

# INSPECTION REPORT

**BIRKDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Southport.

Sefton LEA.

Unique reference number:104860

Inspection number: 181915

Headteacher: Mr P.R. Kelly

Reporting inspector : Mrs S. Öyen

7167

Date of inspection: November 29th – December 3rd, 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706738

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## Information about the school

Type of school : Junior and Infant

Type of control : Community

Age range of pupils : 3 - 11

Gender of pupils : Mixed

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Appropriate authority : Governing Body

Name of chair of governors : Cllr T.J. Francis

Previous inspection: March 1995

## Information about the inspection team

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| S. Öyen<br>Registered inspector | English.   | Attainment and progress;<br>Teaching;<br>Leadership and management.  |
| M. Beale                        | Mathematics;<br>Design and technology;<br>Physical education;  | Pupils' spiritual, moral, social<br>and cultural development;<br>The efficiency of the school.             |
| J. Pollard                      | Under-fives;<br>Information technology;<br>Music;<br>Provision for pupils with<br>special educational needs. | Attitudes, behaviour and<br>personal development;  |
| L. Spooner                      | Science;<br>Geography;<br>History.   | Equal opportunities.<br>The curriculum and<br>assessment.  |
| J. Sweeney                      | Art;<br>Religious education.   | Staffing, accommodation and<br>learning resources.   |
| C. Wild<br>Lay inspector        |  | Attendance;<br>Support, guidance and pupils'<br>welfare;<br>Partnership with parents and<br>the community. |

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## Main findings

### WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Birkdale is a happy school where all children are valued.
- Standards are good in English and science in the Infants.
- Children make good early progress in reading, spelling, writing and investigative work.
- The quality of teaching, provision for and assessment of children under five and the Infants is good. These teachers have high expectations and the children find learning fun.
- The school promotes well self-discipline and respect for all. Children are well behaved.
- Provision for children with special educational needs is good. The very high quality support for children with statements of special need enables them to play a full part in school life.
- The school has a deservedly good reputation for music and extra-curricular activities.
- Visitors and parents are welcome in school. Their support in class and at home contributes much to children's progress, especially in reading.

### WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS WEAKNESSES

- The roles and responsibilities of the senior managers and subject co-ordinators are unclear. This is hindering school development.
- In the Juniors, standards are not high enough. Many children, especially the more able, are not given sufficient challenge.
- In the Juniors, the school is not meeting its stated aim that learning "*starts from what each child knows and enables each to develop to his/her full potential*". Teachers are not assessing the children's progress well enough to identify the next steps in their learning.
- Too often, all Junior children in the same class are expected to do the same regardless of what they already know and can do.
- The school is not evaluating its progress and effectiveness sufficiently well.
- The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents omit several items required by law.

### HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

Improvement has been unsatisfactory, given the 13 school terms since the 1995 inspection. Much has been done in the Infants but the school has coasted and has only responded in part to the four key issues and points for development. There are still inconsistencies in the quality of children's handwriting and presentation of work, especially in the Juniors. The good improvement in Infant curriculum planning and assessment of children's attainment is less evident in the Juniors. There they remain issues for action in relation to the quality of education and the raising of standards. In the Infants, standards have risen year on year since 1995. In 1999, they were above the national average in science and well above in English and mathematics. Whilst standards rose nationally, in the Juniors standards remained steady. This year's marked rise in mathematics and science is largely due to revision and booster classes rather than to improvement in the overall quality of education in all the junior classes. Teachers' planning often lacks clear objectives for differing groups of children. The assessment of Junior children's progress and attainment is unsatisfactory.

The headteacher took up the post in September. He has a clear vision for the school and his audit identified many of the weaknesses highlighted in this report. The revised school development plan addresses some of these. Previous plans indicated steps to be taken but had few specific targets and little was done to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of action taken. The school has satisfactorily introduced the literacy and numeracy hours but custom and practice in the Juniors has thwarted and weakened initiatives in curriculum development and hindered subject co-ordinators monitoring teaching quality and standards. Core subject co-ordinators have a sound view of what needs to be done to raise standards, although present uncertainty over roles and responsibilities is getting in the way of change. Given this situation, the school's capacity for improvement is satisfactory.

## STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in the 1999 National Curriculum tests:

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

The 1999 results show a marked improvement compared with 1998 particularly in mathematics and science. In English, the high attainment of girls in reading and writing raised standards overall. In science, nine out of ten children reached Level 4, and one in three reached the higher Level 5. This was higher than the national average. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are not likely to be as high in 2000 but the school is on line to meet its targets. In the nursery and reception year, the children make at least satisfactory progress and attain the Desirable Learning Outcomes in all six areas of learning. All make good progress in personal and social development and many make good progress in reading, writing and number. In the Infants, standards are good especially in reading, spelling and science. The vast majority of children reach Level 2 as expected for their age in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Throughout the school, the children often have interesting ideas but they do not always write using correct punctuation. This lowers the standard. Junior children have good knowledge of grammar but their skills in drafting, word processing and writing at length are not as good. Standards in information technology are satisfactory. In religious education, standards are in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Music standards are good especially for those children who learn to play an instrument or who sing in the choirs. In physical education standards are good. Standards in geography and history are good in the Infants and satisfactory in the Juniors. In art and design and technology standards are satisfactory throughout the school.

## QUALITY OF TEACHING

| Teaching in:           | Under 5 | 5 – 7 years  | 7 – 11 years |
|------------------------|---------|--------------|--------------|
| English                | Good    | Good         | Satisfactory |
| Mathematics            | Good    | Good         | Satisfactory |
| Science                |         | Good         | Satisfactory |
| Information Technology |         | Satisfactory | Satisfactory |
| Religious education    |         | Satisfactory | Satisfactory |
| Other subjects         | Good    | Good         | Satisfactory |

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

Overall, teaching is satisfactory. In 97% of lessons teaching is at least satisfactory. There is some unsatisfactory teaching at Key Stage 2 in English and religious education. For children under five in the nursery and reception classes the teaching is good. At Key Stage 1, the teaching is good in six lessons out of ten. Teaching is at least good and often very good for a class of Year 1 and a class of Year 2 children. In the Juniors, the teaching is good in four out of ten lessons with most of the good teaching for Year 6 children and particularly for those in a mixed class of Year 5 and 6. Too much of the teaching in the Junior classes is staid and lacks the spark and enthusiasm of that for the Infants. The specialist music and much physical education teaching is good. The group teaching for lower attaining children and those with special educational needs is good. The special needs teacher and support staff work well together but in the Juniors the class teachers do too little to identify the small steps in learning needed by these children to promote consistent progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect  | Comment   |
|---|---|
| Behaviour   | Good; children behave well in and around school. From the nursery onwards, they show good self-discipline and respect for authority.  |
| Attendance  | Good; above the national average. A small number daily arrive late.   |
| Ethos*  | Very good for nursery and reception year children and for Infant children - satisfactory in the Juniors. Younger children find learning fun – it is a highly stimulating learning environment and the teachers have high expectations. These features are less apparent in the Juniors.   |
| Leadership and management                         | Satisfactory; the headteacher has a clear vision for the school and is working with the governors and staff to initiate change; the roles and responsibilities of senior managers are unclear; there is no framework to promote, monitor and evaluate school and curriculum development.  |
| Curriculum  | Good for children under five and Infant children; satisfactory in the Juniors. Although there are comprehensive planning and assessment systems in the Infant department, there is little tracking of Junior children's progress and the information is not used to set targets for learning. Very good range of extra-curricular activities. |
| Children with special educational needs           | Good provision and management; individual education plans are detailed; very good support from adults ensures pupils have full access to the curriculum and make good personal and academic progress.   |
| Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Good provision for children's moral, social and cultural development through a range of school activities.  |
| Staffing, resources and accommodation             | Good; the high number of teaching and support staff allows much small group work; excellent range of books and resources; the old buildings have many limitations – many Key Stage 2 rooms are small.   |
| Value for money                                   | Good.   |

