

INSPECTION REPORT

VICTORIA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Leeds

LEA area: Leeds

Unique reference number: 107930

Headteacher: Mrs T Mason

Reporting inspector: Miss K Manning
20267

Dates of inspection: 4th – 8th December 2000

Inspection number: 225088

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Nursery, infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Ivy Avenue
Leeds 9

Postcode: LS9 9ER

Telephone number: 0113 248 2449

Fax number: 0113 248 2449

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs M Warwick

Date of previous inspection: December 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
K Manning 20267	Registered inspector	Mathematics Foundation Stage	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements. Teaching and learning. Leadership and management.
T Smith 19741	Lay inspector		Pupils' welfare, health and safety. Partnership with parents and carers.
A Welch 31012	Team inspector	English History Religious education English as an additional language	Curricular and other opportunities
G Halliday 22881	Team inspector	Science Geography Music Special educational needs	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
T Cox 25623	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Physical education Equal opportunities	

The inspection contractor was:

Quality in Focus
Thresher House
Lea Hall Park
Demage Lane
Lea by Backford
CH1 6LP

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	22
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	26

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a large primary school with a nursery. There are 153 girls and 149 boys in classes from reception to Year 6. Some of these classes have pupils from more than one year group. In addition, 30 boys and 19 girls attend the nursery part-time. Many children have very limited language, literacy and numeracy skills when they join the nursery and their attainment on entry to the reception class is well below expectations for four-year-olds. The school is in an Education Action Zone and the percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is above average and the number of pupils who start or leave the school part way through their education is high. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. Although most are English, eight pupils in the main school are at the early stages of learning to speak English. The number of pupils who have special educational needs is higher than in most other schools. Ninety-six children are on the school's register of special educational needs because they have learning, physical or emotional difficulties. Of these, 14 infants and juniors have statements of special needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a school on the move. Good leadership ensures that most of the teaching is good and pupils reach the standards of which they are capable even though these are not as high as in most other schools. The school meets each new challenge successfully and is likely to continue to improve in the future. The cost of achieving this is high but pupils benefit considerably from the care and attention given to their well-being. When all of this is considered the school gives sound value for money.

What the school does well

- Good leadership and management have helped the school come a long way in the last few years.
- Almost three-quarters of the teaching is now good or better and most pupils learn well.
- Pupils with special educational needs, and those who do not speak English at home, get the help they need to make good progress in their learning.
- The school's provision for pupils' social, moral and cultural development is good and is a significant factor in pupils' good behaviour in lessons and positive attitudes to learning.
- Children in the Foundation Stage¹ get a good start to their education.

What could be improved

- Despite pupils' making good progress, standards in information and communication technology are below expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Higher attaining pupils are not being challenged sufficiently by their work in science.
- Higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not challenged sufficiently by their work in mathematics.
- Though much improved since the previous inspection, teachers' monitoring is not focused enough.

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

¹ The Foundation Stage is the time children spend in nursery and reception classes.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has improved at a good rate since its last inspection in December of 1997. Governors responded well to the key issues identified in the last report and clear direction provided by the headteacher helped the school tackle all of these successfully. There is a purposeful plan to help governors and teachers target what needs to be done next in order to continue to improve. Detailed guidelines help teachers plan work and the headteacher and senior teachers keep a close check on the quality of teaching. As a result, there is more good teaching than at the time of the previous inspection and pupils who stay at the school from nursery through to Year 6 learn at a steady rate. The school's results in national tests are increasing at a similar pace to the national trend and it is on course to achieve the targets it has set for raising standards in tests in 2001.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	E	D	D	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	E	E	D	C	
science	E	E	E	D	

Although standards in English were below those expected of 11-year-olds, pupils in Victoria Primary performed better than those from similar schools. This is a success story for the school and is due to the emphasis given to reading and writing throughout the school. Standards in mathematics were also below those expected for 11-year-olds, although pupils performed equally as well as those in similar schools. In science, standards were well below those expected of 11-year-olds and below those achieved by pupils in similar schools. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, reach the standards of which they are capable. By the time they leave the school, there are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls.

Standards were well below the levels expected for seven-year-olds in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Although it appears that pupils' performance was also well below that achieved by similar schools it is important to note that a third of the pupils in the year group had joined the school part way through their education.

Standards in information and communication technology are below the levels expected of seven and 11-year-olds. This is an area where the school intends to raise standards in the next few years. In religious education, standards meet the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus for seven and 11-year-olds.

Standards are improving steadily but remain a priority for the school. The school exceeded its targets for English and mathematics in national tests in 2000. Test results are affected by two important factors: the high numbers of pupils who join the school in the middle of their

education and do not have the chance to follow the school's full programme of work all the way through; and the increasing numbers of pupils who have special educational needs.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy school and have good positive attitudes to learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well during lessons and when supervised by teachers. At other times pupils are more boisterous and noisy, though behaviour is still satisfactory.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils are proud to be given jobs and responsibilities. They make friends easily and have good relationships with staff. A significant number lack the self-discipline to behave sensibly all of the time.
Attendance	Attendance is slightly below average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

There is much more good teaching than at the time of the previous inspection. Of the lessons seen, 58 per cent were good and a further 13 per cent were very good. One lesson was excellent and the remaining 27 per cent were satisfactory. None of the lessons seen during the inspection were unsatisfactory and there was good teaching in every class. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is always good or better.

Teachers' good knowledge of how to teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy increases pupils' understanding and helps pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers work very hard to keep pupils interested in their work and to maintain discipline. Their efforts ensure that pupils concentrate and generally try to do their best. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are given a tremendous amount of support and help and make good progress. The school is successful in meeting the needs of most pupils. However, higher attaining pupils are not always given challenging enough work in mathematics and science in infant classes and science in junior classes. This prevents these pupils from doing as well as they could.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school extends its satisfactory curriculum with a reasonable range of extra-curricular activities. Children under five have sufficient access to the nationally approved curriculum. Some aspects of information technology are not taught in sufficient depth.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	These pupils are supported well by teachers and classroom assistants and consequently make good progress. They are taught in small groups and with the rest of their class. Procedures for dealing with disruptive behaviour work well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Teachers do all they can to help pupils learn to speak English. Pupils are given the support they need to settle into school and opportunities to join in every aspect of the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school does this well. Provision for pupils' social, moral and cultural development is good. Provision for their spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good procedures for assessing pupils' academic performance help the school keep a check on pupils' progress. There are good procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development.

The school tries very hard to involve parents in their children's learning. Despite this, only a small number help in school, though more attend school events such as special assemblies.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has done well to lead the school through a period of rapid change and improvement. The temporary deputy headteacher has supported the headteacher well up to and during the inspection. Senior teachers manage their subjects well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil all their legal responsibilities. They are closely involved in planning the school's development and in managing its finances.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Teachers are constantly reviewing their work. This is one of the reasons why the school has improved so much since the previous inspection. Governors have a good idea of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	There are ample qualified teachers and support staff to teach the full curriculum. The time and talents of support staff are put to good use to help pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory and are used effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Governors and teachers compare the school's results with local, similar and all other schools. They try hard to ensure that they get the best possible value for money from spending, particularly when it is large amounts, for example, on providing computers. Parents' views about the school are sought regularly on important matters and they are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
• The school helps their children become mature and responsible. • Parents are pleased that their children like school. • Parents think that most of the teaching is good. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	• Some parents would like a more interesting range of activities outside lessons. • A number of parents are unsure whether their children get the right amount of homework.

Less than 25 per cent of parents returned questionnaires and four gave their views at a meeting prior to the inspection. Most of these had very positive views about the school and were pleased with the efforts made on behalf of their children. Inspectors agree with the positive views of parents. Parents' concerns about after-school clubs and homework are unfounded. There is an appropriate range of activities for pupils at lunchtime and at the end of the day, though these are mostly for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Pupils are given homework regularly. It helps them understand the work they are doing in school and prepares the oldest pupils for secondary school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 When children start nursery, their achievements are mainly well below what is usually found in children of their age. A few know about books and numbers and have a wide experience outside of their own home and family. A significant number lack the confidence or vocabulary to speak to adults and some do not speak clearly. A very small number of children do not speak English when they start nursery. Inspection findings show that children develop many personal, social and emotional skills, learn about reading and writing and mathematics, gain knowledge and understanding of the world and increase their creative and physical skills. However, despite a growing confidence and widening vocabulary, few reach the standard expected for their age by the time they start in Year 1.
- 2 There are several important factors that affect the school's results in National Curriculum tests. The school has a high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs. These are often linked to learning difficulties but a significant number of pupils have emotional and behavioural problems. An increasing number of pupils do not speak English as their first language and most of these are at the early stages of learning the language when they join the school. This has an impact on test results where pupils are tested after being in school only a short while. Similarly, the number of families who move into and out of the estate is very high. For example, of last year's group of pupils a third of those in Year 2 had not been attending this school for the whole of the infant stage and a large proportion of pupils in Year 6 started part-way through the juniors. The school attracts the parents of pupils who have not succeeded in other schools; many of these pupils have special educational needs. This also affects the school's results.
- 3 The results of National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 showed that standards of reading and writing were well below the national average. Fewer pupils than in most other schools reached a higher level in reading or writing. However, a third of this group of pupils had special educational needs and in addition two spoke English as an additional language. These two factors brought the school's results down. On the other hand, the school's own records show that pupils had made progress from a low starting point. The results of National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds in 2000 show that standards were below the national average and far fewer pupils than in most other schools reached a higher level. However, a real success for the school is that pupils perform better in English tests than those in similar schools. This is because of the additional help given to lower attaining pupils from Year 3 onwards, which results in a significant number achieving the expected level by the time they leave the school. Consequently, the school exceeded the targets it had set for the year 2000. Inspection findings confirm that standards are below expectations for seven and 11-year-olds.
- 4 In National Curriculum tests in mathematics for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2000, standards were well below the national average. Very few pupils achieved a higher level and a large number failed to achieve the expected level. This is due to a combination of the high number of pupils who join the school part way through and a large proportion of pupils with special educational needs. It is also because teachers do not always set higher attaining pupils challenging enough work. Inspection findings show that standards remain below average. The results of National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds in 2000 show that standards were below average and fewer pupils achieved a higher level. However, pupils performed as well as those in similar schools and the school exceeded its target for raising standards. Comparisons with pupils'

prior attainment seem to indicate that they have not made the progress they should have in Years 3 to 6. This is misleading because a significant number of those pupils no longer attend the school. As with English, the school's own records show that pupils who have gone all the way through the school progress at the same rate as those in other schools. Inspection findings confirm that standards are below the levels expected of 11-year-olds by the end of Year 6. As teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy more effectively, pupils throughout the school are becoming much better at mental mathematics than they were previously.

