constantly alert to any signs of poor behaviour, bullying or harassment. Should instances occur, they are quickly identified and handled effectively.

48 Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. Initial assessments are used as soon as the youngest pupils enter the school. Pupils with special educational needs are quickly identified. National Curriculum tests for seven and 11-year-olds as well as non-statutory tests in Years 3, 4 and 5 are used to build up an overall picture of pupils' progress as they move through the school. The school analyses pupils' attainment to set clearer group and individual learning targets for pupils such as boys' writing and pupils' spelling. The school has much useful information on pupils, but at present the use of these records does not clearly highlight what they need to do next in all areas of their work. More systematic use of information, in mathematics for example, would enable the school to give more focused support to pupils to enable them to make better progress.

49 Teaching and office staff are becoming familiar with the recently implemented optical mark reading registration system. Staff are aware that registers must be marked at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Registers are monitored and any emerging patterns of poor attendance or lateness quickly identified and followed up.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50 The school makes every effort to involve parents and continues to benefit from the good partnership it has developed with them which is good. The part parents play has a positive impact on their child's education. Through the questionnaire, pre-inspection meeting and discussions during the inspection, parents expressed very positive views about the work of the school. The majority agrees that their children like school and are making good progress; that the school encourages children to behave well and work hard and that it helps them to become mature and responsible. Parents feel that teaching is good, that the school works closely with them and that it provides a wide range of activities outside lessons. The inspection team endorses most of these views although teaching is judged to be good in the foundation stage and satisfactory for pupils aged seven to 11. However, a significant minority expressed a

concern about the quantity of project homework set and the high level of staff turnover. The inspectors' view is that homework is satisfactory. It is similar to that seen in most primary schools. However, the school needs to review the organisation of project work carefully to meet the needs of pupils of differing abilities. Although there is a high turn over of staff in the school, the head teacher manages this well to ensure the least disruption to pupils' learning. There is no evidence that staff changes have an adverse impact on pupils. Parents and carers have access to the pupils' homework books and reading records. These are taken home regularly. However, both are underused by parents and their potential as a means of home/school communication is missed.

51 Parent and carer's involvement has a positive impact upon the work of the school. In order to encourage parental participation the school has made good use of the Credits scheme to run a number of courses such as 'Helping in School' and NVQ2 information technology courses. Good use is made of the expertise gained. Parents who help in school are briefed by the class teacher and deployed effectively to increase pupils' learning opportunities. A number of parents help in school on a regular basis in classes and the library. Parents also provide help on educational visits and residential trips. The Friends of Vickerstown organise such events as the Christmas and Summer Fayres and an Easter Raffle. These events raise valuable funds which are used to provide additional resources. Fundraising has paid for shelving in the library and bought musical instruments, science and audio equipment. Parents support their children in raising money for good causes such as UNICEF and Macmillan Nurses through a range of charity events.

52 Parents are welcomed into school for a range of formal and informal meetings. Appointments can be quickly arranged. Many parents talk with teachers at the end of the school day. Discussions are held twice a year in which the teacher meets parents and pupils together to discuss the school policies and procedures, statutory tests and pupils' individual targets. Attendance at most of these events is good. The school works even more closely with parents of pupils with special educational needs. This good liaison keeps parents up to date with their children's progress.

53 The majority of parents say that they feel comfortable to approach the school if they have a concern. The home/school agreement is discussed with parents annually. As a result they are all aware of their responsibilities. The school produces a good range of written information in the form of a prospectus, newsletters, individual notes, a brochure for new starters and leaflets. Annual reports comply with statutory requirements. They provide parents with helpful information about their children's progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54 The head teacher provides good leadership and management of the school. She leads purposefully and by example as a teacher. She provides stability in a school where staff and governor changes have taken place recently. She creates a sense of shared purpose within the school; demonstrated in its aims and educational direction. She has ensured that areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report have been dealt with. The school is inclusive in its outlook and welcomes pupils with all levels of special educational need who are included in the mainstream classes. It is a happy and caring place where the pride pupils feel in their school is clearly evident. Pupils' achievements both in and out of school are recognised and celebrated. The positive ethos is reflected in the very good relationships, the welcoming environment and the attractive and high quality displays of pupils' work. The school is open to the local community and offers a variety of courses and events and is used for the training of new teachers.

55 The head teacher is ably supported by the deputy head teacher and they work closely together. In addition to the management of staff development, standards funding and Key Stage

2, the deputy head teacher has recently successfully undertaken major areas of development in ICT, behaviour management and the provision for special educational needs in the school. There has been a good impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress and attainment in these areas.

56 Senior staff meet regularly to report on and provide analysis and progress in their subjects and make contributions to school development planning. The roles of subject co-ordinators have been well defined since the previous inspection. This is an improvement. They are still in the early stages of development for several of the more recently appointed co-ordinators. The head teacher, deputy head teacher, numeracy co-ordinator and literacy and numeracy consultants from the local education authority, monitor pupils' and teachers' work, effectively. Monitoring of teaching by co-ordinators of religious education and physical education is currently taking place. A programme of further monitoring of subjects is planned. Co-ordinators in ICT, mathematics and science have devised action plans for raising attainment in their subjects in line with the whole school development plan for the present and subsequent year and there are signs of improving standards in these subjects.

57 Analysis of pupils' results from statutory and non-statutory tests has been carefully undertaken in mathematics and English and areas for improvement have been identified. The school has clear records for tracking each pupil's performance as a result of these tests. Analysis of pupils' records has been undertaken and targets have been set in English, mathematics and science. This analysis provides pupils with clear long and short-term targets. Pupils, parents and teachers are aware of and discuss these targets. The school and local education authority compare school results each year against the average for schools with a similar percentage of free school meals and against its own previous performance and targets.

58 The school has a long-term development plan for five years from 2000 onwards and a shorter-term management plan for the current year. The long-term plan is a general outline plan for the school explaining its direction and philosophy in certain areas. It stands as a sound policy statement for the school but does not directly refer to how the school will raise standards or how it will improve the quality of teaching and learning. The short-term management plan is much more precise. However, although it details actions to be taken to improve teaching and learning in ICT, mathematics and science, there is insufficient indication in the current year's plan of the initiatives needed and dates for review to raise standards of pupils' attainments in English.

59 The governors support the development of the school. They fulfil their statutory duties. The annual report to parents has some omissions of which the governing body is aware. The chair of governors is new to the post over the last year and one other governor is also new this year. Most governors attend governor meetings regularly. They are not directly involved in the planning for school improvement but appraise and agree the plans when they are submitted by the head teacher. Governors are well aware of the school's strengths, such as the provision for special educational needs and the various cultural activities. They take on liaison roles to support teachers in literacy, numeracy and special educational needs, although they have yet to develop these roles fully. The initiative to link individual governors to a particular class within the school is good and pupils appreciate their visits. Governors undertake training to keep them abreast of new initiatives. This is particularly so for new governors.

60 Despite its efforts, the school currently has five vacancies on the governing body. School staff are well represented. The size of the governing body puts an inevitable strain on the existing governors. Several members of the governing body work in the school on a daily basis. This affects its objectivity and makes it hard for the governing body to be an effective critical friend of the school. Whilst the governors are aware of the school's strengths, they are not aware of where it needs to improve. Furthermore, they do not sufficiently evaluate the actions of

the school to check whether they are effective and cost-effective. They oversee efficient financial planning, but they do not monitor the outcomes clearly.