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

## THE PARENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What most parents like about the school  | What some parents are not happy about  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school – and their love of learning continues at home.</li> <li>• The “open door”: teachers are approachable and it is easy to talk to them.</li> <li>• The school encourages and welcomes help in school and at home.</li> <li>• Their children achieve good standards of work.</li> <li>• Music is good and is a high school priority.</li> <li>• Children have positive attitudes towards others with disabilities.</li> </ul> | <p>There were no aspects identified by a significant number of parents but a few commented on :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the inconsistency in homework;</li> <li>• not being well informed about their children's progress;</li> <li>• the smallness of Key Stage 2 classrooms and the limitations of an old school building and site;</li> <li>• the handling of complaints.</li> </ul> |

Inspection findings support parents' views. While a few are concerned about the handling of complaints, most find it easy to talk to teachers about problems. Children get on well with each other. Teachers often talk with parents before and after school and many parents help their child with homework or help out in school. The school has a deservedly good reputation for music and many children, particularly Infants, reach a good standard across the curriculum. Not all year groups are being given regular homework. Parents are right to comment on the limited information about their Junior children's progress. End-of-year reports to parents vary in quality. Whilst those for the nursery, reception and Infant children give a full picture with targets for improvement, those for Junior children often refer only to what the child has done. The school is in good repair. The small Junior classrooms are offset by the central space but this is not always used to best advantage.



## Key issues for action

In order to raise standards and improve the quality of education, the Governing Body, headteacher and staff should :

1. strengthen the quality of the management and leadership of the school by:
  - clarifying the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of governors, senior managers and curriculum co-ordinators;
  - providing and implementing clear guidelines and systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning;
  - devising and implementing systems to evaluate the school's effectiveness in meeting targets for improvement;

[ see paragraphs 87, 89, 91, 105, 108 and 148 in the main report ]

2. raise pupils' attainment further, especially for the higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 2, by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can do and should attain;
  - identifying and sharing existing good practice in curriculum planning;
  - ensuring that all short term planning identifies clear learning objectives for pupils of differing attainment;
  - providing professional development to heighten teachers' subject knowledge;

[ see paragraphs 20, 21, 23, 43, 44, 49, 54, 58, 59, 95, 144, 159, 171 and 226 in the main report ]

3. ensure consistency and continuity throughout the school in the assessment of pupils' progress and attainment by:
  - putting in place procedures at Key Stage 2 which will provide clear information on pupils' progress and attainment particularly in English, mathematics, science, information technology and religious education;
  - using the information gained from assessment to identify the next steps in pupils' learning and teachers' planning;
  - ensuring that teachers' marking informs their planning and tells pupils what they have done well and what they need to do to improve;

[ see paragraphs 50, 51, 56, 64, 65, 66, 83, 108, 146, 147, 161, 172, 205 and 227 in the main report ]

4. take steps to ensure that the school prospectus and the Governing Body's annual report to parents include all legally required items.

[ see paragraphs 82 and 90 in the main report ]

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weakness should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Pupils' handwriting and presentation are not always of a high enough standard.

[ see paragraphs 22 and 142 in the main report ]

## Introduction

### Characteristics of the school

1. Birkdale Primary School is in the Kew ward of Birkdale, three miles to the west of Southport. The school buildings date from the 1870s. The nursery, reception and one Year 1 class are in a smaller building separated by a playground from the rest of the classes in the main building. The school serves an area of predominantly semi-detached and terraced housing and many pupils live in rented accommodation. Thirty-nine pupils (12 per cent) are entitled to free school meals. A significant number of families choose to send their child to Birkdale Primary and the school is over-subscribed.
2. The number on the school roll has remained stable around 336 since the last inspection in 1996. The 12 classes vary in size from 20 to 34 with the reception year children in classes of 22 and 23. The nursery currently has one child who attends full-time and 58 who attend part-time but will take additional children in January. About half of the nursery children transfer to the reception class on a full time basis in the September after their fourth birthday. The nursery children spend time in the reception classes in the Summer term.
3. At the time of this inspection, all the nursery children and 30 of the 45 children in the reception classes were under the age of five. Children's attainment on entry to nursery is generally below that expected for their age but is closer to the average on entry to school. The girls show higher attainment in language and personal and social development.
4. There are 80 pupils (24 per cent) on the school's register of special educational need. Nine pupils in school and two children in the nursery have a statement of special educational need and 33 other pupils receive support from outside agencies. Five pupils have English as an additional language.
5. The school's eight aims place high emphasis on the development of attitudes and values : *"to promote .. positive attitudes including reliability, honesty and trust"* and *"the development of self-esteem, self-confidence and self-discipline"*; other aims address the acquisition of knowledge, skills and values which will be relevant throughout life; a positive learning environment where all learning *"starts from what each child knows and enables each to develop to his/her full potential."*
6. The headteacher took up his post in September 1999. Following discussions with the Governing Body, revised school priorities until March 2000 were agreed. These are: to implement successfully the National Numeracy Strategy, to continue to improve the premises and the environment, to implement a new system of school development planning, to continue to develop music schemes, to update existing information technology hardware through the National Grid for Learning and to develop existing links with parents.

## Key indicators

### Attainment at Key Stage 1<sup>1</sup>

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

| Year   | Boys    | Girls   | Total   |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1998/9 | 27 (27) | 20 (24) | 47 (51) |

| <b>National Curriculum Test Results</b>       |          | Reading   | Writing     | Mathematics |
|---|----------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| Number of pupils<br>at NC Level 2 or<br>above | Boys     | 25 (25)   | 24 (24)     | 27 (24)     |
|   | Girls    | 19 (21)   | 17 (20)     | 19 (20)     |
|   | Total    | 44 (46)   | 41 (44)     | 46 (44)     |
| Percentage at NC<br>Level 2 or above          | School   | 94% (88%) | 87% (85%)   | 98% (85%)   |
|   | National | 82% (80%) | 83% (81%)   | 85% (84%)   |
| <b>Teacher Assessments</b>                    |          | English   | Mathematics | Science     |
| Number of pupils<br>at NC Level 2 or<br>above | Boys     | 25 (25)   | 27 (27)     | 25 (29)     |
|   | Girls    | 19 (21)   | 19 (21)     | 19 (21)     |
|   | Total    | 44 (46)   | 46 (48)     | 44 (50)     |
| Percentage at NC<br>Level 2 or above          | School   | 94% (88%) | 98% (92%)   | 94% (96%)   |
|   | National | 82% (81%) | 86% (85%)   | 87% (86%)   |