- 5 Standards in science continue to be well below the national average although test results have increased steadily over the last four years. Teachers' assessments of pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2000 showed that standards were well below the national average and no pupils reached a higher level. Inspection findings confirm that standards remain well below average by the end of Year 2. This is partly because teachers do not use assessment to ensure that work matches the needs of higher attaining pupils. The results of National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds in 2000 showed that standards were well below the national average. Pupils in Victoria Primary do not perform as well in science tests as pupils in similar schools. One of the reasons for this is that higher attaining pupils are not given challenging enough work. Inspection findings confirm that standards are well below average by the end of Year 6. One of the main reasons for this, which is evident throughout the school, is that pupils lack the confidence and vocabulary to explain science or talk about their work.
- 6 For the last four years girls have performed better than boys in reading and writing tests at the end of Year 2. This is a similar picture to the national one. It is not the case in Year 6 where boys perform slightly better than girls. There are no patterns to the performance of boys and girls in mathematics. In science, boys in Year 6 have outperformed girls for each of the last five years. Teachers have analysed tests but found no clear reasons why this is happening.
- 7 When judged together, standards in all three subjects are improving at a similar rate to the national trend. This means that despite changes to the school population, and the high number of pupils with special educational needs, the school is managing to overcome the challenges presented by each of these situations and help pupils achieve the standards of which they are capable. For example, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in all aspects of their work as a result of good teaching and support from all staff. Those with English as an additional language make significant leaps and bounds in their understanding and speaking of English because of the intense help they get from staff. Similarly, the large number of pupils who join the school part-way through their education make steady progress because teachers are quick to establish whether they have difficulties with learning or settling in to the school and they too get a lot of support.
- 8 Standards in information technology remain below what is expected of seven and 11-year-olds. The situation is likely to improve with the installation of the new computer suite. This is already beginning to raise standards as pupils get more opportunities to work with computers. However, there are still areas of the curriculum that are not covered in full because of the lack of resources, for example, for monitoring events and responding to them and using multi-media to communicate information. Consequently, older pupils have a lot of catching up to do in their use of computers to develop ideas and make things happen. Younger pupils are becoming familiar with many of the programs on the school's computers. In addition, not all teachers have the expertise to use information and communication technology competently or confidently and more training for staff will be needed if the school is to raise standards.
- 9 In religious education, standards meet those prescribed by the locally Agreed Syllabus for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils in the infants begin to understand why some

occasions, such as Christmas, are special. In Years 3 to 6, pupils widen their knowledge of other religions to include the Jewish and Hindu faiths.

- 10 In all other subjects, standards match the levels expected of seven and 11-year-olds, though many pupils lack the vocabulary to talk confidently about what they know. In geography, pupils have a sound understanding of the local area and the countries they study. In history, pupils know about Tudor England, the ancient Egyptians the Victorians and the events of the Second World War by the time they leave the school. In both subjects they are beginning to develop skills of researching facts from books and other sources. In art and design, pupils produce imaginative paintings and models. Similarly, in design and technology, pupils plan and evaluate the models they make and try to finish them to a good standard. In music, pupils benefit from the many first-hand experiences they have to listen to and play musical instruments and compositions from around the world. In all aspects of creative arts, pupils' understanding and imagination are fired by the work they do with a local theatre groups. In physical education, pupils are good at games, are competent gymnasts and enjoy athletics and dancing. Nearly all swim the recommended distance by the time they are in Year 6.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 11 Pupils' attitudes to school continue to be good. Most are very enthusiastic about school and are keen to take part in the many activities the school provides. This is particularly evident in the Foundation Stage where most children come into school smiling and eager for what the day has to offer. Because teachers expect pupils to listen to one another with respect, they know that their opinions are valued. As a result, pupils enjoy taking part in discussions in lessons. Pupils work hard in all lessons but particularly enjoy games. They take pleasure in listening and performing music in assemblies, and many are involved in a range of extra-curricular activities. Their positive attitudes have a direct impact on their learning.
- 12 Most pupils' behaviour in lessons is good. Teachers work hard to achieve this situation since many classes contain pupils with special educational needs for their emotional and behavioural problems. Behaviour is satisfactory at break and lunchtimes when pupils lack the close supervision from their teachers available in classrooms. When incidents of bullying or racism are reported, teachers deal with them promptly and firmly. Pupils who are new to the school and those with English as an additional language say they have made friends and that other pupils are nice to them. Pupils care about their school and treat its resources, fixtures and fittings with respect. No pupils were excluded last year, despite some difficult behaviour. This is a measure of the school's successful management of pupils and the fact that pupils and teachers like one another.
- 13 The caring nature of the school successfully promotes pupils' personal development. Pupils who are elected to the *school council* develop self-assurance when they represent the concerns and wishes of their classmates. Pupils without friends to play with during breaks can rely on the help of an older *buddy*. Because of good relationships between pupils and teachers, lessons take place in a harmonious atmosphere. Most pupils can be trusted to work hard without supervision and work well together in pairs and small groups. The learning of pupils who work together with very high levels of co-operation improves as a result of their ability to share tasks and ideas. In games, for instance, the oldest pupils played *tag rugby* with zest and an impressive understanding of teamwork and fair play. A few pupils find it difficult to work easily with others. The school is working hard to raise these pupils' self-esteem.
- 14 Attendance is similar to that reported at the last inspection, and remains just below the average for primary schools nationally. Unauthorised absence remains very low.

Punctuality is generally good. Almost all pupils arrive on time and are settled in class promptly at the start of sessions.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 15 There is much more good teaching than at the time of the previous inspection. Of the lessons seen, 58 per cent were good and a further 13 per cent were very good. One lesson was excellent and the remaining 27 per cent were satisfactory. None of the lessons seen during the inspection were unsatisfactory and there was good teaching in every class.
- 16 Teaching in the Foundation Stage was always good or better and children get a good start to their education in the nursery and reception classes. This is because teachers ensure that the curriculum is appropriate for young children and that activities are of a practical nature and help children find out for themselves. A strength of the teaching is the emphasis on personal and social development that helps children gain self-esteem and confidence. A further strength is the way that teachers constantly talk with children. This has a marked effect on those children who have speech or language difficulties and those who are just learning to speak English. As a result of the many opportunities they get to talk to adults; they make good progress.
- 17 Teachers' good knowledge of how to teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy increases pupils' understanding and helps them to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. In literacy lessons, pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn different strategies for reading unfamiliar words so that they are more confident about sounding words out or having a guess based on the pictures. Lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs or who do not speak English; are given lots of extra help with both reading and writing. This is successful because the help is not just in literacy lessons; pupils are helped to read worksheets and instructions in lessons such as geography and history. In numeracy lessons, teachers give far more attention to mental mathematics and the emphasis on number work is paying dividends as pupils get older and are more confident in handling numbers.
- 18 Teachers work very hard to keep pupils' interested in their work and to maintain discipline. Their efforts ensure that pupils concentrate and generally try to do their best. The lessons planned for pupils are always interesting and well prepared. No time is lost getting down to work and this minimises any opportunities for pupils to be bored. In good lessons, the pace is always brisk enough to keep pupils working at a fast pace; for example, in a good science lesson in Year 5; pupils were urged to get on with their experiments and not spend too much time writing up the task. All teachers and staff in the school follow the school's policy for managing behaviour. This means that pupils know what is expected of them and they understand the consequences of misbehaviour. Teachers are tireless in their insistence that pupils look at them and listen. However, this is done in such a way that lessons are very rarely slowed or disrupted. Very often a reminder of the rules is sufficient. Sometimes teachers use strategies such as giving secret signs to pupils, which means that they have to watch or they miss the sign. The result of all this hard work is that behaviour in lessons is generally good and, when asked, pupils are keen to talk about their school.
- 19 A particular success of the school is that pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are given a tremendous amount of support and help and make good progress. This is most noticeable in the way they are given extra help and support with their reading and writing. Each class has the help of a classroom assistant who works with small groups of pupils. They make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching. Without them, pupils' acquisition of skills, the

effort they make and their pace of working would not be anywhere near as good as they are. In addition, the headteacher and deputy headteacher spend much of their time working with groups of pupils and supporting teachers in a range of subjects. Pupils' difficulties are diagnosed early in the Foundation Stage and those that need help with reading, writing and number are given support in small groups. Very often this is planned meticulously and is based on each child's targets in their individual learning programme. This is particularly beneficial for those pupils who speak English as a second language, for example, in learning to follow instructions or speaking in full sentences. As a result of this help, they make quick progress in learning to speak English and settle easily into the school. Further up the school, additional support for small groups helps lower attaining pupils in Year 3 to improve their reading and writing and often re-awakens their interest in books. Later on in the juniors, pupils in Year 6 are given the extra push needed to help them do as well as they can in National Curriculum tests through *booster classes* which focus on English and mathematics.