61 The school supports its development well through careful budgeting. It has had a part-time bursar for the past year to control the school's finances. He has worked well with the head teacher to put right all the recommendations from the most recent school financial audit. The school allocates the funding for specific grants appropriately and the bursar carefully checks this. It makes sure that it spends its money wisely by comparing quotations for goods and services. The school's short-term development plan for one year shows expected spending levels. It is considering tenders for the future work on its new boundary fence and is able to pay for much of this fence by a carefully managed surplus.

62 The school has sufficient qualified teachers and learning assistants to meet the needs of teaching the National Curriculum and to support the high number of pupils with special educational needs. All members of staff, apart from newly qualified teachers, have a curriculum responsibility and those who have responsibility for English, mathematics and science receive an additional allowance. The high turnover of staff is managed well by the head teacher and no measurable disruption has been made to pupils' learning. Staff have left predominantly through a combination of promotion and relocation to other parts of the country. The school gives satisfactory support to new staff such as detailed curriculum schemes of work, the appointment of mentors and a staff handbook that deals comprehensively with the day to day organisation and running of the school. Good induction procedures are in place. Information and the knowledge of pupils provided by classroom learning assistants ensures that minimum disruption to pupils' learning takes place. The number of support staff is good. They are deployed well to provide additional support in all classes including the two full-time non-class based teachers.

63 The school is kept well by the caretaker and standards of cleanliness are good. Resources in the school are good. The school has good resources to accommodate and teach pupils with special educational needs. Resources for English, music, art and design, geography, history and information and communication technology resources are good. The library is well stocked and is an attractive and welcoming additional area for lessons and for pupils to work in small groups on their individual work. Books are well organised and classified for pupils to readily access.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64 In order to raise standards and improve the quality of education, the head teacher, staff and governors should:

(1) Raise standards in English, mathematics and science.

In English:

- use assessment information gained to match work more carefully to pupils' abilities.
- ensure that more able pupils are consistently given a higher level of challenge in their work.
- indicate initiatives for raising standards more clearly in the school development plan.

(Paragraphs 7, 22, 58, 76, 83)

In mathematics:

- ensure that the use and application of mathematics is incorporated throughout all areas of the curriculum.
- ensure that resources in lessons are used effectively.
- ensure that pupils with special educational needs have carefully set targets in their individual education plans and that more able pupils are sufficiently challenged.
- monitor the quality of teaching and learning more closely.
- indicate initiatives for raising standards more clearly in the school development plan.

(Paragraphs 23, 58, 90-93)

In science:

- review the scheme of work to ensure that it is balanced to meet the needs of the school and that it provides progression of scientific knowledge and skills.
- ensure pupils' work is frequently assessed to match work carefully to what pupils already know and can do.
- analyse pupils' work and results in the different areas of science for future school development.
- monitor the quality of teaching and learning more closely.

(Paragraphs 32, 56, 58, 99, 100)

2) **Improve the governors' knowledge and understanding of the school by:**

- involving them more fully in the analysis and evaluation of the school's performance and its work, ensuring that they have a good understanding of its strengths and areas for future development.
- involving them in monitoring the outcomes of financial planning.
- continue to make efforts to increase the number of governors.

(Paragraphs 59, 60)

In addition to these key issues for action, the following less significant issue should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Improve marking to ensure it informs pupils of what they do well and how they can improve their work. (Paragraphs 25, 81, 92, 100)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	41
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	44

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	3	41	51	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	221
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	35

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	18
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	75

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	11	18	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	7	10
	Girls	16	16	15
	Total	20	23	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	69% (79%)	79% (88%)	86% (85%)
	National	83% (82%)	84% (83%)	90% (87%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	10	8
	Girls	17	15	17
	Total	23	25	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79% (88%)	86% (88%)	86% (91%)
	National	84% (82%)	88% (86%)	88% (87%)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	18	17	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	8	9
	Girls	15	8	13
	Total	25	16	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71% (53%)	46% (59%)	63% (66%)
	National	75% (70%)	72% (69%)	85% (78%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	8	7
	Girls	12	9	8
	Total	18	17	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	51% (66%)	49% (66%)	43% (69%)
	National	70% (68%)	72% (69%)	79% (75%)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	192
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.09
Average class size	27.6

Education support staff: YR – Y11

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	204

Financial information

Financial year	2000 - 2001
	£
Total income	504,326
Total expenditure	485,175
Expenditure per pupil	2,196
Balance brought forward from previous year	23,237
Balance carried forward to next year	42,388

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	221
Number of questionnaires returned	59

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	25	3	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	46	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	41	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	43	9	12	3
The teaching is good.	59	36	3	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	49	8	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	29	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	27	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	47	47	5	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	42	41	8	5	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	43	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	74	26	0	0	0

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

65 At the time of the inspection there were 27 children under six in the reception class. Children with special educational needs are identified early and where needed receive specialist help from outside agencies such as speech therapists. The results of the assessments made by the teacher when children first start in the reception class show that almost all of the children began school with attainment in all areas of learning assessed which were well below those expected for their age. As a result of good help and teaching across all the areas of learning, children make good progress in the reception class. Children with special educational needs are identified when they start in the reception class. They make good progress in accordance with the targets and carefully judged steps of learning identified on their individual education plans. Pupils with statements for specific need make very good progress for instance in walking, communicating and socialising. However, by the time they start Year 1 a significant number of children have not attained the early learning goals identified for their age particularly in mathematics and language and literacy. The school has very good systems in place to help children and their parents have a happy and secure start to school.

66 The school has maintained the good standards of teaching and provision reported at the last inspection. However, the standards of children's attainment when they begin in the reception class are no longer average overall in speaking and listening and mathematical development due to the increasing number of children with special educational needs.

67 The policy and programme of work have been reviewed in accordance with the foundation stage of learning for children under six. Planning is thorough. Accommodation for the foundation stage is good. The school has a large classroom for children to work and play and a readily available outside area although this is not secure enough for children to access independently. Resources are good in the reception class. These include a very good selection of new-wheeled toys including bicycles with stabilisers and tricycles funded by the crew of a visiting Canadian submarine to the port.

Personal, social and emotional development

68 The teaching in this area of learning is good and personal, social and emotional development is emphasised well by all staff. They show patient and sensitive care and consistency with the children. They encourage and enable the children to learn and to develop their social awareness and have high expectations of children's behaviour in all their activities. Children achieve well and develop a good understanding of what is right and what is wrong. They develop and understand that some of their friends need more help in their work than others. Children are encouraged to learn and play in small sociable groups and to listen to and to help one another in their activities. For instance, small groups of children built a model of the school together with large blocks and helped each other find the right sized blocks to fit. Children with special educational needs are helped by classroom assistants to join in these activities and good attention is given to their emotional needs. Although most children make good progress in this area of learning and achieve well at a level commensurate with their starting point, children with special educational needs do not achieve the expectations of the early learning goals in their social and emotional development by the end of their reception year. As a result of good teaching and help children receive, most other pupils reach the expectation for this area. For instance they work happily with each other without adult help, sit and talk about what they are doing and show their efforts to visitors proudly. They explain what they are asked to do and try hard with their tasks. They listen to the teacher as they learn how to record their counting and make tally marks to help them. In a physical education lesson they choose partners without any

fuss, after the lesson dress themselves and generally manage well. Children use equipment properly and tidy it away after use. They listen carefully and most follow simple instructions and guidance successfully. Children have routines which they understand and they leave and enter the hall sensibly. The teachers develops respect for each other in lessons and children learn how important the special books of the bible and the Qur' an are to Christians and to Muslims.