### Attainment at Key Stage 2<sup>1</sup>

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

| Year   | Boys    | Girls   | Total   |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1998/9 | 25 (28) | 24 (24) | 49 (52) |

| <b>National Curriculum Test Results</b>       |          | English   | Mathematics | Science   |
|---|----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| Number of pupils<br>at NC Level 4 or<br>above | Boys     | 17 (18)   | 20 (17)     | 23 (16)   |
|   | Girls    | 18 (17)   | 15 (11)     | 21 (11)   |
|   | Total    | 35 (35)   | 35 (28)     | 44 (27)   |
| Percentage at NC<br>Level 4 or above          | School   | 71% (71%) | 71% (57%)   | 90% (55%) |
|   | National | 70% (65%) | 69% (59%)   | 78% (69%) |
| <b>Teacher Assessments</b>                    |          | English   | Mathematics | Science   |
| Number of pupils<br>at NC Level 4 or<br>above | Boys     | 17 (17)   | 19 (18)     | 22 (20)   |
|   | Girls    | 19 (18)   | 17 (16)     | 19 (15)   |
|   | Total    | 36 (35)   | 36 (34)     | 41 (35)   |
| Percentage at NC<br>Level 4 or above          | School   | 73% (71%) | 73% (69%)   | 84% (71%) |
|   | National | 68% (65%) | 69% (65%)   | 75% (72%) |

<sup>1</sup> Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

**Attendance**

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year :

|                         |                           | %    |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|------|
| Authorised<br>Absence   | School 1998/9             | 4.8% |
|                         | National comparative data | 6.2% |
| Unauthorised<br>Absence | School 1998/9             | 0.2% |
|                         | National comparative data | 0.5% |

**Exclusions**

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

|              | Number |
|--------------|--------|
| Fixed period | 0      |
| Permanent    | 0      |

**Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

|                        | %   |
|------------------------|-----|
| Very good or better    | 4%  |
| Satisfactory or better | 97% |
| Less than satisfactory | 3%  |

## **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **Attainment and progress**

7. Standards are in line with those seen in most schools in English, mathematics and science. Standards are higher at Key Stage 1 than at Key Stage 2. Given pupils' attainment on leaving Key Stage 1, standards could be higher at Key Stage 2.

8. At the end of Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils reach the level expected for their age in English, mathematics and science. A small but significant number of pupils reach a higher level. Compared with most schools, the school has a high number of pupils with special educational needs and a very high number of pupils with a statement of special educational need. In both the last and the current Year 6, one in five pupils has been identified as having special educational needs and their attainment is often lower than expected for their age, especially in English. This needs to be considered when viewing how standards compare with other schools.

9. Since the last inspection in 1995, standards have risen at both key stages but more markedly at Key Stage 2. However, this gives a false impression of the situation. Whilst Key Stage 1 standards rose slightly year on year, standards at Key Stage 2 remained steady between 1996 and 1998. Taking the average of the three years, and comparing the school with others nationally, Birkdale's results actually fell and pupils were the equivalent of six months progress behind. The 1999 improvement in standards is in keeping with the national upward trend but was much higher than seen nationally in mathematics and science. However, this largely reflects the quality of the cohort of pupils, especially the girls, and the revision and booster classes held before the national tests rather than to overall improvement in teaching or the curriculum in all the classes in Key Stage 2. When all pupils' test results are taken into account, standards in English and science are above the average for all schools, and also for schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. They are in line with the average in mathematics.

10. In the 1999 Key Stage 2 tests in English, seven out of ten pupils reached Level 4, as expected for their age, which was broadly in line with the national average. As seen nationally, pupils fared better in reading than in writing and the girls did better than the boys with many of them attaining the higher Level 5. Six out of ten girls reached Level 5 in reading and one in three in writing which was well above the national average. This high attainment raises the standard when comparing overall results both with the average for schools nationally and for similar schools.

11. In mathematics, seven out of ten pupils attained Level 4 which was line with the national average. The school met its target. Although one in six pupils reached the higher Level 5 this was below the national average and although the girls' Level 5 attainment was similar to the national picture, the boys' attainment was lower.

12. In science, nine out of ten pupils attained Level 4 and almost four out of ten attained Level 5. Again the girls' did better than the boys with one girl in two attaining Level 5. The girls' attainment was well above the national average. These results keep the overall standard above the average for all and for similar schools.

13. Inspection evidence shows that current standards at Year 6 are not as high. Pupils are making at least satisfactory progress but, as in the previous year, there is a wide spread of attainment and a significant minority are not working at the level expected for their age in English and mathematics. More are at the expected level in science. Few pupils are working towards Level 5. The school is aware that it may not meet its targets for next year especially in English.

14. On entry to the nursery, the children's overall attainment is below that expected for their age. They make good progress in the nursery year. The nursery staff's high emphasis on developing the children's personal and social skills has a positive effect on the children's overall progress and attainment. They make good progress in taking care of their own needs. There is a difference in the rate of progress of the children who attend in the morning or the afternoon. During the inspection, many afternoon children were tired after a busy morning and harder to motivate. They make slower progress than the children who attend in the morning. However, when the children move into the reception year, they have made good progress overall and their attainment is close to the standard expected.

15. By the age of five, and certainly by the end of the reception year, the children have made at least satisfactory progress and the majority have attained the national standards (Desirable Learning Outcomes) in personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. This sustains the "very good to sound" standards noted in the 1995 inspection. In personal and social development the children make good progress and by the age of five, are confident and often quite mature in how they conduct themselves. Good teaching in language and literacy promotes the children's good progress and many get off to a really good start in reading and writing. At the age of five a good number are working towards, or have attained Level 1 of the National Curriculum. They are reading and writing independently, spelling simple words accurately and beginning to use sentences. Similar good progress is made in mathematics. The introduction of elements of the numeracy hour is accelerating progress in number recognition and indicating possible Level 1 attainment by the end of the year.

16. At Key Stage 1, standards are good in reading, spelling, mathematics and science. Inspection evidence confirms that whilst many pupils attain the level expected for their age in writing, few do better than this although there is potential to do so. This keeps standards in writing in line with the national average.

17. In the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 national tests in reading, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2, as expected for their age, was well above the national average. Almost all pupils reached Level 2 and three in ten reached the higher Level 3. The girls, as seen nationally, did slightly better than the boys. In writing, the 1999 results were broadly in line with the national average and also the average for similar schools. However, no pupil reached Level 3.

18. In mathematics, nearly all pupils reached Level 2 and the school's results were well above the average for all schools and for similar schools. One in four pupils reached the higher Level 3 with twice as many boys doing well for their age than girls. The high percentage of pupils working at or above the level expected for their age indicates possible higher attainment than expected for their age at Key Stage 2. This is also indicated by the teachers' assessments of the pupils' science attainment. Nine out of ten pupils reached the standard expected for their age which was above the national average and one in five reached the higher Level 3. Attainment is equally as strong in investigative skills as in scientific knowledge.