- 20 Pupils who join the school part-way through their education are given a lot of support. Teachers spend time assessing what they know, particularly if there are no records from the previous school, in order to ensure that the work they get is pitched at the right level. Any special educational needs are identified and pupils are given extra support with their work, where it is necessary to help them catch up with their classmates. Staff explain the rules and routines of the school to pupils and parents and as a result pupils settle very quickly.
- 21 The school is successful in meeting the needs of most pupils. However, higher attaining pupils are not always given challenging enough work in mathematics and science in infant classes and science in junior classes. This prevents these pupils from doing as well as they could. Teachers recognise that there are bright pupils in the school and that sometimes their expectations of what these pupils can do is not high enough. This was mentioned in the previous report and is something that co-ordinators need to keep a close check on if the school is to do the best it can for pupils of every ability.
- 22 Teachers make better use of information from assessments of pupils' work to plan the next stage of learning in English and mathematics than in other subjects. Since the previous inspection, they have become very competent at recording pupils' achievements and tracking their progress. In this way they can judge if pupils are doing their best, or are underachieving in the light of their past attainments. Teachers recognise the need to use similar strategies to record progress and plan work in other subjects and co-ordinators have begun the task of doing this and matching record keeping to the new National Curriculum.
- 23 Teachers make good use of homework to help to raise standards in English and mathematics in particular. The introduction of homework in the Foundation Stage is particularly helpful in that it establishes the school's partnership with parents. Pupils are set homework regularly in reading, writing, spellings and learning tables as well as practical activities to share with their parents.

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

- 24 The school has improved the range and quality of the curriculum since the previous inspection. With the exception of information and communication technology, where some areas of the subject cannot be taught in sufficient depth because there are not the resources, the school meets all statutory requirements to teach the new National Curriculum and religious education. This means that pupils' academic and physical development are promoted equally well, and although emphasis is given to literacy and numeracy, a fair balance of time is devoted to other subjects. In addition, sex

education, the misuse of drugs and healthy living are all taught as part of topics in science and through a planned programme in assemblies, lessons and discussions. The attention given to pupils' personal development is a significant factor in how well pupils settle in school, behave well in lessons and are able to forge good relationships with their teachers and others.

- 25 The curriculum is enriched by a suitable range of after-school activities, which are popular with pupils. Sports activities such as basketball encourage a competitive spirit and make pupils proud of their school. Other activities, such as the computer club help pupils increase their knowledge of information and communication technology. Parents' concerns about this aspect of the school's provision are unfounded.
- 26 The curriculum is also enriched by visitors to the school, in particular, local artists who work with pupils and once again help them experience theatre and music in an exciting way. Educational visits give pupils first-hand experiences of history, geography and other religions and pupils say they enjoy these very much. In discussions, they are keen to talk about where they have been and younger pupils look forward to their turn when they get older.
- 27 Pupils in this school get a fair deal. Children in the Foundation Stage get a curriculum that is suited to their age. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs get the support they need to help them make good progress in their learning. The school does the best it can, without further support, for pupils with English as an additional language and they quickly learn to speak and understand English. Boys and girls are given the same opportunities to take part in activities and make progress. Pupils who join the school part-way through their education are given the support and care they need to help them settle quickly and get on with their learning. The only pupils who are not being given the best possible chance to make progress are the higher attainers, who are not always given challenging enough work.
- 28 The school's provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good and is a strength of the school. It is satisfactory for their spiritual development. The school has maintained this level of provision since 1997. School and class assemblies make a suitable contribution to pupils' spiritual development. The headteacher and staff use assemblies to raise spiritual awareness by telling enjoyable stories about themes such as loneliness and being fair, and by encouraging pupils to take part in discussions and activities. Sometimes, opportunities for spiritual development are missed when insufficient time is provided for meaningful reflection about the ideas contained in the theme. Apart from religious education, opportunities for the development of spirituality are not systematically planned into the curriculum but occur incidentally. When they do occur, pupils' experiences are enhanced. For instance, pupils in reception were spellbound when the robotic toy they had programmed in an information technology lesson moved for the first time.
- 29 Teachers provide a strong moral code. By setting clear guidelines they promote moral values effectively and pupils learn to distinguish right from wrong. Pupils are given opportunities to be involved in making rules for their classroom. Teachers discuss unacceptable behaviour with pupils and encourage them to see the point of view of others and to accept responsibility for their own actions. Regular opportunities to discuss moral issues occur during *circle time*. This special time is handled sensitively by teachers which encourages all pupils to take part and thereby gain in moral development.
- 30 Provision for social development is good. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to work together co-operatively in subjects such as drama, science and physical education. Good relationships between adults and pupils help to contribute to the caring community that is evident within the school. A weekly assembly to celebrate

pupils' achievements raises their self-esteem when the school shows how much it values their efforts. Two elected pupils from each class take part in fortnightly meetings of the *school council*. This role is taken very seriously as pupils report back to their class about issues, such as behaviour at playtimes, discussed at the council meeting. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils are committed to a variety of duties, including being playtime *buddies* to keep an eye open for lonely or unhappy pupils at playtime. Pupils in the Year 5 and 6 class share weekly reading experiences with younger pupils. Consideration for others is promoted through charitable work. After-school activities and visits encourage pupils to work and play together and pupils in Year 6 develop a sense of responsibility and take initiatives during their annual residential visit.

- 31 Pupils are given many good opportunities to learn about their own and other cultures. In history and geography lessons, pupils develop their knowledge of past societies in ancient Egypt and Greece, and of contemporary ones in India and Africa. This helps them to compare other cultures with their own. Nearer to home, they become steeped in local traditions as they study the legacy left by the Victorians, for instance, the changes brought about by the introduction of the railways. In art, pupils learn of famous artists from many parts of the world and in assemblies, they hear music by composers from many different cultures. Religious education gives them the opportunity to study faiths such as Judaism and Hinduism. Visits to museums and other places of culture, together with visits from theatre companies, are also planned into the curriculum.
- 32 Pupils' learning continues to benefit from links with the community. Educational visits extend the work done in class and visitors help to broaden their experiences, particularly in religious education. Pupils' personal development is enhanced through residential visits and by the distribution of harvest gifts within the locality. Business links are developing. For example, older pupils have recently visited a solicitor's office and had an article written about the experience in a local newspaper. There are good links with other local schools through the Education Action Zone programme, and satisfactory arrangements are in place for transferring pupils to secondary school at the end of Year 6.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 33 Pupils' welfare remains a high priority and continues to be promoted well within the school. Pupils are supervised carefully and the day-to-day practices adopted by staff to ensure pupils' well-being are good. Arrangements for ensuring child protection are also good. When necessary, three trained members of staff are responsible for contacting outside agencies and follow local education authority guidelines if cases of abuse are suspected.
- 34 Procedures for supporting pupils' learning and personal development are good. Teachers know their pupils well and understand their needs. They use praise and rewards effectively to encourage effort, and celebrate pupils' achievements in weekly assemblies. Effective marking of pupils' work in subjects such as English in Years 5 and 6 provides guidance for improvement. The setting of targets for pupils' learning in English and mathematics helps pupils to understand the standards teachers expect of them. Staff have high expectations of good behaviour, and promote it successfully. All schools in the locality drew up a jointly agreed behaviour policy. This ensures that pupils are familiar with the same disciplinary procedures when they start their secondary education. The school has clear procedures for dealing with bullying. Any reported incidents are taken seriously and handled effectively. Parents and pupils are reminded regularly about the importance of good attendance. Information about what is acceptable and unacceptable absence is displayed prominently in the entrance hall.
- 35 Pupils with special educational needs receive good support for their learning and behavioural problems. This is because teachers' thorough assessments of pupils' achievements and personal development underlie the individual education plans they produce to meet pupils' needs. Individual education plans are updated frequently by monitoring and analysing pupils' progress. The school makes good use of the services of the local education authority for the benefit of pupils with special educational needs. For instance, an educational psychologist and learning support teachers visit the school regularly. During lessons, pupils receive good support for their learning and sensitive guidance on their behaviour from support staff.
- 36 The school has good procedures for assessing pupils' learning. Teachers use the results of frequent tests to measure and track pupils' progress as they move through the school. Assessment is a natural part of teaching and learning in most lessons. By checking pupils' understanding through questioning, discussion and marking teachers know when pupils are ready to move on to the next stage of learning. Teachers' good knowledge of pupils' attainments raises their awareness of pupils who may need support for special educational needs. Although staff keep good records of the learning and personal development of pupils with special educational needs, they do not record the personal development of other pupils. Nevertheless, this presents few problems as teachers know their pupils well.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 37 Although few returned questionnaires or attended the pre-inspection meeting, parents express strong support for the school. Most are happy with the standards their children achieve and appreciate that teachers expect them to work hard and to do their best. As at the last inspection, the school works hard to build helpful relationships with parents. Consequently, parental support is increasing.

- 38 The school involves the parents of pupils with special educational needs in discussions and reviews of their children's progress from the time of teachers' initial concerns, and they are kept well-informed about subsequent developments. This also encourages parents to work in partnership with teachers to support their children's development.
- 39 Parents receive good information about their children's progress. Annual reports contain helpful indications about pupils' learning, and comments about their personal and social development. They identify areas for improvement in English, mathematics and science. The prospectus and governors' annual report also meet requirements. The school provides extensive details for parents about what is taught in lessons and homework is set on a regular basis. The school also provides courses to improve parents' understanding of how they can help their children at home. Teachers encourage parents to become involved in the work of the school by helping in classrooms. Every year, the school seeks parents' opinions about the quality of education it provides. Because of teachers' efforts, almost all parents have signed home school agreements. Those parents who help their children at home, and the small number who help out in school, help to raise standards but despite all the school's efforts, this is still only a small number of parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 40 Strong leadership and a firm commitment from staff and governors have helped the school to come a long way since the previous inspection. The rate of change and improvement has been rapid and is a measure of the hard work of everyone involved.
- 41 The headteacher is a good leader who has tackled each of the key issues of the previous report in a thorough and systematic way. This has been achieved through rigorous evaluation of what works and what does not in teaching, by analysing the results of tests and tracking pupils' progress as they get older and by producing a more structured plan for how the school should continue to improve than had previously existed. Through all of this, the enthusiasm and encouragement of the headteacher has continued to motivate staff and keep morale high.
- 42 The school development plan has been the catalyst for all recent improvements. It sets out in detail the school's priorities for improvement, identifies areas where further training or resources are necessary and indicates how the school will know how well it is doing. The only weakness to the current plan is that teachers are trying to do too much and the number of targets is unrealistic. The headteacher recognises that this is because everyone has worked flat out in the last five years. By prioritising targets more rigorously next year, it is likely that staff will be able to focus on monitoring those aspects of the school's work that will have most impact on pupils' learning.
- 43 As a response to comments in the previous report, the headteacher has delegated responsibilities for leading subjects more evenly and the deputy headteacher no longer has a heavy burden. This means that she is able to oversee the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language, and spend important time with parents and specialists who visit the school. During the time of the inspection, a temporary deputy headteacher provided good support for the headteacher and teachers. Her quiet, calm efficiency ensured that the school continued to run smoothly.