Communication, language and literacy

69 Although children make good progress in this area, by the time they leave the reception class the majority of children do not attain the early learning goals identified in the national guidance for this age group. The teaching is good and the teacher and other adults who work with them go to great lengths to make sure that all children have opportunities to interact and listen and speak within warm and responsive relationships. For instance, when children were working in the “post office”, the nursery nurse talked and questioned children very effectively to help them to order their activities and keep their thoughts on track. This resulted in them achieving well and making good progress. Volunteers who share books with and hear children read, always discuss the stories and books with the children individually and provide help in their understanding of stories and books. Many children need encouraging consistently as they are hesitant to speak. They use nods and shakes of the head, smiles, single words and incomplete sentences to communicate. A significant number have indistinct speech and pronunciation difficulties. Fewer children than is typical for this age group, are confident to talk in front of the whole class during a numeracy session although they listen quietly. They do not all understand the need to take turns when answering the teacher’s questions although they are reminded constantly and try hard. A small proportion of children make gains in confidence with speaking skills. They worked together and made suggestions to each other such as, “I know, let’s make drinks together”. They talked to visitors about books and their baby sisters and their favourite toys although they found it hard to talk in long sentences. Letter sounds and names of letters are reinforced constantly. The teacher used interesting activities such as, “Lucy Ladybird” to pick out objects from a sack for children to identify first and last letters. Children were engaged in the activity, responded well and moved on well in their learning. Children make good progress, if at a slow pace for some, in recognising rhyming words when reading “Big Books” with the teacher. They learn to appreciate books and stories and by the end of reception, although children of lower ability reading levels attain below the level typical for their age, able and more able readers attain the early learning goals although they do not exceed them. They turn the pages and use pictures to guess what is happening. They recognise that words have meaning although only more able readers are beginning to read a range of common and familiar words independently and attain levels which are typical for children of this age. Writing skills are developed well by teachers and children try hard and make good progress. They have many opportunities for using crayons, pastels, coloured pens and pencils. This control is gained slowly for many children and they find it hard to concentrate and make recognisable letter shapes. Only a small number of children write their names legibly in the reception year.

Mathematical development

70 Children make good progress in their learning in this area in comparison with what they already know when they start school. The proportion of children reaching the early learning goals by the end of the reception year is below that usually found and no children exceed the goals. About one third do not reach the levels expected of them by the age of six. Children have little experience of number and shape when they start in the reception class. The teaching is good. Staff provide many opportunities for counting objects to ten in rhymes, songs and poems and a range of activities across the curriculum. They reinforce counting continually, such as in sand activities, when working on computers and when counting the different hair colours of the children in the class. This helps children achieve well. Although children add numbers on up to twenty with the teacher and know the number names, many children find it hard to count and

match numbers beyond ten although they do their best and try hard often reaching eight or nine. More able children learned to make tally marks in groups of five for recording the number of postcards and pencils in the post office. They made good progress but they found it harder to count in tens. The teacher used the touch screen on the computer well to develop children's counting skills to find the most popular hair colour in the class. All children made good progress in this activity including those with statements of educational needs. The well-focussed teaching helped them to make effective use of the touch screen and make gains in their understanding of counting and matching numbers. A group of six less able children had difficulty in matching numbers and objects to six when they are working with support using the sand tray. A small number of children built a model of the school and learned new mathematical language such as 'tall' and 'short' successfully when building.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

71 The provision for learning and the quality of teaching for children in this area of the curriculum is good. Many will reach the early learning goals by the end of the year. Children develop a satisfactory knowledge of the world around them. For instance they made a visit to the local park and followed the route they took on a large plan displayed in the classroom. They have good access to information and communication technology in the reception class. They have frequent and regular experiences of activities on the computer. With help from the adults who work with them, they have taken photographs with a digital camera during a visit to the park. They talked about the photographs they have taken and this improves their observational skills and describing skills. Children made a model of the school building using wooden blocks and talked to others about what they had done. In a well-organised activity children went out into the school grounds in a small group. The teacher gave good explanations of the purpose of their activity and children observed well and recorded in drawings what they saw in front of them, to the left and to the right from certain positions sitting on a mat. This promoted the use and understanding of positional language well and encourages children's skills of observation. They looked carefully at the buildings they see and were able to distinguish between newer and older buildings. They spotted local features from different positions on their play mats recognising the road and cars passing. They clearly enjoyed the activity, put their mats together to replicate the road. This practical activity helped the able and more able children to describe what they have been doing to the others.

Physical development

72 By the end of the reception year, the majority of children attain the early learning goals in physical development and it is taught well. Children who have special needs in this area are helped significantly by the adults who care for them as well as having additional specialist help for example by physiotherapists. They make good progress according to their individual education plans. Children play outside almost every day on a variety of wheeled toys and with large chess figures and small equipment such as bats and balls. They run and walk showing appropriate co-ordination for their age and pedal bicycles and tricycles at different speeds displaying good control and suitable awareness of space and of others. Most children followed the teacher's directions sensibly and carefully in a lesson in the hall. They handled the large, soft balls confidently and developed their individual skills of bouncing and throwing up and catching them well. With practise they achieved well in a challenging activity of throwing and catching with a partner. The teacher demonstrated, coached and encouraged the children well. They learned to weave around the hall and to stop on the command of a signal although some children found it difficult to react quickly. Children are encouraged to develop their basic manipulative skills, for instance when building models they handled small linking bricks well and in art and design most used spreaders and scissors carefully.

Creative development

73 The provision and teaching for children's creative development is satisfactory. They use their imagination and act out roles in play situations such as the post office and when working with small objects in sand and water. They explore the use of different colours and materials in their artwork such as collages, paintings and drawings and develop manipulative skills carefully by colouring between lines. However, in some of their artwork there is a strong direction from adults and this restricts children's free expression. Children sing nursery rhymes such as "Pussy cat, Pussy cat!" in the reception class but development of children's speaking skills could be improved with a greater emphasis on singing.

ENGLISH

74 By the end of both the infants and the juniors, the overall standard of pupils' attainment in all areas of English, including speaking and listening, reading, and writing is below the national average. This shows a decline since the last inspection, when standards were broadly average. The main reason for these lower standards is that since the previous inspection the intake of pupils into the school has changed and pupils no longer enter the school with average levels of attainment in literacy skills.

75 Test results in reading and writing at the end of Year 2 show that standards have varied over recent years in comparison with schools nationally. In writing they have varied from above average to below average. In reading however, over the past three years results have not risen and standards are not as good as they could be in comparison with national averages. In the juniors pupils' attainments at the age of 11 have also varied but were below average in the tests in 2000. Most pupils begin in Year 1 with below average levels in literacy and a significant proportion of pupils have literacy skills that are well below the average. The school has developed as a strategic facility for special educational needs in the area. This has resulted in a higher proportion of pupils with statements and special needs across the school whose lower standards of achievement depress the results in tests. The level of help for these pupils is good overall, and it is very good for the high number of pupils with statements of special needs.

76 The school has a higher level of movement in and out than is usually found. Many pupils at the end of the juniors did not start their education in the school and the majority of the incoming pupils have levels of attainment below the national average. The school now tracks pupils carefully, and has a register of more able pupils. Many pupils receive booster support to raise them to the national average but higher attaining pupils are not targeted and challenged sufficiently well in lessons to raise them to the higher levels. Of the mainstream pupils in the current Year 6, the results of non-statutory tests kept year on year and teacher assessment for the current year, show that most who reached the average level at seven have maintained steady progress. Most have reached the expected level 4 but few have reached the higher level 5. Most pupils with lower levels of attainment have improved by at least one level and some by two levels. Pupils who joined the school in the juniors have mostly maintained or improved the levels they came in with. The results of the most recent tests for the current year indicate that standards are improving although there are no national comparatives yet available.