19. Standards of listening and speaking are as expected for pupils' ages. Most pupils listen attentively and appreciatively to stories, to adults and to each other. They speak clearly and explain themselves well. Some are reticent to speak before a large audience but in class and in group work they contribute ideas and talk about their own experiences. Group reading times in the literacy hour and circle time sessions help to foster pupils' skills in putting forward, explaining and justifying their opinions. Pupils' make at least satisfactory progress owing to the good relationships with their teachers. In some classes, the teachers' skill in questioning and encouraging the pupils boosts their progress.

20. The school's strategy for literacy is satisfactory overall but currently far more effective at Key Stage 1 than at Key Stage 2 in promoting progress and raising standards. The good quality teaching of the literacy coordinator is accelerating the progress of her class of Year 2 pupils. Her advice is evident in the consistency of teaching approach in Key Stage 1 but not all Key Stage 2 teachers have followed the advice fully. The school has an excellent collection of books and pupils have a wide reading experience. Parents' willingness to hear their children read contributes much to their progress particularly in the early stages. Pupils make good progress in recognising letter and words and appreciating the content of stories. The good quality of teaching at Key Stage 1, with its focus on teaching phonics and sentence structure, is ensuring that pupils get off to a strong start. The literacy hour is helping reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils to look carefully at the structure of texts and to acquire appropriate terms to talk about them. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are reading fluently and often with good expression. The staff are aware that pupils' progress in writing is less consistent. The pupils make an early start in writing independently and in using their knowledge of letters and sounds to spell words. Year 1 pupils are already confident writers who are willing to have a go. They are making good progress in writing stories, reports and instructions. Year 2 pupils are beginning to join their writing and to revise their work. However, progress is slower in using more advanced punctuation such as speech marks and in developing their ideas. Pupils cope with reading and writing across the curriculum but the quality of their writing is often lower than their knowledge in the different subjects.

21. Progress is satisfactory at Key Stage 2 and is enhanced by pupils' liking of reading and their interest in books. Pupils receiving additional literacy support are making good progress especially in their knowledge of word patterns. This is aiding their spelling as well as word recognition in reading. However, progress is not as good as it could be due to the quality of teaching. Year 3 pupils in the relatively early stages of writing are not receiving the teaching necessary to promote their progress and reading skills are not being taught systematically. Their progress has slowed compared with that at Key Stage 1. Similarly at upper Key Stage 2, not all pupils are receiving the teaching needed to develop their skills in reading for information or writing more complex stories. Pupils make satisfactory progress in learning the "mechanics" of punctuation, grammar and spelling rules. Many, however, do not apply these consistently in their writing in English and other subjects.

22. Pupils in all year groups at Key Stage 2 are making at least satisfactory progress in appreciating the language and formats of poetry, stories and other texts. Class readings of books such as "Charlotte's Web" and "A Midsummer Night's Dream" are alerting pupils to different styles and uses of language. Progress is often good when pupils discuss the ways in which poets use language forms, such as metaphors, to create effect. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils cope well with fiction and non-fiction across the curriculum. They read fluently and accurately. Higher attaining readers use characterisation and phrasing well when reading aloud and are competent at finding and extracting information from a range of written sources. Lower attaining pupils with special educational needs make slower progress and often need help to interpret what they read. By the end of Year 6, pupils write in a range of formats such as reports, stories and poems. Higher attaining writers express their ideas well and organise their longer pieces of writing into paragraphs. Not all pupils write neatly in a joined style. The errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar lower the overall standard.

23. The school's numeracy strategy is satisfactory. The introduction of the numeracy hour with the rehearsal of number bonds, counting patterns and multiplication tables is increasing pupils' facility in handling number and in solving problems, especially at Key Stage 1 where the good progress reflects the good teaching. At upper Key Stage 2 the mathematics co-ordinator is setting higher expectations for his class of mixed Year 5 and 6 pupils and progress is accelerating. When the teachers use quick-fire questioning and puzzles about numbers with games and aids such as number cards to facilitate pupils' involvement, the pupils' enthusiasm increases and good progress is made. In some lessons, however, the challenge is too low and the pace too slow. This limits pupils' progress, especially for the higher attaining pupils such as those in Year 3.

24. At the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 most pupils have a secure facility with number which they use in solving number problems in mathematics and other subjects. Pupils are becoming more confident in explaining their reasoning and the strategies they use when solving a problem. By eleven, the majority of pupils have a sound understanding and competence in using the four rules of number in a range of mathematical situations. They apply this knowledge when working in design and technology, history and science, but the teachers do not always exploit the potential of these situations. Lower attaining pupils still need help in seeing how to apply their knowledge and coping with more complex calculations. Pupils make satisfactory progress at both key stages in the other elements of mathematics. They develop a sound understanding of shape, space and measures and data handling including the use of the computer to collate and present information in a range of forms such as line graphs and pie charts.

25. Pupils make good progress in science at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory progress at Key Stage 2. Progress is better for Year 6 pupils as their teacher is the science co-ordinator and uses her skills well in fostering progress. Pupils' skills in carrying out investigations develop well initially and pupils make good progress in appreciating the process of predicting, experimenting and looking at findings. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have some understanding of a fair test. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have refined their skills and consider variables when planning an experiment. However, their skills in interpreting findings and drawing their own conclusions are not as strong because there is too much teacher direction in other years. This limits the progress of the higher attaining pupils. In both key stages, pupils develop knowledge and understanding about life processes, materials and physical processes.

26. Standards in information technology meet national expectations at the end of both key stages. Pupils make satisfactory progress at both key stages in developing the skills of using information technology. Progress is better at Key Stage 1 in using information technology as part of subject learning as the computers are based in the classroom. At Key Stage 2, progress is often good in the timetabled sessions and pupils are keen to join the computer club to apply and refine their skills. Many of the Key Stage 2 computers are old and lack up-to-date software. Pupils are not benefiting from using current programs and more sophisticated word processing functions. At Key Stage 1, pupils make at least satisfactory progress in using the mouse and keys to activate CD ROMs, to play word and number games, to word process their writing and to handle data. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are competent in using spreadsheets, importing graphics and creating their own patterns and formats. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and often good progress when assisted by a friend or allowed time to practise their skills.

27. In religious education, standards at the end of both key stages are in line with those outlined in the locally Agreed syllabus. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school and assemblies and circle time sessions enhance pupils' understanding and tolerance of different views, beliefs and principles.

28. In music and physical education, pupils make good progress at both key stages and standards are higher than expected. Progress is fostered by the teachers' high expectations and systematic teaching and rehearsal of skills. The training of all teachers, together with the use of a national scheme, has raised standards in physical education. Pupils are introduced early to musical notation and standards in singing and playing instruments are very good.

29. In geography and history at Key Stage 1, standards are good. The development of pupils' knowledge and skills through activities related to the topic is good and pupils make good progress in using simple maps and talking about places and their features. At Key Stage 2, progress is satisfactory and standards are as expected for pupils' ages. In art and design and technology, pupils make satisfactory progress at both key stages although progress slows slightly at Key Stage 2 as there is overlap between the two subjects. Whilst pupils' skills in designing, making and evaluating develop well at Key Stage 1, pupils' make slower progress at Key Stage 2 in refining and applying these skills, as projects are often directed by the teachers and pupils have less opportunity to determine their own work.



30. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall. It varies, however, and is best when the work is appropriate to their level of attainment and in keeping with the content of their individual education plans. When working with the special needs co-ordinator or support assistant they often make good progress. They respond well to short, daily sessions and many are making good progress in word building and spelling. Progress in class is less consistent. For many it is slow when they are expected to do the same as the others particularly in writing and mathematics. In other subjects, when the work is practical and pupils work as part of a group, their progress is at least satisfactory.

## **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

31. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, personal development and relationships with others are good. This contributes to the overall good quality of learning and to pupils' personal development. This area of strength is reflected in the views of the parents. Ninety-five per cent of those who returned the parents' questionnaire agreed that their children liked school and ninety-three per cent that the school achieves good standards of behaviour. This maintains the judgements made in the last inspection.

32. The personal and social development of children under five is good. Some children enter the nursery and school with poorly developed skills in playing and being with others. They respond well to the routines, to the pattern of the day and to the many ways that the adults encourage the development of confidence and feelings of self-worth. In the nursery, the children's behaviour is generally good. However, whilst a significant number of children, boys and girls, become engrossed in self-chosen activities, others flit from activity to activity. All are easily drawn to activities when there is an adult present and often concentrate for long periods when given a particular task, such as mixing colours to paint a candle. They sit still during story times and help to tidy away. Most play as individuals and only the more mature collaborate with others to develop ideas. Two boys and a girl worked well together to create hollows in the damp sand and showed great delight when they created a high sand wall. In the reception classes, the children are well settled and very confident in moving around the classroom and shared areas. They sit quietly on the carpet, respond positively to instructions and are enthusiastic about playing games and having a go at new things. They follow the routines, such as hanging up aprons and replacing items where they found them. The children enjoy school and have a positive attitude to learning.

33. In both Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils are interested in their work and are attentive, willing learners. In all lessons seen, pupils responded well, even when the teaching was uninspiring and the tasks were mundane. Key Stage 1 pupils show a slightly more positive attitude and enthusiasm overall. This reflects the higher quality of teaching and more stimulating curriculum. At both key stages, pupils find learning interesting but it is more fun for Key Stage 1 pupils.

34. Pupils are keen to know what is happening and interested in new things. They are quick to settle to lessons and usually concentrate well. When their attention is really caught, as in science at Key Stage 1, the pupils are highly motivated. Year 1 pupils were very absorbed in carrying out experiments to see which colours were visible in poor light. They worked very well with a partner in developing a routine of attaching papers inside a box, holding torches as each looked through a peephole and then deciding their findings. Year 4 pupils remembered to bring photographs of special people in their lives and listened very carefully to each other as they talked about personal qualities. Pupils learn to reflect on and to talk about what they have done. When composing a musical accompaniment for a poem, Year 6 pupils listened critically to recordings of their work, gave constructive appraisals of its quality and suggested how they could change or modify it to make it better. Pupils say they love school because there is plenty to do which keeps them busy and stops them "being couch potatoes" (Year 6 pupil). They like working hard and enjoy a challenge. When the work presents little challenge, or when the lesson pace slows, most pupils remain attentive and positive although they show signs of restlessness. This rarely gets out of hand and pupils quickly renew their interest when the lesson or activity changes.

35. The attitudes of pupils with special educational needs are good as are those of others towards them. All pupils show a positive attitude to learning and working with others. There is much support and natural consideration for others' needs. Pupils often spontaneously move furniture or carry items for those who find walking difficult but no pupil is patronised. They enjoy working in small focus groups and try hard to get the task completed in the time given.

36. At both Key Stage 1 and 2, pupils show good standards of behaviour. They behave well in class and around the school. They are clear about the school's rules and the pupils in one class devised their own school rules as part of work in the literacy hour. Pupils' show a good level of self-discipline and self-control. When pupils move from the playground to the classroom or walk from their classroom to the hall there is little jostling even though space is at a premium. Pupils' good behaviour is reflected in the fact that there have not been any exclusions from the school in the last year or previous two years. Pupils are polite, respectful and helpful to visitors. They are proud of their school and take good care of its environment.

37. The good relationships between boys and girls, and between staff and pupils, contribute significantly to the caring, valuing and inclusive approach within the school. Pupils respond well to encouragement and are genuinely pleased when they receive rewards such as stars, smiley faces or house points for good work and conduct. When pupils of different ages come together, as in the choir and recorder groups, they show interest in what others are doing and help one another. Pupils often go to one another for assistance or help when working on the computers. They respect each other's views and most listen well, for example, when they describe the process that their group used for making a song tune. In the literacy hour, many pupils work productively on their own and show an ability to organise their time and what they need. However, pupils' skills are not always used to advantage by teachers, particularly at Key Stage 2.

38. When pupils are given opportunities to take responsibility they do the tasks conscientiously and often show a mature and sensible approach. Older pupils wheel the packed lunch trolley to the dining room, play with the younger pupils at morning playtimes, give out hymn books, tidy up the library and look after the tuck shop. If encouraged, they use their initiative to generate activities. Members of the information technology club are working hard to compile a school newspaper and have organised a drop-in box for contributions. However, they have few opportunities to use their initiative in other aspects of school life.

## **Attendance**

39. Attendance is good and above the national average. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Although the majority of pupils are punctual, a significant minority of pupils arrives late in the morning. This does not affect unduly pupils' attainment and progress. Lessons start and finish on time.

## **Quality of education provided**

### **Teaching**

40. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with many good lessons throughout the school and across the curriculum. This sustains the judgement of the last inspection that "*most of the teaching is in the range of very good to sound*" but the judgement "*with the majority good*" now only applies to the teaching at Key Stage 1. The quality of the teaching contributes well to pupils' positive learning attitudes and to the ethos of the school.

41. Across the school, teaching is at least satisfactory in 97 percent of lessons. It is good in four lessons in ten and very good in one in twenty-five. However, the profile of teaching varies across the stages. For children in the nursery and reception classes, the overall quality of teaching is good. At Key Stage 1, the teaching is good in six lessons in ten and very good in one in ten. The teaching for one class of Year 2 pupils is a strength of Key Stage 1 as teaching is consistently at least good and often very good. At Key Stage 2 the teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good in one lesson in three and very occasionally it is very good. Most of the good teaching is at upper Key Stage 2 for the Year 6 class and the class of mixed Year 5 and 6 pupils. This is boosting pupils' progress. During the inspection, the unsatisfactory teaching for Year 3 and Year 5 pupils in English and religious education reflected the teachers' inadequate subject knowledge and lack of clear planning to ensure that pupils of differing attainment worked at an appropriate level of challenge. Pupils made unsatisfactory progress in these lessons.