- 44 Staff with leadership and managerial roles have a firm understanding of their responsibilities and contribute to the effective management of the school. Subject co-ordinators have worked hard to ensure that everyone is prepared for the new National Curriculum and the recently introduced Foundation Stage. Good quality schemes of work in all subjects and accurate systems for assessing what pupils know and can do in English and mathematics put the school in a good position to be able to continue to improve the way it monitors pupils' progress. Co-ordinators have contributed to the significant improvement in teaching and learning since the previous inspection. The systems they have for monitoring teaching and pupils' progress are good. However, there is a need to be more specific about the aspects of teaching being monitored. Co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science analyse the results of tests but this is not the case in all subjects. In the same way, not all co-ordinators check teachers' planning to ensure that pupils' work is pitched at the right level.
- 45 The school complies with the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs and fulfils all legal requirements. The special needs co-ordinator provides good support for staff by ensuring that they understand the requirements of the Code of Practice. The school has an ample number of support staff who work with pupils both in lessons and in groups outside classrooms. Support staff are effective in improving pupils' learning and behaviour, and undertake their work to a high standard.
- 46 As a result of a thorough and honest reflection on their teaching and what needed improving, the quality of teaching is better than at the time of the previous inspection. This was done by watching colleagues at work and giving critical advice about what worked and what did not in classrooms.
- 47 Governors continue to make a positive contribution to the good leadership. They are involved in decisions about curriculum and policy and see that the aims and values of the school are met in its everyday working. Their decision to employ high numbers of support staff is based on careful financial management and rising numbers of pupils. Grants arising from the school being part of an Education Action Zone and for training are put to good use. The budget for pupils with special educational needs is spent productively on additional support for their learning. The school receives little money to help teach pupils with English as an additional language but does the best job it can on the finances available. Governors play an important part in monitoring the school's finances and keep a close watch on the budget. Their prudence with money has helped the school save for a suite of computers, which is vital if standards in information and communication technology are to improve. Two very competent administrative assistants ensure that the school runs smoothly and that the recommendations of the most recent auditor's report have all been acted upon.
- 48 The headteacher and governors are rapidly coming to terms with the principles of best value and are well aware of the need to use all of the school's resources effectively. They use information from analysing the results of National Curriculum tests and comparisons with other schools to guide financial decisions. Spending is beginning to be targeted to where it will have the best impact on standards. Parents are consulted on matters such as homework and the school has a good idea of its strengths and weaknesses.
- 49 There is a satisfactory match between the numbers, experience and qualifications of teachers and the curriculum. Suitable procedures are in place to introduce new and supply teachers to the school so that pupils' learning is not disturbed. A good record of staff training has been maintained over the last two years to make sure that teachers are competent to teach the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The school has successfully continued to appraise the work of teachers. This takes place in the form of discussions between the headteacher and teachers after the quality of teaching and learning has been observed during lessons. It has helped improve the quality of

teaching in the last two years and puts the school in a good position to make the move to a system of *performance management* smoothly.

- 50 The school has sufficient accommodation for effective learning to take place. Classrooms are spacious for the number of pupils in each class. The grounds are a reasonable size and the inside and outside of the school are kept spic-and-span by the caretaker and cleaning staff. There are also sufficient resources to teach all subjects and they are used to good effect on pupils' learning. Teachers' make good use of visits to places of educational interest in the local area to increase pupils' understanding of subjects such as geography and history. In addition, visitors to the school help stimulate pupils' imaginations by telling stories, dancing and playing musical instruments.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Governors, headteacher and staff should

(1) raise standards in mathematics by

- a. using information from assessment to plan more challenging work for higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1
- b. checking pupils' books to determine whether pupils of different ability are given work at the right level
- c. continuing to analyse the results of tests in order to identify gaps in learning, and making these a focus for monitoring teaching and planning pupils' work.

(paragraphs 4, 85 – 93, 21 of the main report)

(2) raise standards in science by

- a. ensuring that higher attaining pupils are given more challenging work
- b. monitoring pupils' work in order to ensure that it is planned at the right level
- c. planning more opportunities for pupils to investigate and experiment for themselves and to talk about their work.

(paragraphs 5, 21, 94 - 100 of the main report)

(3) raise standards in information and communication technology by

- a. ensuring that there are sufficient resources to teach all aspects of the subject
- b. providing further training for teachers, where necessary
- c. checking teachers' planning to see that the curriculum is taught in full.

(paragraphs 8, 101 - 105 of the main report)

(4) increase the effectiveness of monitoring by

- a. analysing test results in order to identify gaps in teaching and learning
- b. checking teachers' planning in order to ensure that work is pitched at the right level for different groups of pupils
- c. being very specific about the aspects of teaching that are monitored,
- d. providing feedback to teachers in order to help them develop their teaching skills.

(paragraphs 21, 42, 44, 84, 93, 100 of the main report)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	62
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	13	58	27	0	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	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	25	302
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	77

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	14
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6	96

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	8

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.6
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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	22	21	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	15	16
	Girls	20	18	18
	Total	32	33	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (66)	77 (71)	79 (68)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	16	15
	Girls	20	19	17
	Total	35	35	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (66)	81 (68)	74 (71)
	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	19	18	37

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	16	18
	Girls	12	9	11
	Total	28	25	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (61)	68 (47)	76 (68)
	National	75 (71)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	16	16
	Girls	12	11	10
	Total	27	27	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (53)	73 (45)	70 (55)
	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	1
Black – other	6
Indian	5
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	233
Any other minority ethnic group	4

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.2
Average class size	30.2

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	331

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25

Number of pupils per FTE adult	12.5
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	630920
Total expenditure	631241
Expenditure per pupil	1973
Balance brought forward from previous year	6170
Balance carried forward to next year	5850

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	327
Number of questionnaires returned	75 (22.9%)

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	33	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	45	48	3	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	45	3	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	32	9	1	33
The teaching is good.	67	28	5	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	32	8	0	7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	27	3	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	39	0	1	7
The school works closely with parents.	49	37	7	1	5
The school is well led and managed.	48	43	4	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	44	3	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	28	16	1	32

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

- 51 In Victoria Primary School, the Foundation Stage is made up of the nursery and two reception classes. Children start in the nursery in the term after their third birthday; at the time of the inspection, 39 of the 49 children were aged three. Children move on to the reception classes in the September of the year in which they are five. Because the inspection was in the autumn term, and most children in the Foundation Stage have spring or summer birthdays, only fourteen children in the reception classes were aged five.
- 52 The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is a strength of the school. Most of the teaching in nursery and reception classes is good and some of it is very good. Staff have adapted their planning and teaching to take account of the new Foundation Stage and the *stepping stones* that lead to children achieving the early learning goals.
- 53 When children start nursery their achievements vary widely but are generally well below what is expected for their age. While several have gained considerable independence, others are experiencing life away from their families for the first time. A few know about books and numbers and have a wide experience outside of their own home and family. Most are timid and a small number do not speak clearly or in English. During their time in nursery and the reception class, children make good progress in everything they do, although few are likely to reach the expected standards in communication, language and literacy, mathematics or knowledge and understanding of the world by the time they start in Year 1.

Personal, social and emotional development

- 54 This area of learning is promoted well by staff. In the nursery, children are encouraged to do things for themselves and be independent. They learn quickly to follow instructions to sit on the carpet, because they know that this means they will be having a new activity. Teachers encourage children to be friendly to one another and say *please* and *thank you*. Despite their shyness, most children said or whispered *thank you* to a boy who was giving them a chocolate bar to celebrate his birthday.
- 55 Teachers in the reception classes give children responsibilities for putting things away, carrying out jobs such as taking the register back to the office or just finding their own reading bags from the box. A good feature of teaching is that teachers know each child well and are able to respond to their needs. For example, a teacher spotted when a child was feeling unwell and arranged for her to be taken home before she got too upset.
- 56 Staff encourage children to make their own decisions. This is evident when children are given the chance to choose the activities in which they want to take part and know that they have to tidy away once they have completed a task or game.
- 57 The adults provide good role models for children. They are calm and organised and treat children with respect and courtesy. This leads to warm and trusting relationships and helps the children to behave in a friendly manner to one another.