77 By the age of seven, pupils listen satisfactorily but do not speak with enough confidence or clarity. In most classes, teachers develop good relationships with the pupils and these encourage pupils to listen and take part happily. Teachers use some good strategies to motivate pupils. One teacher, for example, used a glove puppet and a 'magic' bag to generate pupils' interest in the initial sounds of words. As a result, pupils concentrated well and were keen to pronounce and repeat the words. They were visibly unhappy when the session ended. Not all pupils join in, though, and some less able pupils and those with special educational needs do not speak enough because they lack skills in speaking. Teachers sometimes compound this by using language and grammar which are quite demanding for many pupils, such as the use of "apostrophes" in Year 1. This inhibits rather than encourages good speaking or listening skills.

78 By the age of 11 most pupils are more competent at speaking and listening, although they do not all speak with a good enough range of vocabulary. Teachers often enable pupils to talk freely, as in a science investigation at Year 5 and during discussions about personal and social issues, but pupils have less opportunities in literacy lessons. Pupils have enough respect for their teachers to listen sensibly and productively. Teachers are very good at selecting interesting topics to encourage pupils to listen. Pupils in Year 6, for instance, were eager to talk about their knowledge of volcanoes. Another teacher used details of the local shipyards, although the technical data made understanding quite hard for many pupils. Another lesson in Year 5 on the

imminent general election was very topical, but pupils did not have sufficient background knowledge and found it very hard to talk about local political issues.

79 Many pupils do not read as well as they should. All pupils, by the age of seven, enjoy reading but their ability is below the national expectation. Most pupils lack the confidence to read even quite simple text with any fluency. Pupils use pictures well to deduce meanings of new words and can pronounce the initial sounds of words well, but not consistently enough. Less able pupils and pupils with special education needs use strategies such as using picture clues and deduce the words they do not know. This is good but their knowledge of sounds and groups of sounds for word building are not taught and developed as well as they could be. For instance, teachers encourage the use of pictures as a guide but this can result in basic mistakes, such as reading 'cap' as 'hat'. More able pupils read quite well, and are aware of sentence structure and speech marks. They know how to deal with longer words but they have yet to develop expression. Teachers do not yet use the library enough to develop pupils' experience of books.

80 By the age of 11 pupils have a wider range of reading skills but they are below the national average. They are not all familiar with many well-known writers and their books. The school has begun to address this in the careful tracking of what pupils' read and encouraging them to explore types of stories by a range of authors. However, this has not yet had sufficient time to affect older pupils' knowledge. Pupils read competently, but often lack confidence. For example, even though they can pronounce most words correctly, they tend to pause before longer words or sentences. This prevents real fluency. Few pupils read with genuine expression. Less able pupils read in a monotone as they work out more demanding words. Nevertheless, more able pupils' skills in comprehension are improving and they explain and retell stories. Teachers ensure that pupils use reference books efficiently to support work in other subjects. They also use interesting ideas in lessons to improve pupils' appreciation of reading, such as the solving of riddles, but do not always pitch the vocabulary at just the right level for all pupils to fully understand.

81 Pupils' writing is below the expected standard by the age of seven. They can generally form and sequence sentences quite well, although these tend to be lists of actions. Pupils are beginning to write in different styles mainly concentrating on personal diary entries and the re-telling of stories. Pupils with special educational needs still need adult help to organise their writing. Most pupils have a simple vocabulary but their choice of words is not as interesting as it might be. The quality of spelling is poor and, whilst teachers are aware of this, they do not highlight this enough when marking work, to improve pupils' awareness of the problem. This is also true of handwriting and punctuation. Most pupils know how to form their letters but many do this carelessly. Teachers try to teach all pupils about apostrophes and tenses and this simply leads to confusion. Pupils know how to use full stops and capital letters, but often forget. Less able pupils have very weak spelling and very erratic handwriting. More able pupils write with greater conviction and use more complex sentences, but their grammar sometimes lets them down.

82 By the age of 11, pupils have satisfactory writing skills. They can write comfortably in a range of ways, not just stories but factual accounts in science, poetry and journalistic articles. Teachers expect pupils to write short novels as extended homework. This is good practice. It encourages pupils to think out plots and to present their writing neatly and correctly. Some pupils extend their computer skills by word-processing their finished work. In a science fiction novel, one pupil had to think creatively to develop a struggle between Dr Dark and Rayman. However, pupils' ideas and language are not very adventurous. Spelling and punctuation are satisfactory, although teachers do not always help less able pupils enough since they introduce such concepts as speech marks and paragraphing before they are ready. These pupils' stories tend to be a sequence of events and they rely on simple words in descriptions, like 'lovely' and 'nice'. A small number of more able pupils write at length and know how to develop the suspense in a

story, for example, by building up to a climax. They can tie this in to a moral issue, like awareness of the dangers of playing close to an electricity sub-station. Some of the vocabulary can be evocative. One pupil referred to 'the soft, rich, golden, deep scruff of a lion's head'.

83 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers develop good relationships with their pupils, which ensure good behaviour and attitudes. Teachers want their pupils to succeed and are very supportive in class and group work. They have high expectations of their pupils and often plan their lessons to inspire pupils. This use of other subjects to broaden pupils' knowledge and vocabulary is a good idea. However, teachers are not aware enough of pupils' needs when setting work. They usually give work of a similar, or often the same level to all pupils. In a lesson using technical data about submarines, for instance, many pupils of lower ability, in a Year 4 class were left puzzled. Less able pupils and those with special educational needs find such lessons especially hard. Their solving of riddles in Year 3 was made all the harder, since the pupils did not understand what words like 'aquamarine' and 'luscious' mean. When teachers ask questions about a text the class is sharing, the few hands that go up show how little pupils understand.

84 Despite some interesting topics, the pace of lessons is often too slow and whole class discussions are sometimes heavy going. This is partly because the pupils lack confidence but also because teachers do not galvanise all pupils into action. There is little evidence that teachers regularly assess pupils' progress in lessons and adjust their teaching accordingly. When this happens, this helps to reinforce most pupils' learning. One teacher, for example, realised that she had to re-explain the basics of summarising text, before developing the lesson further. Often, teachers' records of pupils' learning are too vague. For example, although teaching assistants and parents undertake reading with pupils, teachers themselves do not listen to pupils read with enough regularity. They do not evaluate pupils' reading skills systematically, and as a consequence they cannot always guide learning effectively enough.

85 The co-ordination of English is satisfactory although literacy has not had as much priority as in previous years. The co-ordinator is new to the post and has been well supported by the head teacher. Areas for development in English have been analysed and the school has introduced a range of support to help pupils achieve better. These include reading intervention schemes, booster classes for the national tests and choral speaking. There has recently been a school project to improve the writing of the more able pupils. However, these additional initiatives have not been in place for long enough to raise standards sufficiently high.

86 The school has built up a good range of resources and there are sufficient support teachers, classroom assistants and parents in all classrooms.

MATHEMATICS

87 Standards of pupils' attainment at 11 are not as good as at the time of the last inspection report. Evidence from the current inspection indicates that pupils in Years 2 and 6 are below the standards expected nationally. This is not as low as the results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests which showed that at the age of seven pupils' attainments were well below the national average for all schools nationally and well below those for similar schools based on the number of free school meals. The nature of the school has changed since the previous inspection. By the time they begin in Year 1, overall levels of attainment are below average and a significant number of pupils have attainment levels which are well below average. This is because the school is now a strategic facility for pupils with special educational needs. Consequently there is a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs (21 per cent) in the Year 2 class and this includes pupils with statements of special educational needs. Teaching in the infants has improved and is now better than it was at the time of the last inspection. While teaching is no longer unsatisfactory several weaknesses still exist, such as the careful matching of activities and

resources to pupils' abilities in the daily mathematics lesson and ensuring that all pupils pay attention.