42. A common strength of the teaching throughout the school is the teachers' care and concern for the pupils and the effective use of team teaching to support pupils with special educational needs. Teachers and support staff work well together, although not all teachers at Key Stage 2 share their planning early enough with support staff to ensure that they have adequate time to prepare appropriate resources. The high quality of the work of the nursery nurses, classroom assistants and the special needs support assistants adds considerably to pupils' progress and the overall quality of education. Many of the support staff are skilled in questioning and encouraging the pupils. This benefits not only their allocated pupil or group but also those who are working close by. Their presence in the classrooms is unobtrusive and they manage their time well often taking the initiative to get resources or to sort out materials.

43. Most teachers have responded positively to training and advice from subject co-ordinators in the teaching of English, mathematics, science, information technology, music and physical education. At Key Stage 1, the high degree of consistency in approach and strong team spirit has ensured the smooth introduction of both the literacy and numeracy hours and the effective use of team teaching to support pupils with special educational needs. The teachers plan and prepare thoroughly and identify clearly what pupils are to learn. However, at Key Stage 2, not all the teachers plan in sufficient detail to show what pupils are to learn and how this is to be taught. Some lesson planning, especially for the literacy and numeracy hours, is skimpy and shows little regard for the need to plan consistently for groups of pupils of differing attainment.

44. National guidance is being used to plan work in many subjects and all teachers have a secure understanding of subject programmes of study in the National Curriculum. However, not all teachers have a secure grasp of the National Literacy Strategy and their own knowledge of how to teach reading and writing is not sufficient to pose a consistently high enough challenge to all pupils. In the reception classes and at Key Stage 1, the use of computers is integral to most lessons and the teachers identify appropriate learning targets. At Key Stage 2, the teachers use specific sessions to introduce new software and skills. However, opportunities are missed at both key stages to use information technology in the literacy and numeracy hours. The literacy co-ordinator set a good model in having some pupils complete work on the computer whilst others did the same work on paper. When teachers assist small groups and individuals at the computer, their comments and support enhance pupils' progress.

45. At Key Stage 1, the teaching of English, mathematics and science is good and promotes pupils' good progress. There are strengths in these subjects at Key Stage 2, especially for the classes taught by the subject co-ordinators and the headteacher. At both key stages, the teaching of music and physical education is good. The expertise of the subject co-ordinators is used well to promote high standards in their own classes and to extend pupils' skills in extra-curricular sessions. At Key Stage 2, the good teaching of the specialist music teachers from the Local Education Authority support service promotes pupils' good progress and high standards. It also provides a good model of teaching for staff who teach a second lesson later in the week. At Key Stage 1, the teaching is also good in art.

46. For children under five, the quality of teaching is good in all six areas of learning. The teachers have a very good understanding of young children and how they learn and value highly the children being as independent as possible. The staff have organised the nursery and reception classes to encourage the children to collect and return what they need and there are very clear routines and procedures. The adults provide constant encouragement and praise. Their warm enthusiasm, high level of interest in each child and skills in drawing children in to conversations do much to promote the children's good progress. Sessions are well planned and resources are well prepared. The good quality of organisation of the children, space and resources ensures that the children know exactly what is expected of them and sessions run smoothly. The reception teachers are imaginative and resourceful in their planning and use a good range of items to support the children's learning. This is best seen in the literacy activities for children first thing in the morning. Observation of pupils' reading skills is well recorded but opportunities are missed to observe the children in a range of other learning situations.

47. At Key Stage 1, there are many strengths in the teaching in all classes but especially for one class of Year 1 and a class of Year 2 pupils. The teachers work very well as a team despite being in two separate buildings. All the teachers give time to organising their classrooms and displaying their pupils' work attractively. The classrooms are vibrant and purposeful learning places with key words on display to aid pupils' spelling and clearly defined learning zones. Reading corners and writing areas are well resourced and the collection of Christmas books in each room supported the use of "The Silver Christmas Tree" as the class reading book. Classroom routines are well established and relationships are good between teachers and pupils. The teachers are generally secure in their knowledge of the curriculum and have worked well together to develop topics and ideas. Less experienced staff are well supported and there is a high consistency in teaching approach, which ensures good continuity for pupils. In the most effective lessons, the teachers review previous learning and help the pupils to see how what they know is relevant. The teacher's encouragement to pupils to have a try and doing their best alongside the use of enquiring questions such as "If you do this, what might happen?" ensured that Year 1 pupils made very good progress in testing out their ideas for Christmas wrapping paper. Similarly, the Year 2 teacher's demonstration, use of relevant terms and summary of the strategies she had used enabled the class to see how writing can be revised and edited.

48. At Key Stage 2, although the teaching is satisfactory overall, there are shortcomings in many lessons across the curriculum. Much of the teaching is staid and lacks the spark and enthusiasm of that for the younger pupils. Even though classes have topics in common there is little on display in classrooms or the central area to stimulate the pupils' interest or to develop their knowledge further. Teaching expertise is not being shared to the benefit of year groups or the key stage and there are few times when all pupils from the same year group meet.

49. Key Stage 2 pupils are being taught well the "mechanics" of literacy and numeracy. In several literacy and numeracy hours, especially for the older pupils, the good level of teachers' planning and preparation led to a good learning pace. However, in other lessons, the learning objectives were not always clear and the pace was too sedate to sharpen the knowledge and skills of higher attaining pupils. The effective use of games and practical tasks in the numeracy hours is less evident in literacy work. Too many lessons fall back on exercises and tasks from commercial materials and time is lost copying out worksheets or information from the board. Guidance has not been acted on fully by all Key Stage 2 staff in literacy and in planning work in other subjects.

50. In better lessons the teacher's easy repartee and probing questions about pupils' views lifted the lesson pace and Year 5 and 6 pupils made good progress in analysing and evaluating the quality of a poem. In a science lesson the Year 6 teacher's clear directions, good management and critical questioning of what they had found out, ensured that all worked productively and that a group of lower attaining pupils made good progress in understanding how to separate materials. Whilst there is some detailed marking and comments to pupils on how they might improve, particularly for the older pupils, this is not carried out by all teachers and is also more carefully done in English than in other subjects.

51. At both key stages, the overall quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is at least satisfactory and most often good, especially when pupils work alongside their classmates with the guidance of a teacher or support assistant. The teaching of the special needs co-ordinator is good. In planning work for pupils, she takes the targets and content of individual education plans and statements of special educational need into account, and often consults support assistants. Support assistants' daily records of pupils' response and progress towards their targets are used well to plan further work and provide appropriate resources. In other lessons, the class teacher does not always take the needs of individual pupils into account and occasionally pupils struggle with the task. The lack of assessment information aggravates this situation.

52. The teachers expect pupils to take their reading books home and to learn spellings and multiplication tables. Other homework extends class themes and topics and at upper Key Stage 2, pupils complete comprehension and grammar exercises.

### **The curriculum and assessment**

53. The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory overall. It is good for children under five and for pupils at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. The Key Stage 2 curriculum lacks the dynamism and excitement of that for the younger pupils. The curriculum promotes pupils' intellectual, physical, social and personal development and prepares them satisfactorily for the next stage of education.