Communication, language and literacy

- 58 This area of learning is taught well and children get a good start to reading and writing. Despite this, few achieve the skills expected for their age by the time they leave the reception classes.
- 59 A strength of the teaching in the Foundation Stage is the way that staff constantly talk with children. Every activity involves asking questions and emphasising words and names. As a result of their efforts, most children will answer questions and a child who speaks little English has settled quickly into the nursery and understands simple instructions, such as *tidy away* and *time for milk*. Teachers in the reception classes continue to foster children's enjoyment of spoken language by planning many opportunities for children to listen to stories and to talk about their work. As a result, children extend their vocabulary and gain confidence, though a significant number remain hesitant and shy.
- 60 Another good feature of teaching is that teachers tell and read stories to children every day. Consequently, children learn to enjoy books and to handle them with care. Children in the nursery learn to turn the pages by the corner, and to understand that the words tell the story. They all look at the pictures very closely and smile and join in with the parts they know. By the time they are in reception class, the brightest children read simple stories and talk about the characters. Most children act like readers, pointing to the words and telling the story, though a number are still at the stage where they remember the words rather than read them.
- 61 In both the nursery and the reception classes children are given many opportunities to write. As a result, most can copy the writing of an adult by the time they leave the reception classes and the brightest children write short sentences about their news or something they have done.

Mathematical development

- 62 This area of learning is also taught well, though few children reach the standards expected for their age by the time they leave the reception classes. Teachers ensure that children gain an understanding of number, pattern and shape through practical activities such as counting objects, playing games and sorting shapes into sets. This helps children make good progress in understanding numbers and concepts, such as adding and taking away. However, teachers also encourage children to record their mathematics, first as pictures and then, as they get older, as sums with symbols for addition, subtraction and equals. Most children can do this by the time they leave reception classes, but some write numbers the wrong way around and teachers do not always correct these mistakes.
- 63 Teachers make mathematics fun and a part of the everyday life of the school. In the nursery, children learn to count and use mathematical language such as left and right by singing number rhymes. By following their teacher's example, most could put up the little finger on the right when singing the song *One, two, three, four, five*. In the reception classes, the teachers asked children to work out the number of children absent from school that day. Although everyone was keen to give an answer, most were guessing and got it wrong.
- 64 The reason that most do not achieve all of the goals set out for five-year-olds is that they are held back by their limited vocabulary. For example, children in a reception class knew that three comes after two but did not have the words to say that three is more than two or two is less than three. However, there are a few bright children in the reception classes. They have a firm understanding of number and work things out in

their head much more competently than the other children. For example, one boy worked out that there are six tens in 60 easily and quickly.

- 65 Finally, staff constantly reinforce children's understanding of mathematical language by asking questions such as *is that full now?* Children respond by using the same language in their descriptions and quickly learn to use the right terms of measurement and position.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 66 Good teaching helps children widen their understanding of the world. Teachers do this by planning activities that are based on first-hand experiences, such as experimenting with sand and water and looking at the houses and shops around the school. They encourage children to talk about their families and use stories to help children learn about the significance of special festivals, such as Christmas.
- 67 One of the strengths of teaching in this area of learning is that children are encouraged to find things out for themselves. This was evident in a very good science-based activity, when children in the nursery explored the properties of mirrors. One boy was fascinated by the way he appeared upside down in a curved mirror and tried to see how he could appear the right way up. In a reception class, children were equally excited to discover that they could programme a robot to move. They very quickly learned to estimate distance and to clear the toy's memory before they had their go at making it move. However, despite being very keen to find things out, a significant number of children have difficulty talking about what they know because of their limited vocabulary.

Physical development

- 68 Regular opportunities to use the hall for dancing, games and gymnastics help children make steady progress in the development of physical skills. By the end of the reception year they have achieved many of the early learning goals and move with confidence and control. This was evident when children played ring games in the hall and could get themselves into circles and keep in step to the songs.
- 69 Children in the nursery get plenty of opportunities for robust play outside and they enjoy letting off steam with a good run around the yard. They whiz around on wheeled toys very capably but often choose to bump into someone or something in order to stop. This is something that staff are trying to discourage.
- 70 At a different level, teachers also teach skills such as cutting and gluing, to help children gain control of these types of movement. Having regular opportunities to use small tools helps children hold pens and paintbrushes correctly, though a few still struggle with scissors.

Creative development

- 71 Teachers plan a wide range of interesting creative activities where children can explore colour, texture shape and music. Consequently, by the time they leave the reception classes, they achieve many of the skills expected for their age. In the nursery, children are encouraged to sing along and join in with songs and rhymes and there is a good range of percussion instruments that they can choose to use. Children enjoy singing and even though few know the words, almost all joined in with the actions to songs they liked. One girl's enjoyment of music was evident when she spent some time shaking bells and smiling at the sound. Five minutes later the girl was back having another go and was watched by a child who later copied her actions.

- 72 In the reception classes, teachers build on what children already know. Painting skills are developed further as children are taught how to mix paint to get a wider range of colour and tone. As a result of working with a widening range of materials, children create imaginative pictures and draw detailed pictures to illustrate work in other areas of learning. The portraits that children draw of themselves and other people show the good progress that they make in adding detail to their pictures. Children's work is valued and is displayed attractively in the nursery and reception classes.
- 73 Children's imagination is further evident in role-play, when they enjoy playing with train sets and dressing up and acting out the part. This was evident when a small group of nursery children played for a long time with trains and track.

ENGLISH

- 74 Standards achieved by 11-year-olds in National Curriculum tests in 2000 continued to be below the levels expected for their age. This result was not surprising or unsatisfactory, as a high percentage of pupils in last year's Year 6 had special educational needs for their learning difficulties. Also, the number of pupils who start or leave school between reception and Year 6 is high and this has a detrimental effect on the school's results. Despite these factors, standards have risen sharply over the last two years, considerably narrowing the gap between what is expected and what pupils achieve. Moreover, pupils in this school did better than those in similar schools. This is partly due to the good provision made for pupils with special educational needs in reading and writing, the additional support given to pupils in Year 3 who are behind with their reading and the *booster classes* that provide an extra impetus for pupils in Year 6. As a result, the school exceeded its target for 2000, with more pupils than ever reaching the level expected for their age.
- 75 Standards achieved by seven-year-olds in National Curriculum tests in 2000 in reading and writing remain well below the levels expected for their age. However, this group of pupils included two pupils who were at the early stages of learning to speak English and even more significantly, a third of the group had special educational needs. This drastically reduced the percentage of pupils reaching the expected levels.
- 76 Girls consistently do better than boys in national tests. The school's own analysis of why this is so indicates that girls are often more interested than boys in reading and writing. The school has begun to tackle this issue by taking part in a project organised by the local education authority, set up to raise boys' enthusiasm for writing. By working in a small group with an advisory teacher, boys focus on topics of particular interest to them, to improve their standard of writing and thereby their motivation for further writing. Also, the school has purchased a wide range of story and information books to boost boys' enthusiasm to read. This is already paying dividends as confirmed during the inspection when boys were keen to talk about the number of new books they had already enjoyed.
- 77 Inspection findings confirm that standards are below the levels expected of 11-year-olds and well below those expected in writing for seven-year-olds. However, standards in reading for seven-year-olds have risen and are close to the expected levels. This is because of the strong emphasis teachers place on developing pupils' reading and comprehension as they read with the whole class during the literacy hour. Also, the *Sustained Reading Intervention* programme is successful in helping pupils learn a range of strategies for reading unfamiliar words and involves parents in sharing reading activities with their children.

- 78 The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good overall with some very good teaching. The National Literacy Strategy has had a powerful impact by raising teachers' knowledge and understanding of teaching the basic skills of literacy. Since many pupils have difficulties with spoken English, especially the less able and those who speak English as an additional language, teachers put considerable effort into encouraging pupils to express themselves clearly with an increasingly interesting and varied vocabulary. They give them many opportunities for speaking at the end of lessons and in responding to questions and suggestions. By the time they are seven, most pupils are willing to take part in discussions although their limited vocabulary frequently inhibits them from adding detail to their descriptions and only higher attaining pupils speak at any length. Although pupils with English as an additional language receive good support from their teachers and classroom assistants, they tend to rely on familiar adjectives such as *nice* and *good* and speak in incomplete sentences such as *candles when is birthday*. By the time they are in Year 6, most pupils are aware that language and expression are important, for example, when reading *Haiku* poems or sharing their work with the school during assemblies, although a significant minority still lack confidence and eloquence.
- 79 Most pupils do well to reach standards in reading at a level below that expected by the time they are aged eleven. Despite the low attainment of many pupils in Years 1 and 2, they all use the strategies that they have been taught to make sense of simple stories. Teachers make learning enjoyable as they play games with pupils to help them break down words in reading. Very effective use of questioning encourages pupils to look for deeper meanings in texts and to consider the writer's choice of language to argue a point. For example, pupils in Year 6 begin to link sentences using *however*, *furthermore* and *therefore* as they consider whether the *mayor* or *Silas Marner* should keep the baby.
- 80 Throughout the school, standards in writing are not as high as those in reading. The school's own analysis of why this is the case, indicates that pupils' limited language skills, together with a lack of confidence in their own ability, makes them reluctant writers. Intensive teaching of writing skills and the use of *story frames* is helping to build pupils' confidence although with the exception of the class of Years 5 and 6 and the class of Year 6, not enough opportunities are given for pupils to put these skills into practice at the time of their acquisition. All pupils have personal targets for improving their writing and are pleased when their teachers sign their books as each target is met. Marking is particularly strong in Years 5 and 6 where pupils are very clear about their strengths and are given targets for development on each piece of work. Other initiatives to raise standards in writing include specific support given by the headteacher to a group of pupils in Year 6 whose attainment in writing falls well below their attainment in reading.
- 81 Older pupils are given good opportunities to write for a variety of purposes. Their work is enhanced by strong links with drama; by working with a theatre company, pupils were very highly motivated to write their own play script of *Silas Marner* and to develop it into a performance for parents. Its success is summed up by the pupils' own evaluations which included *I felt so relaxed and calm*, *I learnt lots of new words*, and *I'm better at co-operating and being focused*.
- 82 A strength of the teaching is the good provision made for pupils who speak English as an additional language and for those with special educational needs. Because of the good relationships they have with their teachers and classroom assistants, they respond well to the extra support they are given during literacy lessons. In Years 1 and 2, they learn a range of strategies for reading unfamiliar words and the focus on building up words in spelling helps them to write short accounts of personal experiences. The continuing good support as they move through the juniors enables

them to use their literacy skills in all subjects and to make good progress towards the targets on their individual educational plans.