88 The results of the National Curriculum tests in 2000 at the end of the juniors were very low compared with the national average and also very low compared with similar schools. Both girls and boys did worse than the national averages. This is because a large number of pupils had special educational needs and statements of specific needs. However, the school recognises that there has been a lack of direction for the subject and has begun to tackle this situation. As a result of more emphasis on the mental arithmetic part of the lessons, standards are starting to improve. Examples where recent changes are beginning to have an effect are the more effective use of testing to chart progress and the effort teachers are putting into their introductions at the beginning of the daily mathematics lessons. However, by the end of Year 6, although no pupils have statements of need in the Year 6 class, there are many pupils with special needs who have gaps in their knowledge from earlier learning and standards are still below where they should be. Nonetheless, the quality of teaching remains generally satisfactory, as it was at last inspection.

89 In both the infants and the juniors, the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and most, though not all pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. A large number of classroom support assistants, and other adults, provide teachers with good support and, make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress. For the higher attaining pupils progress is slower. Very few go on to attain the higher levels in the infants and in the juniors. The school's tracking of the attainment of pupils in Year 6 from the results of non-statutory tests and teacher assessment in the juniors shows that nearly all pupils who gained the national average at the age of seven do so at 11. However, few make enough progress to gain higher level because more able pupils are not challenged enough.

90 Pupils' work demonstrates that pupils in both the infants and the juniors undertake a suitable range of work on number, data handling, space, shape and measures, but do not tackle a sufficient range of problems involving investigation during the course of a year. Too many pupils in Year 1 do not understand the operations of addition and subtraction. They do not correctly identify multiples of two and three or use mental strategies to solve problems, something that the teachers are beginning to address. Pupils in Year 2 are below the standard one would expect to find at this stage. Few add 9 to 6 by adding 10 and subtracting 1. They successfully find patterns unaided when adding 11 and 19 to single digits and quickly recognise patterns of ten. Pupils use number squares effectively to help them in finding a pattern. In Year 3, most find it hard to write word problems from sums, and many cannot mentally add two or more numbers such as $27+32+41$. In Year 4, too few pupils recognise multiples and understand and divide accurately although able pupils coped well with multiplication of for instance 6.6 In Year 5, too many pupils do not recognise decimal and fraction equivalents, such that 0.01 is equivalent to one hundredth. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils had difficulty in recognising and explaining, patterns and relationships in numbers although they achieved a sound understanding of the meaning of "inputting numbers" and "outputting numbers".

91 The quality of teaching of mathematics throughout the school is satisfactory. In most classes pupils are managed effectively with praise and encouragement. Some teachers create a purposeful atmosphere for learning. Teachers' knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy is still developing, and some plan interesting and relevant activities, using useful aids. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, the teacher used whiteboards so that pupils did not simply sit and listen. However, sometimes aids such as dominoes are not suitable for all pupils, some of whom become even more confused. Teachers need to be more discriminating in their use of such strategies, and use their knowledge of pupils' attainment better to plan lessons and activities. Lessons have clear objectives, which are usually explained to pupils so that they know what they

have to do. Staff work closely as a team. Support staff are deployed effectively and make a good contribution to learning, especially for pupils with special educational needs.

92 Where teachers have a personal enthusiasm for the subject, as well as high expectations for the pupils' work and behaviour, pupils' energies are harnessed so that they make good progress in the lesson. In a Year 5 class, for example, the teacher fully involved pupils in coming up with their own examples when learning about probability theory. Teachers do not reinforce learning with rigorous marking. While it is regular it often focuses on how hard pupils have worked. Teachers do not tell pupils clearly enough what they need to do to improve. Too often poor presentation is accepted, including from the higher attaining pupils. Standards of writing and drawing do not contribute to the quality of pupils' written work. Information technology is used in data handling. Pupils with special educational needs have individual education plans. In some cases these include appropriate and clear numeracy targets and benefit pupils well. The areas for development and the work set is usually well matched to their needs. Where these plans are evaluated, and outcomes used, pupils with special educational needs make the progress they should. However, identification of special educational needs and the provision of educational plans for numeracy are less well developed than in literacy and could be beneficial to pupils in raising standards.

93 Numeracy work is planned well into activities for some subjects such as science, geography and design and technology but pupils would benefit from a further emphasis on numeracy across the subjects of the curriculum. Teachers try to involve pupils in their lessons rather than just instruct them about what to do. They do this with varying degrees of success since some infant pupils are often too inattentive to fully benefit. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are sound and sometimes good, but few pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. The co-ordinator is relatively new to the role, and needs to rigorously monitor and evaluate pupils' learning and their work, as well as teaching.

SCIENCE

94 Standards of attainment for pupils at the ages of seven and 11 are below the national average. This is below those found at the previous inspection. However, it is an improvement on the Key Stage 2 test results for 2000 when pupils' performance was very low and in the lowest 5 per cent of schools in comparison with schools nationally and with similar schools. Inspector findings are similar to the Key Stage 1 teacher assessment results for 2000 and are below the national average.

95 Results for the last four years show that immediately following the last inspection pupils' performance dropped to well below the national average at age 7 compared with all schools nationally. Although boys performed significantly below the national average in 2000, girls' performance was also below that reached by girls nationally. This is because sixty nine per cent of boys in this test group were on the register of special educational needs and 25 per cent had statements of special needs.

96 The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs makes the comparison of results with national and similar schools unreliable. The school has a special facility for pupils with special educational needs. Numbers of pupils with special needs and statements of special needs has increased in the school since the previous inspection although it varies from year to year. Twenty one per cent of pupils have joined the school during Key Stage 2 and of these half are of lower ability. The tracking of pupils' results in science from Year 2 to Year 6 using teacher assessments shows that pupils without special educational needs make satisfactory progress and more able pupils make good progress.

97 Pupils in Year 2, learn about the five senses and the human body. Able and more able pupils gather and record data from different body measurements successfully. They learn the importance of collecting evidence and data in an investigation. However, most pupils find it difficult to work independently and need a high level of support. For instance, in the first lesson of a well planned series of lessons on the form and structure of living things, more able pupils predicted that they expected to find living things under stones in the wildlife area but needed some prompting. Following a minisafari and investigation outside, they returned and were able to record their findings on prepared sheets successfully. They were well supported in this activity by a learning assistant. Other groups of pupils made observational drawings of woodlice, millipedes and centipedes independently and became engrossed in their drawings although they found it hard to remember the names of the insects they drew or to compare the similarities. Pupils are generally interested in the exciting activities prepared by teachers in lessons but even with effective questioning and probing by the teacher, many find it difficult to explain their observations using the scientific language suggested and explained to them. In recordings and planning of their work they have not yet realised that sometimes tests and comparisons are unfair. Most pupils needed a high level of support to carry out their group activities and many find it difficult to sustain their concentration.