54. The last inspection identified two key issues arising from the curriculum. These have been addressed but with varying degrees of success. All subjects now have appropriate policies and guidelines but not all teachers use them equally well to inform their planning and delivery of the curriculum. At Key Stage 1, much has been done to improve the quality of curriculum planning and provision. A joint approach to planning using information from curriculum guidelines and identifying clearly what groups of pupils with differing attainment will do has lifted the quality of the planning and of the curriculum itself. At Key Stage 2, the criticisms remain valid as there are inconsistencies in planning and in the use of curriculum guidelines to inform planning. This is a significant factor in the unsatisfactory progress made since the last inspection to raise standards and improve the overall quality of education in the school.

55. The curriculum for children under five in the nursery and reception classes is good. It addresses the six areas of learning recommended nationally and makes good provision for children to achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes. It is a sound preparation for Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum and appropriate account is taken of National Curriculum programmes of study when planning for the older children and the higher attaining pupils in the reception classes. Appropriate high emphasis is given to the children's personal and social development in the nursery and to literacy and numeracy in the reception classes. Learning through play is valued and there is a good balance of adult-directed and child-chosen activities. Elements of the literacy and numeracy hours are being introduced in the reception classes. The nursery and reception children have periods of outdoor play using wheeled toys. The reception children follow the Key Stage 1 timetable, attend assemblies and have morning and afternoon play with other classes.

56. The assessment of children's attainment begins with a home visit by nursery staff. The teacher and support staff discuss the children's progress regularly and use such information to guide their planning. However, there is little observation and recording of the rate of each child's progress towards the Desirable Learning Outcomes. In the reception classes, the children's attainment on entry to school is conscientiously assessed in line with the Local Education Authority guidelines. Information from this is used to plan and to group pupils for literacy and numeracy work. The staff work as a team to record the children's progress across the curriculum and parents are also involved in commenting on the children's reading progress. Opportunities are missed however, for adults to observe children and to record what they do.

57. The curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 is broad and balanced and complies with the requirements of the National Curriculum. In response to a key issue in the previous inspection, the school has adjusted the time given to each subject and the time allocations are similar to those in many schools. The locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education is appropriately followed. Sex education and drugs awareness are delivered through the science curriculum, in accordance with the governors' policy. Pupils receive personal and social education principally through the subjects of the National Curriculum and some circle times but there is no co-ordinated or systematic programme of personal and social education.

58. At Key Stage 1, the teachers take good account of the guidelines of the National Literacy Strategy in planning the literacy curriculum and especially the daily literacy hour. This is not the case at Key Stage 2, where teachers' planning does not consistently follow national guidelines. Neither does it include those aspects of English which are not part of the literacy strategy such as listening and speaking and drama. At Key Stage 1, the curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills across the curriculum. They write plans and reports in design and technology and science and read accounts and descriptions in geography and history. At Key Stage 2, the pupils use their reading skills naturally in a variety of activities but opportunities to teach and develop these skills, such as locating and collating information in history, are not included in curriculum planning. Opportunities for pupils to discuss and take part in debate, or to use and develop a wide range of writing skills are also not consistently planned as part of other subject plans. At Key Stage 2, the learning objectives for text, sentence and word level work are often too general and insufficient care is given to the planning of group work and guided reading and writing sessions. This is limiting pupils' progress, especially for a significant number of pupils in Years 3 and 5.

59. The National Numeracy Strategy was introduced at the beginning of the school year. The numeracy hour is well established at Key Stage 1 and is supported by good, clear and detailed planning for each section of the hour. At Key Stage 2, the planning is less consistent and not all teachers are ensuring that the mathematics curriculum addresses the needs of all the pupils. The planning does not address the integration of numeracy and data handling into subjects such as science, geography and design and technology.

60. The school uses a programme of topics on a two-year cycle which ensures that pupils in a mixed-age class do not repeat topics. The topics date from before the previous inspection but have been updated in line with National Curriculum changes. The topics are used creatively and imaginatively for children under five and Key Stage 1. Stories and experiences are well integrated and the curriculum is stimulating, exciting and challenging. The planning is rigorous and identifies clearly what pupils will learn and how this will be organised, managed and assessed. Overall, the curriculum promotes pupils' good progress. The Key Stage 2 topics lack the vitality of those at Key Stage 1 and do not reflect the systematic development of skills needed in subjects such as design and technology. Teachers' planning draws on topic guidelines but does not always set the level of challenge high enough especially for the higher attainers. In extra-curricular activities, such as music and computer club, these pupils often have more opportunity to build on and use their knowledge and skills. The school is currently looking at ways to encourage more boys to take part in musical activities. Whilst this is a positive aspect of the school's approach to ensuring equal opportunities for all, the needs of the higher attaining pupils are not met fully in the curriculum.

61. A strength of the curriculum is the inclusion of all pupils with special educational needs. The curriculum provision for these pupils is very good in the nursery and reception classes. Class teachers and support staff work together to plan the curriculum and to decide the patterns of support for pupils on the special needs register. At Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum provision is good. Pupils are withdrawn from lessons for more focused tasks and are also provided with good support in lessons. Statements of special educational need are reviewed regularly to monitor each pupil's progress towards their targets and to set new ones. No pupils are disapplied from the National Curriculum.

62. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities for both Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils. Many pupils take part in the sports and music sessions run by a number of teachers and parents. The choir and recorder groups are often invited to take part in outside events. Members of the photographic club have been successful in competitions. The computer club allows pupils to practise their skills and they are currently working to produce a school newspaper.

63. The curriculum is also enhanced by visits to places of interest and by visitors such as the owner of a barn owl. Older pupils take part in residential visits but have little experience of outdoor and adventure activities.

64. The quality of the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is good for children under five and Key Stage 1 pupils but unsatisfactory for pupils at Key Stage 2. In the previous inspection, assessment procedures for the foundation subjects were identified as a key issue for action. This has not been successfully addressed as a whole-school issue.

65. A clear, comprehensive and effective system to monitor pupils' attainment and progress has been separately established in the nursery, reception classes and Key Stage 1. Teachers evaluate their lessons in terms of pupils' learning and they monitor pupils' progress using recent national guidelines. The information gained is used well to inform future planning and to set targets for individual pupils. This is not the case at Key Stage 2 where there is no clear, consistent pattern of assessment. Procedures to assess and record pupils' on-going attainment and progress have been pared so that there is scant information either in pupils' books or in teachers' records to indicate progress in all attainment targets in English, mathematics, science, information technology and religious education. This provides insufficient information for teachers to set targets for improvement or to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. Whilst Key Stage 1 teachers produce detailed reports for parents on their children's progress, reports in Key Stage 2 more often are a summary of what has been covered. Better reports in both key stages indicate what the child needs to do to improve.

66. The school meets statutory requirements in conducting end of key stage assessments but the monitoring of assessment and recording procedures throughout the school is unsatisfactory. Limited use is made of standardised tests and their results but the headteacher is introducing this into each pupil's profile as from next year and intends to use the results to set learning targets. Although records of pupils' attainment in English, mathematics, science and information technology are completed at the end of the school year and passed on to the next teacher, these have limited value as they merely give a blanket grade and do not identify specific attainment. This has had a negative impact on the appropriateness of teachers' planning for Year 3 pupils who are still in the relatively early stages of reading and writing.

67. Portfolios of assessed and annotated pupils' work have not been kept up-to-date. The writing portfolio is several years old and does not provide sufficient guidance to teachers on assessing the attainment of pupils in their writing across the curriculum.