- 83 Another strong feature of teaching lies in the firm and consistent way that teachers manage pupils' behaviour. Every class has pupils with special educational needs for their behavioural problems. Their behaviour easily distracts other pupils whose concentration is not strong. These pupils cause a lot of hard work for teachers and support staff who, by their prompt action to put an end to any misbehaviour or inattentiveness, enable other pupils get on with their work undisturbed.
- 84 The English co-ordinator provides a strong lead for the subject. By monitoring teaching with a clear focus in mind such as raising standards in writing, the co-ordinator and senior management team are improving teaching and learning. Good procedures are in place to check what pupils know and can do and to track their progress and the information gained is used well to inform planning. With the support of the co-ordinator and the successful use of the National Literacy Strategy, the school is in a good position to improve standards.

MATHEMATICS

- 85 The results of National Curriculum tests in 2000 showed that standards were well below those expected of seven-year-olds and below those expected of 11-year-olds. Fewer pupils than in most other schools reached a higher level and a greater number failed to reach the level expected for their age. Comparisons with similar schools show that pupils in Year 6 had not made the progress they should have done, based on the results of tests in Year 2 in 1996. Inspection findings are that standards remain below expectations for both seven and 11-year-olds.
- 86 However, this is not the real picture of attainment in mathematics in Victoria Primary School. There are several factors that have a significant effect on why standards appear low. Firstly, the school has a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than most other schools. Although these pupils achieve as well as they can, their failure to get to the expected level brings the school's overall results down. In addition, there is an increasing number of pupils who do not speak English as their first language. While older pupils have often had time to learn the language and do as well as they can in tests, the youngest pupils might have had less than two years schooling before they are tested. Finally, the school has a high turnover of pupils. For example, in the Year 2 class of 2000, a third of pupils had started school part way through the key stage. It was a similar picture in the Year 6 class. A more realistic view of standards is found by looking at the school's own records of pupils' attainment. These show quite clearly that those children who have gone all the way through the school progress at the same rate as those in other schools. The school exceeded the target it had set for raising standards in 2000. Inspection findings are that most of the teaching and learning is good. Despite this, standards remain below expectations for pupils' age for the same reasons that test results are not higher.
- 87 Teachers are knowledgeable about the National Numeracy Strategy and make good use of it to ensure that the work they plan for pupils covers all aspects of mathematics. They follow the format suggested for teaching and a good feature of all lessons is the mental mathematics session. Pupils look forward to the sense of competition in many of these sessions and enjoy the challenge of having to think quickly. Their enthusiasm is evident in the number of hands that go up after each question and the smiles on their faces when they get the answer right. As a result of teachers giving more time and emphasis to mental mathematics, pupils are much better at remembering multiplication tables than they were at the time of the previous inspection. By the time

they are in Year 3, most pupils can count in *twos* and *tens*. They go on to increase their knowledge so that by the time they leave the school, average and higher attaining pupils know most of their tables to ten.

- 88 A strength of the teaching throughout the school, is that teachers have good relationships with their pupils and use a balance of praise and firm control to ensure that they pay attention. Pupils who have special educational needs arising from behavioural or emotional problems are often given close support from classroom assistants or other teachers and this ensures that they listen. For example, in a good lesson in Year 3, the classroom assistant sat with two pupils during the mental mathematics session and prompted them to try and answer questions. As a result, they joined in the session and were prepared to have a go. Similarly, pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, often work in a small group, led by the classroom assistant or teacher. The extra attention they get helps them make steady progress in their learning of mathematics and language.
- 89 In order to help pupils develop their own strategies for using mathematics, which has been identified as one of the weaknesses in their learning, teachers frequently ask pupils to explain their thinking or talk about their work. Although many pupils struggle to do this because of their lack of vocabulary, they try hard to say what they mean. For example, in a very good lesson in the Year 3 and 4 class, pupils were asked to tell a classmate something special about their number and a number responded by saying *it's a multiple of*.
- 90 Planning is generally satisfactory. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly and give informative introductions, which clarify what a lesson is about and what pupils have to do. This ensures that in most lessons, pupils settle quickly to their work and do not demand the attention of teachers. For example, in a lesson in the Year 1 and 2 class, the teacher was able to concentrate her efforts on helping a small group of pupils because the rest of the class were working purposefully on shopping activities.
- 91 Teachers do not plan work at the right levels for higher attaining pupils in the infant classes. Too often, these pupils follow the same programme as average attaining pupils and this slows their learning. This does not happen in Year 5 and 6 classes because pupils are grouped according to ability for mathematics lessons and higher attaining pupils are set more challenging work than other groups.
- 92 Teachers ensure that pupils use their mathematics in other subjects. For example, in a good lesson in Year 6, pupils used computers to learn about databases. In discussions about mathematics, older pupils talk about how they use numbers and measurement in science and design and technology.
- 93 The co-ordinator manages the subject well and has identified the weaknesses in teachers' planning as a key area for improvement. Next year, checks on pupils' books and teachers' planning are likely to provide evidence of how well this has been achieved. The co-ordinator makes good use of the results of tests and assessments to check whether pupils are learning at a fast enough rate and to predict the levels they will achieve by the time they leave the school. This has only recently started but is already helping teachers to see which pupils are not doing as well as they should be.

SCIENCE

- 94 Standards in science are well below those expected of seven and 11-year-olds. In National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, pupils do not perform as well as those in similar schools. Inspection findings, however, confirm a rising trend of achievement seen in the results of national tests, in line with the rising national trend. This has been

achieved through good teaching. Teachers use national guidelines to provide pupils with interesting step-by-step lessons and as a result they make good progress as they get older.

- 95 In recent years, teachers have been given suitable training in the subject. As a result, their confidence and knowledge have improved. This helps them to make lessons interesting so that pupils want to learn. Teachers tell pupils clearly what the lesson is about, so pupils know what they are going to do and learn. This gives a focus to the introduction of the lesson and pupils enthusiastically participate in answering questions and making suitable points. The teachers who focus on developing clear scientific language give pupils a more accurate understanding of the subject. In a lesson for pupils in the Years 4 and 5 class, the teacher used the correct technical vocabulary to explain how electricity flows. The pupils copied this good example and were themselves able to use terms such as *switch*, *circuit* and *conductor*. This good practice is not consistent and results in a critical weakness in pupils' ability to explain science effectively in their own words or talk about what they have done. This prevents standards being higher. Teachers check pupils' understanding step by step as the lesson progresses. For instance, in a Year 3 and 4 lesson the teacher's probing questioning revealed a lack of understanding of the word *insulator*, which was remedied before the lesson became more difficult for pupils to understand.
- 96 Teachers succeed in establishing an enthusiastic and keen response from pupils. Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong and productive. The pupils know that their ideas are valued and it is rare for lessons to be disrupted by pupils calling out or not listening. In a lesson in the Years 4 and 5 class, the teacher's very good management skills enabled pupils to work sensibly and productively at a good pace, because they wanted to succeed in making an electric circuit.
- 97 Although teachers help pupils learn basic scientific skills of setting up and observing experiments, they do not always provide enough opportunities for them to investigate and find out for themselves. For example, in a lesson in the Years 1 and 2 class, the teacher introduced pupils to the idea of a *fair test* in finding out how pushes and pulls can make things move, speed up or slow down. Pupils were asked to predict what might happen if conditions were changed. However, the teacher missed the opportunity to involve them directly in the actual investigation. This prevents pupils from working out for themselves how to carry out an investigation. Such an approach continues through each year group. In Year 6, for example, investigations in the growth of plants tend to be led by the teacher with pupils watching. On the other hand, lessons were seen in Years 3, 4 and 5 with a suitable emphasis on investigative science where pupils enthusiastically joined up electric circuits. Most teachers do not pay enough attention to helping pupils record their experiments in a scientific way. However, there is, again, a basis to build on and there are examples of better practice in some classes.
- 98 A weakness in teaching is that teachers do not always provide suitably challenging work for the brightest pupils. These pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Too often they are set the same tasks as average attaining pupils. However, in a lesson in the Years 4 and 5 class, the teacher did take their needs into account. They responded well in setting up their own investigation by finding and designing a switch to control the flow of electricity.
- 99 A strength of the teaching is the way pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are supported. For instance, in a Year 6 lesson, the special needs assistant gave pupils the help they needed by asking questions and helping with key vocabulary. Very good provision was made for these pupils in Year 3. While the class teacher taught the majority of pupils, the special needs teacher worked with a small group and helped them understand how to make a simple electrical circuit.

- 100 The school's procedures for checking pupils' achievement and progress are good. The information gained helps teachers group pupils for science lessons. Analysis of test results show the school that boys do better than girls in science in Year 6. However, at present, the school cannot explain why and does not have a strategy in hand to raise girls' achievement in science. Arrangements exist for the subject co-ordinator to check teaching and learning in the classroom, but they are not effective enough to give an accurate picture of the overall success of the school's work in science. The co-ordinator's knowledgeable leadership gives the school the capacity to raise standards in science.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 101 Standards are below those expected for seven and 11-year-olds. When information and communications technology was last reported on, it was judged that standards were unsatisfactory. Although standards appear not to have risen, the situation is improved in areas such as word processing and data collection, but there are still areas of the curriculum that are not covered due to lack of resources. These include monitoring events and responding to them and using multi-media to communicate information. Pupils in both infant and junior classes understand how computers affect their lives and are used in appliances in the home and offices. Younger pupils, of five and six years of age, make good progress using the mouse to select words from a word list. Pupils in infant classes and in the early and middle years of the junior school use word processing programs competently but 11-year-olds have got a lot of catching up to do. This is because they have not previously used computers often enough to gain the skills expected for their age. However, since the installation of the new computer suite, older pupils are making good progress in all aspects of their learning. They rapidly gain familiarity with software programs, such as databases, and learn quickly how to use menus to add text and pictures to their work.
- 102 Pupils have equal opportunities to use computers and other information and communication technology. Pupils in infant classes have computers in their classrooms, though teachers do not plan for them to be used often enough in subjects other than information and communication technology. They are used to good effect with pupils who have special educational needs and to some extent with pupils who have English as an additional language. The new computer room enables teachers to teach new techniques to about half their class at a time and to give those pupils close attention, while the remainder of the class get on with work that is linked to what is being taught. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 6, half of the class entered information into a database while the remaining half drew graphs to communicate data. Although pupils in infant classes have lessons in the computer room, its situation makes it far more accessible to pupils in Years 3 to 6.