98 By the end of Year 6, pupils have learnt about all the recommended areas of science. They do not use their initiative and take sufficient responsibility for their work. They do always make systematic enquiries that build on what they already know. This is done well when sorting materials for instance and investigating friction. However, when studying new aspects of a topic, time is often spent relearning earlier work rather than moving on to a higher level. The quality of recording their investigations is limited, and is not consistently set out systematically. As a result of good teaching, pupils in Year 5 make good progress and are involved in planning their investigations. Most pupils in this class are achieving at the average for their age and should exceed this by the end of Year 6. In a good lesson, all pupils, in Year 5 including those with special educational needs worked together well in a group to separate materials of sand, salt, gravel, cork, and metal filings. They planned what they should do and predicted what would happen before carrying out their investigation successfully. They showed a good understanding of how to separate materials and used their previous knowledge, for instance, of filtering and magnetism independently. A group of pupils with special educational needs, working with support, made good progress in their learning and were able to explain confidently what they had learnt. Their recording of work is systematic and well planned to encompass areas of prediction, methods, results and conclusion.

99 Science is taught well in Years 2 and 5. Teachers have a secure knowledge of science and in Year 5 it is good. Lessons are generally planned well to identify what pupils are expected to learn. The aims of the lesson are shared with pupils at the beginning of the lesson and this is motivating for pupils because they know what they are expected to do. In a Year 2 lesson, the good teaching and support given to pupils' investigations out of doors ensured that they worked purposefully and were eager to record what they had discovered. Teachers make lessons interesting and exciting for pupils. They use topics and design practical activities which provide motivation and interest. Lessons and resources are prepared well by teachers and in the best lessons pupils are given opportunities to make their own choices for their investigation. Teachers promote and explain scientific vocabulary well in the introductions to lessons. Some teachers provide written activities to extend pupils' understanding of new vocabulary as well as reviewing it at the end of the lesson when pupils' discuss their findings. These parts of science lessons make a good contribution to pupils' skills of speaking and listening. In the best lessons, teachers match work well to pupils' abilities, they invariably provide good support for pupils with special educational needs. However, often activities are the same for all pupils of average and above average ability. Teachers of older pupils set extended science projects such as a project on Electricity for homework. Able and more able pupils complete and set these out well researching

books to find information. They take a pride in presenting them neatly and extend their knowledge successfully.

100 The co-ordinator is new to the post this year and has clear ideas of the standards in science and how they can be raised although pupils results have not yet been analysed for school development. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has sound subject knowledge. She has attended courses and worked hard to develop the subject with good support from the head teacher. The school is currently reviewing the scheme of work and incorporating the national guidelines. The co-ordinator has responsibility for the science budget and has produced a comprehensive school action plan for the coming year when science is rightly due to be a priority for whole school development. Assessment procedures are in place and are beginning to give an effective picture of what pupils can do at the end of a unit of work. However, teachers do not check pupils' skills and understanding gained in lessons enough to move the more able pupils forwards. The marking of pupils' work is not developed sufficiently to inform them what they do well and what they need to do to improve.

ART AND DESIGN

101 Standards of attainment in art and design are as expected for pupils at the age seven and above those expected for pupils aged 11. This is similar to the standards at the previous inspection for sevenyear-olds but an improvement for pupils aged 11.

102 Art and design has a high profile in the school and the quality of displays is good. The school values pupils' work and efforts highly. Pupils show and discuss their displayed work proudly to visitors. This raises their confidence and self-esteem. They have a wide range of experiences in painting, drawing, collage and weaving and modelling three-dimensional clay figures. Carefully prepared books of pupils' finished work add to the quality of the learning environment in the classrooms, hall, entrance and library.

103 Pupils in Key Stage 1 have a variety of experiences of working with a wide range of media such as paint, pastels, fabrics and clay. Teachers plan art and design activities well into themes each half term and this makes experiences meaningful to pupils. For instance, as part of a study in religious education pupils in Year 2 use tones and colours effectively for making Rangoli designs. In a theme for half a term on "Art all around us", teachers use work in geography and science well to develop pupils' skills in observational drawing. They make a detailed study of the diverse aspects of the local area. This varies from drawing objects such as street furniture to the natural objects and creatures that they find such as the creatures in the school wildlife area and on the island. They ask questions and observe centipedes and woodlice drawing them carefully.

104 At Key Stage 2 pupils continue to develop and build on their skills of observation and design. They make good progress. Pupils in Year 3 sustain concentration when drawing the cross sections of fruits such as grapefruit, nectarines and oranges. They observe and draw whole fruits for instance, pineapples, using pencil shading successfully. Pupils keep sketchbooks of their work which show how they develop from making rubbings to using paint techniques to obtain a similar texture. Pupils have regular opportunities to work in clay, modelling animals such as penguins and elephants carefully. These are glazed and fired in the school kiln and good examples are exhibited around the school. As a result of very good teaching, all pupils in Year 6 achieve well in art and design. They look at landscapes and learn to discriminate visually what feelings and moods the pictures are trying to convey. They discuss what it means to them and the approaches the artist or photographer has used to convey different moods and awareness of space. As a result of very good questioning techniques they respond well and form their own opinions. They comment that, "If you put a person into the picture, it would change it and people might think there was a little boy lost". They learn to discriminate, "I think I would leave the house out because it distracts from the waterfall". They quickly choose their own media to work in and

work purposefully and confidently on their own individual landscapes becoming totally absorbed in their work.

105 Teaching is good and teachers and volunteer helpers help pupils achieve good results. In some lessons it is very good. Where teaching is very good, planning of a series of work builds very well on previous lessons and on developing the skills that pupils already have. The teacher's introduction is very good and includes a good recap of previous work which reinforces pupils' previous knowledge. The teacher uses good resources carefully chosen to show what it is the pupils are expected to learn. Pupils have to evaluate artist's work and photographs and they learn to use appropriate vocabulary like foreground, distance, distracts and reflections. They recognise when paintings are too busy or too crowded and how this spoils the feeling of space. Pupils respond well to good organisation and classroom management and become fully involved and do not want the lesson to end.

106 Pupils with special educational needs make equally good progress as other pupils and teachers give them sensitive support so increasing their independence and confidence.

107 Art and design makes a sound contribution to literacy, particularly through the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills when pupils discuss and evaluate their own and others work and that of well known artists such as Heathcote Cooper.

108 The subject is well managed by the coordinator who is knowledgeable and experienced in teaching art. She leads staff in-service training and has written her own very good teacher support materials. The school scheme of work is under review and the nationally recommended guidelines are being incorporated. A clear overview of planning and assessment is in place for art and design. Teaching aids and resources are good and have recently been updated. The school makes good use of visitors such as artists in residence to work with pupils in school. It takes part in community and council art projects. The school is holding a centenary celebration in the coming year and plans are in place to involve every pupil. There are well attended lunchtime art clubs for pupils in both key stages.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

109 During the inspection it was not possible to observe more than one lesson. However, from discussions with staff, examination of documents and the scrutiny of pupils' work and work on display around the school, especially for the older pupils, it is clear that the design and technology curriculum is broad and balanced. By the age of 11 standards in design and technology are broadly as expected for their age, as at the time of the previous inspection.

110 Teachers closely link work to school 'topics'. This succeeds in making learning interesting and meaningful for pupils. For example, in Year 1 pupils design and make finger puppets well, while in Year 2 they design and successfully make a vehicle with movement. In Year 3, pupils design and make attractive "plates of food" as part of an emphasis the school has on a healthy eating week. Work in Years 4 and 5 is linked well to the history topics that pupils study. They plan and construct the "Tudor Rose", while in Year 5 pupils make Viking Helmets. Before they leave the school they work collaboratively to design and make a moving bridge. The more able pupils achieve well. They learn to develop their models and use pneumatics. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

111 The subject is managed satisfactorily by a temporary coordinator. Teachers are using the nationally recommended guidelines. However, the planned review of the scheme of work to match it has been delayed and its use has not yet been evaluated. As a result, pupils do not make consistent progress in gaining knowledge especially in the development of design skills. The recording of pupils' progress and assessment is irregular.