- 103 Too few lessons were seen to make judgements about the standards of teaching in the infant classes but the standard of teaching in the junior classes is at least good and is sometimes excellent. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to plan work that pupils find interesting, for example, to find information from CD-ROMs in history lessons. Good teaching of word processing skills ensures that pupils gain familiarity with the layout of the keyboard and learn to type with two hands. One of the features of teaching is that pupils are taught to build on what they already know. Consequently, after learning to use menus to change the size, colour and style of writing, older pupils learn to add borders and pictures to make their work more attractive. Teachers make good use of the resources they have but until the school has the equipment necessary to teach all aspects of the subject, standards are unlikely to improve. Another good feature of teaching is that teachers assess pupils' work well and keep detailed records of what pupils can do. In an excellent Year 6 lesson, the teacher asked pupils to explain what they were doing to the rest of the class. This enabled the teacher to judge how much pupils had understood and to give extra help where needed. In this lesson, pupils of all abilities got an equal chance to have a go and succeed. Lower attaining pupils wrote out instructions for starting up the computers in the correct order. Pupils of average ability improved their word processing skills by learning how to use bullet points to emphasise work, to move blocks of text around and to correct errors. A small group of higher attaining pupils, who have good word processing skills, used a more advanced program to produce an animated description of the stages involved in making a clay pot. The quality of teaching meant that pupils made very good progress in the lesson and left the room with a sense of achievement.
- 104 Pupils enjoy using computers and treat them with respect. They are keen to work in the computer room and help each other when entering text. When given the chance, pupils are keen to use computers and older pupils eagerly attend lunchtime computer clubs. Pupils who have computers at home often use them to play games but some use them to do their homework and look for information to bring to school.
- 105 The management and leadership of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic, knowledgeable and committed to raising standards and has carried out a survey of teachers' skills in order to provide more focused support for colleagues. A scheme of work has been produced that follows nationally agreed guidelines and thorough assessments of pupils' performance are made each half term. Careful monitoring of teachers' planning ensures that the new National Curriculum 2000 is being taught and by watching colleagues at work the co-ordinator keeps a close eye on the quality of teaching. This has already pinpointed where further training is necessary in order for the school to continue to improve.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 106 Standards in religious education have risen since 1995. They meet those prescribed by the locally Agreed Syllabus for seven and 11-year-olds. The school has moved ahead in the last two years under the effective guidance of a new co-ordinator. An improved and coherent policy and scheme of work have helped teachers feel more confident to teach a religious education curriculum which supports the broad objectives of the locally Agreed Syllabus while, at the same time, being adapted successfully to meet the particular needs of the school. As a result, the quality of teaching is now satisfactory overall with some good teaching in the juniors.

- 107 Teachers in Years 1 and 2 are good at developing pupils' awareness of the basic concepts necessary to the understanding of religions, such as feelings of *belonging* and *celebrating*. In the Year 1 and 2 class, the teacher's interesting descriptions and good use of resources enabled pupils to understand why advent is a special time of preparation for Christians before they celebrate the birth of Jesus. They enjoy hearing the Christmas story and know the reason why Christians celebrate Jesus' birth by giving presents.
- 108 Teachers plan activities that involve pupils studying unfamiliar festivals and traditions. Resources are used well well to stimulate interest. As the Hanukiah candle is lit, pupils in Year 3 spin the dreidle to win a chocolate gelt and eat latkes as part of Hanukkah, the Jewish festival of light. The teacher's good knowledge of Judaism helped pupils to understand some of the symbols of Jewish worship and the significance of a shortage of the oil needed to keep alight the holy candle in Israel 2000 years ago. A strength of the teaching is the enthusiasm of teachers who make the festival come alive. This happened when pupils in Year 3 played the games a Jewish family would during Hannukah.
- 109 Pupils in the Years 5 and 6 class use their knowledge of Hanukkah to consider the impact of religious beliefs on individuals. As they discuss the necessary improvisations made by *Anne Frank* as she celebrated *Hanukkah* during her two years in hiding from the Germans, the teacher's skilful questioning leads them to a greater understanding of the comfort and security people receive from religion in times of stress. Good relationships with their teacher encouraged pupils to share their thoughts openly and to listen to others attentively. Their spiritual and moral development is enhanced as they go on to write letters to *Anne Frank* to let her know how they have been affected by reading her diary. One pupil wrote *It reminds me of members of my family who are dead* while another wrote *my life has changed, I will try not to let my troubles touch me*. However, in other lessons, opportunities to develop pupils' spirituality are missed.
- 110 Most pupils show considerable interest in their work in religious education. Pupils with English as an additional language, and those with special educational needs, are supported well in their reading and writing. Teachers also make sure they are included in discussions, although sometimes they do not make questions easy enough for pupils with English as an additional language to understand. Behaviour is usually satisfactory because teachers keep a tight rein on the behaviour of potentially disruptive pupils who are easily distracted.
- 111 The management of religious education is good. In the last two years the co-ordinator has successfully raised the profile of religious education within the school and standards have risen. Teachers' planning is checked to make sure that it follows the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus and procedures are in place to check what pupils' know and can do. Some monitoring of teaching has taken place with the focus related to provision for teaching about world faiths. Strong links have already been established with the rector from the local Church of England, visitors from the Leeds Jewish Centre and local Hindu community, when pupils visit the area's Hindu temple. Plans to develop this aspect of provision even further, to increase the resources for major world faiths and to develop religious education at the Foundation Stage place the school in a good position to continue to raise standards.

ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 112 Pupils make satisfactory progress in art and design. Standards achieved are in line with levels expected for seven and 11-year-olds.
- 113 In infant classes, teachers plan opportunities for pupils to work with a variety of media. Consequently, most pupils use pencils, pastels and paint effectively to produce a range of work that is satisfactory. Drawings and paintings of themselves, produced early in the school year, show an immature understanding of the proportions of the body. However, pastel drawings of puppets show most pupils have satisfactory observational skills and that some observe the puppets closely to produce accurate and lively drawings. Paintings of sunflowers, carried out after looking at the work of Vincent Van Gogh, show that pupils mix colours well to capture the tone of what they see.
- 114 The satisfactory standards continue in the junior classes, where pupils extend their work to include pottery. Younger junior pupils produce diva lamps in religious education lessons using coiled clay. Ten and 11-year-old pupils develop their skills with clay to produce coil, thumb and slab pots in work about the artist Clarice Cliff. Pupils take care to produce neat shapes, which they decorate in the style of the artist, trying successfully to duplicate her colours. They become engrossed in their work and try hard to produce neat work. Younger junior pupils practise pencil skills to produce a good likeness when drawing the faces of the wives of Henry VIII and older pupils refine these skills to draw British wild birds. Teachers do not always make sufficient use of CD-ROMs to widen pupils' knowledge of art and artists or of computer programs to create pictures or design models.
- 115 Only one art lesson was seen during the inspection but observations of pupils' work and teachers' planning indicates that teaching is at least satisfactory. In the one lesson that was observed, teaching was good. The teacher impressed upon pupils the high standards she expected and this led to pupils paying great attention to the quality of their work. The teacher assessed pupils' work well and used praise to good effect, showing examples of good work and drawing attention to the work of pupils who usually rush their work but were taking care. The looks on the pupils' faces showed how much they appreciated the recognition of their efforts. A good feature of the teaching in design and technology lessons is the way teachers show pupils how to use materials and equipment, for instance, how to apply glue sparingly so that objects stick together quickly and pupils' work is kept neat. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to try different ways of joining materials so that they can decide which is the best method for them to use. Lessons are prepared well and suitable materials are provided. Teachers make good links between work in design and technology and other subjects in the curriculum. For instance, pupils in Year 6 are starting to make models of shelters to support their work in history. When pupils start to talk too much, teachers set time limits and this encourages pupils to finish their work.
- 116 Standards in design technology at seven and eleven are in line with expectations for their age. Teachers give pupils sufficient experience in designing and making for them to produce reasonable results. By the age of seven, pupils select from a wide range of materials and fastenings to shape and assemble puppets. They decide which fastenings are most suited to the task. They use templates to create the shape of the puppets but by the age of eleven, pupils measure and cut out their own materials. Pupils look at photograph frames and then design their own frames. They try out their decorations and amend their designs to improve them.
- 117 Both subjects are managed well. The introduction of the new National Curriculum 2000 has been managed smoothly by careful preparation and the introduction of good quality schemes of work that help teachers plan lessons and assess what pupils know and

can do. Teachers are also helped to make accurate judgements about pupils' attainment from the examples of pupils' work that give a clear picture of what pupils can achieve. Time has been set-aside in the coming term for the co-ordinator to check teaching and learning in the classroom and this puts the school in a good position to be able to continue to improve.