GEOGRAPHY

112 Standards of pupils' attainment are at the expected level for their ages at seven and 11. This is a similar picture to the last inspection. They make good progress in their knowledge and understanding and in the development of geographical skills.

113 Seven-year-olds have a good knowledge of their immediate area through discussion in class and through fieldwork. The concept of 'near' and 'far' was developed well for Year 2 pupils through good teacher questioning and recording of their observations. This experience provided a good grounding for the development of mapping skills. Pupils' geographical knowledge is developed effectively from a focus on the features of the school and its immediate environment, to contrasting localities and environments in the UK and in the world; For instance, when comparing differences between Mexico and Canada, Africa and India. Able and very able pupils recognised the difference between built and natural features. They explained the use of shops and other facilities. Most pupils indicated direction using left and right and the compass points and describe a journey to school. Higher attaining pupils gave convincing reasons for their likes and dislikes about particular environments and how they could be improved.

114 In a good lesson in Year 3, pupils developed their skills of using single figure coordinates and through a study of coastal features acquired the technical vocabulary to describe these environments. They distinguished accurately between physical and built features such as 'groyne' and 'cliff'. Pupils are ably assisted in their understanding by logging on to a website specifically designed for pupils of this age. Pupils in Year 4 have a good grasp of mapping skills and were able to locate places accurately using two figure coordinates on an Ordnance Survey map of Vickerstown. They correctly placed the maps in sequence and distinguished between large and small scale. Through the identification of features on the maps they were able to provide some commentary on the changes made depending on their level of ability. Year 6 pupils know and explain the effect of natural disasters such as earthquakes on the environment and human occupation.

115 Teaching is always satisfactory and often good. Teachers have a satisfactory understanding of the subject and lessons are well planned and show clear learning objectives. Teachers have high expectations and pupils show interest and concentration in their work. They listen attentively to the teacher and sustain attention during independent work. Occasionally the pace of the lesson flags a little and consequently progress made by pupils is reduced. Pupils' work is regularly acknowledged. It is marked regularly and where marking is good, teachers make written comments to improve future work, however marking tends more usually to be remarks about pupils' effort.

116 The co-ordinator monitors progress in the subject by providing advice to colleagues and reviewing samples of pupils' work and teachers' planning. A new scheme of work is currently underway, building upon the nationally produced guidelines. Nevertheless, the current scheme of work provides detailed guidance for teachers to plan their work and assess pupils' progress. All teachers keep records of the individual progress made by pupils in the subject as well as pupil self-evaluation. This information is summarised into a pupil profile for parents. The subject is greatly enriched by an emphasis on field visits, including residential, and good range of quality resources.

HISTORY

117 STANDARDS IN HISTORY ARE AT THE EXPECTED LEVEL NATIONALLY FOR SEVEN AND 11-YEAR-OLDS. THE SCHOOL HAS MAINTAINED STANDARDS SINCE THE PREVIOUS INSPECTION. PUPILS MAKE GOOD PROGRESS IN DEVELOPING KNOWLEDGE AND

UNDERSTANDING ABOUT THE PAST AS WELL AS THE SKILLS OF HISTORICAL ENQUIRY THAT UNDERPIN THE SUBJECT.

118 Seven-year-olds have a secure understanding that history is the study of past events and about people who lived long ago. Through a study of kings and queens they begin to understand that there are some people who have made an important impact on history. An extended study of family history in Year 2 reinforces the notion of change over time in a ~~text~~ which is directly meaningful to the pupils. The impact of history on the present is studied through celebrations and festivals, such as The Gunpowder Plot. Able and very able pupils understand that history is based on a range of sources from the past such as historical objects and diaries as in the case of Samuel Pepys' record of the Fire of London.

119 They understand that there is a sequence of cause and effect and are able to sequence correctly the events of the Great Fire of London and the ~~Plag~~. Through a discussion about combating fire today, pupils are able to make comparisons between now and then.

120 Teaching is satisfactory. History is securely established as an enquiry-based subject. Pupils know about and give different views on ~~the~~ famous people they have learnt about. They formulate questions they wish to answer, for example in a topic on 'Explorers', questions such as, "Who were the Explorers?" "What did they find out?" provide purpose and direction to the studies of past events. Eleven-year-olds follow the National Curriculum units of work over a ~~four~~ year cycle programme of study. Pupils are taught and know about aspects of Victorian Britain. Teachers plan to combine this well with local history. Pupils study a wide range of ~~optcs~~ topics in history such as Britain during Tudor Times, the invasions of Britain by the Romans, Angles, Saxons and Vikings, Ancient Greece and Ancient Egypt. Able and very able pupils are taught to understand that these past events are open to different ~~interpret~~ interpretations, for example in different perceptions of the rich and poor in Victorian Britain or differing views about Henry the Eighth's divorce. Each topic is referenced against a time line so that most pupils can place the periods of history in a correct ~~sequence~~ sequence and pupil-devised questions reinforce the idea of history as a process of enquiry.

121 Although it was not possible to observe any history lessons during the course of the inspection from conversations with pupils and looking at their work, ~~teachj~~ teaching is at least satisfactory. There was considerable written work at both key stages and most was reasonably well presented, which represents an improvement on the previous inspection when written work was described as sparse and untidy. Lessons are ~~planned~~ well planned and activities are interesting. Pupils' work is regularly marked and in the best instances targets for improvement are provided although comment more frequently refers only to the effort made. Teachers keep assessment records of the progress made by pupils in the subject, which follows the child through the school. Pupils also evaluate their own response to the topics as well as a commenting on their own progress. This information is summarised well in pupil reports to parents.

122 The subject co-ordinator has a clear view of the standards in the subject through reviewing teacher's planning and some classroom observations. The scheme of work is very good and provides detailed guidance on lesson content and skills, the use of writing frames, assessment procedures and the importance of developing pupils' historical questioning skills. The subject is greatly enriched by outside visits to places such as Levens Hall in the study of the Tudors and Manchester Museum to study the Ancient Egyptians ~~as~~ well as the good quality and range of resources to support the teaching.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

123 By the age of seven, pupils' skills and knowledge are below what is expected for their age. However, by the age of 11, pupils are far more secure and their attainment is typical for their age. This shows an improvement from the last inspection because pupils now have a wider range of experiences and can use information and communication technology usefully in other subjects. There are still gaps in their knowledge, especially in control technology and simulation activity and not all pupils achieve what they are capable of. This reflects the provision in previous years when there were too few computers and software. The school has worked to develop the subject, in recent years, by buying many resources and ensuring that all staff have up-to-date training. This is beginning to have an impact and the signs for the future are promising.

124 By the end of the infants, many pupils have some skills on the computer. They can operate a mouse well to select and drag data on screen, as when creating a picture in a paint program. They can type in simple text, but are quite slow and erratic in selecting letters. Pupils do not always leave spaces between words and are uncertain about correcting their spelling mistakes. Most pupils can adjust the size and colour of their text, although less able pupils struggle to do this. All pupils rely on adult support too much. For example, a classroom assistant had to open programs for the pupils and needed to remind them how to close them properly. Pupils, therefore, do not gain the independence necessary to learn through trial and error. Teachers do not encourage pupils to use information and communication technology often enough. As a result, their word processing skills, for example, remain laborious. Although teachers plan for pupils to experience skills in simple control technology, such as programming a floor robot to perform a sequence of movements these skills have not built up sequentially in the past and many pupils at Year 2 are insecure in this area of ICT.

125 By the end of the juniors, pupils have a sound range of skills. They are increasingly confident about using a computer selecting and switching between programs efficiently. Pupils can alter the size of pages, scroll through information and download pictures and text from CD ROMs. Not all pupils have effective word processing skills; some less able pupils still have to search for letters on the keyboard. These pupils are also uncertain about the purpose of tool bars. Teachers encourage pupils to produce extended pieces of word processing, especially in the form of a novel or individual project. This is good. One pupil presented his reasons for and against the siting of wind turbines in Barrow very clearly, by positioning his text in columns. Pupils have developed their skills with a digital camera well to take interesting pictures of the school. They have carefully selected and used their pictures to produce an impressive school calendar. Pupils can also create a simple multimedia presentation using pictures, text and sound. However, not all pupils have these skills and more able pupils do not yet achieve at the higher levels of attainment such as using sensors in experiments. Teachers are introducing pupils to the Internet and this is beginning to help pupils find information, such as the personal details of their local Member of Parliament. However, pupils still find it hard, as most of them are not confident about using search engines and most pupils really struggle to sift through the web sites they discover, because their reading skills are not good enough.

126 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers and classroom assistants have succeeded in improving their individual skills in the subject through a range of whole school and individual training. This has enabled them to use ICT successfully across the curriculum, particularly in the juniors. However, some uncertainties do remain. Pupils in one class, for example, were encouraged to add the initials MP to a man's name to broaden the scope of a search on the Internet. This would, in fact, narrow the options down. Nevertheless, the increased confidence that staff show has a direct impact on the pupils. Teachers make good use of the new computer suite to develop pupils' skills and use support staff sensibly to operate it. However, the small size of the suite does not allow enough weekly use for all pupils. Teachers generally plan well to make ICT an integral part of pupils' learning. They do not, though assess

pupils' progress enough in order to challenge all pupils appropriately. For example, in one lesson, all pupils were given the same introduction to the Internet, irrespective of previous experience. As a result, several pupils did not gain much new learning, as they were already familiar with search engines.

127 The school has done well to make ICT a priority. It now has resources it can be proud of. The co-ordinator has worked hard to develop the subject and remains enthusiastic but there is still work to be done. Pupils need to have more experience of all areas of the subject, especially in using technology as a monitoring tool, simple programming and in using computers further to present their work, for example, in graphs and charts in mathematics and geography.

MUSIC

128 Pupils' attainment in music is in line with those expected for their ages at seven and 11. This is similar to that in the infants but not as good at the end of the juniors as it was at the time of the last inspection. This is attributed to changes in staffing; an increased number of pupils with special educational needs in the school and the recent emphasis that the school has been giving to literacy and numeracy.

129 The school now employs a specialist teacher who teaches mainly in the juniors but supports teachers throughout the school in the teaching of music. Teachers in the infants have also had recent staff training from the music department of the local education authority. Pupils with special educational needs respond well to music and in particular to community singing. Older pupils have the opportunity to learn a range of instruments including flute, clarinet, saxophone, guitar and a range of descant, treble and tenor recorders. This develops their skills of musicianship well and a good proportion of pupils is able to read standard notation of music competently. Pupils have opportunities to perform for parents and visitors into school at Christmas and at the end of the summer term. The school also takes part in local music festivals. Teachers are confident in teaching music and use the good resources available to them for lessons. In the infants pupils learn to sing and learn rhymes and songs on a frequent and regular basis. In a good lesson in Year 1, taken by the class teacher, pupils increased their learning and progressed well in identifying loud and soft instrumental sounds. They behaved and concentrated well as a result of a carefully structured lesson which improved their skills in small attainable steps. Pupils in Year 4 made similarly good progress in their knowledge and understanding of standard rhythm patterns and learnt quickly within the lesson to compose and add an accompaniment to a familiar song. They used an effective mix of standard instruments such as flutes, recorders, and clarinet as well as tuned percussion instruments.

130 Most pupils sing well and tunefully in lessons and assemblies. They also learn to listen to and discuss music by a different well-known composer such as Beethoven over the week. Pupils have good experiences in music and have visited local theatre productions of "Oliver" and theatres further afield such as Manchester and occasionally London. Visitors to school such as a tuba player, dancers from the Scottish ballet and African dancers also enrich and bring an added dimension to the curriculum.

131 The head teacher is currently the co-ordinator for music and manages it well. She has prioritised further training for staff and the re-establishment of a choir.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

132 When the pupils leave the school standards in physical education are satisfactory for their age. This is the same as reported at the last inspection. Pupils make sound progress in gaining knowledge and skills during their time at the school. Pupils with special educational needs also

make sound progress. Provision and attainment in swimming is good. All pupils swim 25 metres at least, by the time they leave the school.

133 During the inspection swimming, athletics and games activities were observed. The quality of teaching is sound. Teachers prepare themselves well for all lessons. They plan thoroughly and dress appropriately setting a good example to pupils. They give good attention to health issues and ensure that all pupils have opportunities to warm up at the beginning of lessons and cool down at the end. Pupils in Year 2 developed their skills well for running, jumping and landing, in preparation for making long jumps. In another lesson the teacher coached pupils well in skills of throwing and catching and dribbling balls which pupils succeeded in well. Appropriate standards of discipline are maintained throughout lessons. Pupils know the lessons' objectives, which link well to previous work, though not always to different levels of prior attainment. Pupils in Year 6 display a good understanding of cricket as a result of enthusiastic teaching. They show stamina in the face of very cold and windy weather and develop fielding skills well. Teachers make appropriate use of the accommodation, and the time available to them. However, they do not give enough individual coaching to enable all pupils to develop their skills.

134 Pupils evaluate their own and each others' performance. They help each other such as when working in teams. Many benefit from a range of practise sessions and competitive fixtures. These take place at lunchtime and after school, and include swimming, cricket, football and netball. Each year group in the juniors benefits from residential experiences that develop their awareness of outdoor activities and pursuits and enhance their personal and social skills.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

135 Standards in religious education meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus when pupils are seven and 14years-old but pupils make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of other faiths and in their personal reflections.

136 Pupils in infant classes are developing an understanding of the range of faiths that exist in the world and an appreciation of the respect that needs to be given to other culture's values and beliefs. They understand the significance of special clothes, festivals, places and artefacts in the range of religions they study, appropriate to their age and ability. They can reflect on the importance of particular people and events important in their lives.

137 Pupils make good progress in junior classes and attain satisfactory results. Most pupils have a clear understanding of the special vocabulary associated with the range of faiths they study and can explain the principal symbols associated with these faiths. They develop a set of personal beliefs that they can clearly express. In a Year 5 class pupils developed their own piece of drama, using contemporary events, based on the parable of the Prodigal Son and the need for forgiveness to explain their understanding of the concept.

138 Teaching is at least satisfactory and often good. Work is regularly acknowledged and written comment provided for future improvement. The school places great emphasis on toleration and respect for others and this is particularly evident in the impact of religious education in the life of the school. The curriculum is enriched by good quality resources and the use of outside visits, culminating in visits to a Hindu Temple and Mosque in Bradford. A detailed scheme of work provides teachers with the necessary guidance to develop effective lessons and this represents an improvement on the previous inspection findings.

139 The enthusiasm and commitment of the coordinator has been instrumental in providing this detailed guidance and advice for teachers. In addition, the regular monitoring of the standard of work in the subject has contributed to the raising of standards.