GEOGRAPHY

- 118 The school has improved standards in geography since the last inspection. By the time they are 11-years-old, pupils' achievements in the subject are typical for their age. Now that teachers use national guidelines to plan lessons they provide pupils with a suitable range of knowledge, understanding and skills. This gives teachers clear objectives, which previously were lacking, to promote geographical learning.
- 119 A good feature of teaching is the way teachers use fieldwork in the school grounds, the locality and further afield. Teachers begin to develop the mapping skills of the youngest pupils by looking at how they get to school. Pupils record their knowledge by drawing the features they pass in sequence. Pupils of Years 1 and 2 begin to gain an insight into real-life environmental problems when their teachers take them through the school gates at different times of the day to study traffic. This enables pupils to consider parking control from first-hand knowledge as a means of making the area safer. Older pupils learn from observation in and around the school grounds how noise pollution affects the environment. They make visits to Leeds city centre to study settlements, and to a suitable site to develop their study of rivers. Teachers take pupils in Year 6 on an annual visit to a residential field study centre for outdoor and adventurous activities.
- 120 Teachers' good level of knowledge of the subject enables them to put it over in a way that enthuses pupils. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher's explanation about co-ordinates engaged them all so that they knew what to do when the time came to apply their new learning to a task, which they tackled with enthusiasm. The most able pupils rose well to the extra challenge of working from Ordnance Survey maps of the Lake District which gave them a real life problem. When in Year 3, the teacher told pupils of her own experiences of hearing neighbour's loud music, it set the scene for a lively discussion about noise pollution. Very good questioning skills helped pupils balance the need to hear warning noises clearly, such as police sirens, against the noise pollution they cause. Teachers lead discussions well. They encourage pupils' confidence to take part willingly by ensuring all can get a fair hearing and that others listen. This was particularly effective in a Year 2 lesson where the special needs assistant quietly encouraged the group to listen, put their hands up and behave. This enabled the teacher to concentrate on the quality of discussion rather than on maintaining good behaviour. Pupils work hard at their tasks and teachers and special needs assistants encourage them to record their work effectively by providing suitable tasks. Thus pupils in Years 3 and 4 classify noise pollution by type, that is, *warning*, *natural* and *everyday*. Occasionally the work is too hard or too easy, or done without sufficient care. For instance pupils in Year 2 were baffled by the task of writing a letter to *the council*. Although the teacher was following the school's planning for this, the idea of *the council* was beyond pupils' understanding.

- 121 The subject is managed well and effective leadership puts the school in a good position to be able to continue to improve. The new National Curriculum 2000 has been implemented successfully. The co-ordinator does not have sufficient opportunities to check the standards of teaching and learning.

HISTORY

- 122 Attainment in history is typical of that expected of seven and 11-year-olds. This means standards have been maintained since 1997. An improved programme for teaching, which caters for the needs of pupils in classes with more than one age group, enables teachers to take pupils through interesting and challenging work. By the time they are seven, pupils develop an understanding of aspects of the past well beyond living memory, such as the Great Fire of London. As they get older they develop empathy with ordinary people during the Second World War and have a sound understanding of periods of history from earlier times, like those of the Ancient Egyptians.
- 123 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good teaching in Year 2. There are very strong links with English as opportunities are taken to develop pupils' limited vocabulary through the study of the past. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 build on pupils' existing knowledge step by step in an imaginative way. They choose topics that are interesting to pupils and ensure that there is a wide range of resources available to them. As they sort toys into *new* or *old* sets, pupils in Year 2 use words and phrases such as *dirty*, *ripped*, *worn away* and *cared for*. Their teacher extends their vocabulary by including; for example, *modern* and *traditional*. A good feature of a lesson in classes in Years 1 and 2, was the way the teacher developed the pupils' sense of chronology, going beyond *new* and *old* in ordering the toys by age.
- 124 In the junior classes, teachers extend pupils' knowledge of the past from the Victorians, to Tudor times, to the Viking age and to ancient Egypt. They raise pupils' enthusiasm with interesting introductions to lessons and give good support during activities. In the Years 5 and 6 class, pupils were fascinated by health treatment in the 1930s and their teacher's good use of resources enabled them to compare changes in health care following the introduction of the National Health Service in 1948. A good feature of the lesson was the effective use of an innovative version of a time line consisting of a string stretched across the classroom and on which were hung various objects showing how things have changed since the 1930s. For example, the introduction of tea bags and the impact of technology on the music world.
- 125 Pupils' enjoyment of history is obvious from their enthusiastic responses during discussions. However, this does, at times, become too boisterous and the flow of the lesson is interrupted when teachers frequently need to calm them down. Pupils with English as an additional language, and those with special educational needs, are drawn into discussions by their teachers and are given good support from both teachers and classroom assistants as they record their work.
- 126 A good feature of the provision for history is the way in which teachers enrich pupils' understanding of the reality of the past by visits to museums and historic buildings and by inviting visitors, for example, an evacuee during World War Two, to talk to pupils in school about their own experiences. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use their own locality as they study Victorian and Edwardian housing while pupils in Years 3 and 4 add to their knowledge of the Tudors during a visit to the Royal Armouries in Leeds. A visit to Eden Camp by pupils in Years 5 and 6 gives them valuable first-hand experience of the cramped and basic conditions of an Anderson Shelter and the bleak existence of prisoners of war in World War Two.

- 127 The leadership of history is good. The co-ordinator checks the quality of teaching and planning to ensure that there are no gaps in pupils' learning and that there is a clear progression in what is taught from one year to the next. With the enthusiasm of the co-ordinator, an improved scheme of work for Curriculum 2000 and plans to develop the use of information technology in history, the school is in a good position to raise standards.

MUSIC

- 128 By the time they are 11-years-old pupils reach standards in music that are typical for their age. This is because the school makes good musical provision for its pupils, most of whom have limited experience of music out of school. In school, they are given wide experience, which helps them develop their skills in performing, composing, listening to and appreciating music.
- 129 The level of teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject varies greatly. Those with less confidence have access to the support of specialist peripatetic teachers and the headteacher, who herself is a music specialist. All teachers teach singing, basic percussion work and lessons where pupils listen to and talk about music. They are effective in singing lessons, teaching a wide range of songs and encouraging participation and enjoyment. In a lesson in Year 1, pupils enjoyed clapping the rhythm of a song as they sang. The emphasis on improvement through practice led pupils to make good progress in learning about rhythm and gave them pleasure. For instance, at first they found some difficulty finding the rhythm. Then, when the teacher linked the words *Who stole the cookies from the cookie jar?* pupils felt the rhythm more successfully.
- 130 Teachers give pupils the opportunity to listen to a wide range of music, from western traditions present and past, to music from other cultures far and wide. The calm atmosphere of assemblies is set by pupils entering the hall and listening quietly to recordings of various styles of music. The headteacher makes sure that pupils know what they are listening to. They make creative links with other subjects so that pupils gain a deeper understanding of the music and the subject. For instance, teachers introduce pupils to the music of Tudor times. There was a good start to a lesson in the class of Years 4 and 5 pupils when pupils described their feelings after listening to a lute composition. However, the teacher did not capitalise on pupils' growing enthusiasm by developing their knowledge and appreciation further. Instead, most of the remaining time was spent writing.
- 131 The school takes care to include all pupils in all musical activities. For example, in one lesson, a young pupil who has difficulty co-ordinating movements was helped by the special needs assistant to clap in rhythm with the music.
- 132 The school's specialist peripatetic music teachers make a very good contribution to pupils' musical experience. They offer pupils tuition on the flute, clarinet, recorder and guitar. In addition, all pupils benefit from a rota system for teaching percussion work. An important aim of the school's music curriculum is to develop quality in performance. The members of the school band and the school choir are provided with many opportunities to display their quality to parents and fellow pupils. For instance, in an assembly, the band played *Greensleeves* very pleasantly to an appreciative audience.

- 133 The school has strong links with professional theatre groups which benefit pupils' performance and their cultural development. This culminates for some specially talented pupils with the opportunity to participate on stage with professional performers in front of large audiences. Teachers are enthusiastic about working with professional performers in school. With the additional skills of two of the school's teachers who have qualifications in the performing arts, they explore a wide range of musical forms for expressive dance.
- 134 The school continues to provide pupils with a broad musical experience. Teachers now have the guidance of an improved, well-structured scheme of work to plan lessons. With the high quality of management in music the school is well placed to improve standards.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 135 Standards in physical education are typical of those expected of seven and 11-year-olds. Pupils are good at games and nearly all swim the recommended distance by the time they leave the school.
- 136 Pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of the importance of warm-up exercises at the start of lessons and join in enthusiastically and sensibly. They practise tag rugby skills and benefit greatly from the teacher's good demonstration of how to catch and throw a rugby ball. This ensures that pupils improve their performance and they take part eagerly in the exercise. By the end of one lesson, most pupils could throw and catch a rugby ball with confidence. They have a good understanding of defending and attacking skills. By the age of seven, pupils carry out simple exercises to warm up their arms and legs and most do these competently. A small number, however, find difficulty performing star jumps and the teacher misses the opportunity to develop this activity. Pupils go on to chasing games and tell the teacher that this exercise raises their heartbeat and warms up their muscles. They roll a ball away from themselves and most chase after it and stop it before it goes too far. Pupils show satisfactory ability in throwing and controlling a large ball.
- 137 With the limited number of lesson observations, there is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching. When teaching is good, the teacher's knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject are communicated to pupils so that they are eager to take part. Praise and encouragement are used well to draw out the best from pupils and pupils' esteem is boosted when those who carry out exercises well are asked to demonstrate to the rest of the class. The teacher would not accept any slacking from pupils and made good use of adult support to make sure that pupils were fully involved and learning all the time. By the end of the lesson, pupils made good progress in improving their rugby skills and thoroughly enjoyed the lesson.
- 138 A good feature of teaching is that staff give time to run after-school sports activities. This enriches the curriculum and helps pupils develop a sense of sportsmanship and fair play. Pupils also benefit from coaching provided by local athletes, dancers and professional sports players. They are keen to talk about trips to Headingly cricket ground and they are proud of their achievements in a wide range of sports.
- 139 Leadership in the subject is good. The co-ordinator takes full advantage of sports initiatives and projects to help teachers improve their teaching and to make the subject more exciting for pupils. The dynamic approach to physical education means that the school is in a good position to improve standards.