### **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

68. The overall provision made by the school for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There are strengths in the provision for moral, social and cultural developments but some weaknesses in the provision for pupils' spiritual development.

69. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory but many opportunities are missed to encourage pupils to reflect on the world around them and/or to look at themselves. Assemblies have only a limited impact in this area and little opportunity is given for pupils, particularly those in Key Stage 1, to be still and focused for any length of time. There is little opportunity for pupils to develop their own spiritual values or to be reflective. The absence of staff during Key Stage 1 assemblies sometimes has an adverse effect on pupils' behaviour and limits the effectiveness of the act of worship. Opportunities are missed to promote a sense of reverence, awe or wonder or to provide times of silence. Although displays are attractive and inviting at Key Stage 1, they are less so at Key Stage 2 and rarely invite pupils to appreciate the beauty of art, nature or their own work. During some curriculum topics pupils reflect on environmental issues and write about the destruction of life when people destroy rainforests.

70. The provision for moral development is good and is a secure and successful aspect of the school's work. Teachers promote the values of tolerance and understanding and these qualities are seen in the conduct and attitude of many of the pupils in the way they listen, react and share experience with others. The school is an orderly community where right and wrong are clearly explained and where they underpin the small number of rules placed upon pupils. Pupils are encouraged to develop good moral values through the behaviour policy and by the examples set by adults. Pupils with special educational needs play a full part in the life of the school.

71. The provision for pupils' social development is good and is promoted through the importance placed by the school on good relationships with others. From the nursery, positive social attitudes are constantly encouraged. Residential visits to Shropshire for older pupils offer opportunities to work together and to share activities while living in a large group. The good range of well attended school clubs encourages pupils of different ages to work together. Pupils are encouraged to share, to help and care for others and some take responsibility around the school. Many pupils have been involved in fund-raising for local and national charities, including Children in Need. During the week of the inspection one Year 6 pupil was presented with a British Telecom sponsored Good Citizen award for taking part in a charity triathlon.

72. The school's provision for cultural development is good and shows an improvement since the last inspection. Opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of their own and other cultures are provided throughout the curriculum but particularly in art and music. The hall exhibits of a range of prints of the works of artists including Van Gogh and Lucian Freud. Pupils listen to a wide variety of music including folk songs, classical symphonies and dances from India. A wealth of musical tuition is available in the school and during the inspection the school choir sang at an Advent celebration held in Liverpool Anglican Cathedral.

### **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

73. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils' support, guidance and welfare as was reported in the last inspection. Whilst the school is a happy, caring environment, there are some shortcomings in the way procedures are implemented.

74. The procedures for monitoring pupils' progress and personal development are satisfactory overall but are inconsistent. They are good for children under five and those at Key Stage 1. The nursery staff have records of each child's attainment and details of their personal development. Assessment of pupils on entry to school, as required nationally, is used to identify concerns and to plan appropriate activities. Key Stage 1 teachers meticulously record pupils' response and progress and the annual reports for parents are good with the child's strengths, weaknesses and targets for improvement clearly identified. The teachers know the pupils but at Key Stage 2, there are gaps in the information available to chart any one pupil's progress over a school year and the key stage. The quality of reports to parents varies. The better ones provide details of progress in each subject; the poorer ones merely provide a brief summary of what has been done with no indication of progress or what the pupil needs to do to improve. Pupils' records of achievement are not utilised equally well throughout the school.



75. Good procedures exist for supporting pupils with special educational needs. Parents receive regular information and are invited into school to discuss their children's progress. Individual education plans are detailed with clear, realistic targets. The support for pupils with a statement of special need is good and ensures that they take a full part in school life. Support staff are involved in monitoring the progress of pupils with special educational needs and daily diary entries are used to record responses and events which may be significant in the reviews of pupils' progress. The quality of liaison with outside agencies is very good.

76. Pupils under the age of five are well supported by the school. Support staff meet regularly to discuss their work the following week and to review the children's progress. Home visits by staff before the children start school allow families to share information with the staff about their children and the children to complete an "I can do" booklet. This smoothes entry to the nursery and establishes good working relationships between home and school.

77. Procedures for the promoting and monitoring of discipline and good behaviour are satisfactory. Ninety-three per cent of parents who returned the questionnaire agreed that the school achieves high standards of behaviour. Staff manage and promote good behaviour effectively. The high number of adults in school and in the playground and their good relationships with pupils help to keep behaviour problems to a minimum. Lunchtime supervisors have received training in managing behaviour and there are established procedures to deal with untoward behaviour, including bullying. The staff provide good role models in their concern for and interest in pupils. General information on the management of behaviour is included in the prospectus.

78. Procedures for the monitoring and promoting of attendance are satisfactory. Appropriate procedures are followed in registering pupils' attendance and the school administrator plays a valuable role in ensuring that registers are maintained correctly. The school has a higher than average attendance rate and most parents keep the school informed about absences. The school is no longer checking the whereabouts of absent pupils although the education welfare officer follows up concerns about particular pupils. Not all pupils are punctual and a significant number of pupils take holidays in term time. There are few systems to monitor trends and patterns of absence or lateness and their effect on pupils' progress and attainment.

79. The school promotes satisfactorily an awareness of health and safety issues. A policy is in place and a health and safety officer has recently been appointed. Governors are aware of the uneven playground surface, and are active in seeking assistance to deal with this and other health and safety concerns they have identified. Pupils are reminded of safe procedures during lessons such as physical education and science. There are good procedures for dealing with medical emergencies and the school has four members of staff qualified to give first aid treatment. Parents have been trained to teach the pupils cycling proficiency. Although the school does not have its own formal policy on child protection, it follows the Local Education Authority guidelines. The headteacher is the named person with responsibility for child protection and other staff are aware of relevant procedures.

80. Satisfactory liaison and the passing of information about pupils ensures a smooth transfer to secondary school.

### **Partnership with parents and the community**

81. As noted in the last inspection, the school enjoys "*strong links*" and good relationships with parents and the community. This has a positive effect on pupils' progress and the quality of their experience at school. At the meeting held with inspectors parents praised the welcome they receive at school and the open contact with the headteacher and staff. One parent commented that the school provides "*education with a smile*". Over 90 percent of parents who returned the questionnaire expressed agreement that the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school and that they would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with their children.

82. The quality of information for parents is good. Although there are omissions of legally required items in the current prospectus and last governors' annual report to parents, these are useful documents which parents value. The nursery has its own information pack which is not included in the main school prospectus. Home visits and open communication between nursery staff and parents help the children to settle into nursery life. School newsletters have a friendly tone and an easy to read format, and "survival" booklets provide parents with useful information on what their children will need and be doing in each class.

83. However, parents are given minimal information on the curriculum and on the topics to be covered. A few parents commented that they would appreciate knowing more so that they could help their children at home. Annual reports to parents in their child's progress are satisfactory but vary in quality of comment and content. The better reports, as seen at Key Stage 1, give clear indications of the child's progress, their strengths and areas for improvement. At Key Stage 2, not all parents are as well informed and in several cases, the reports merely summarise what has been done. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept very well informed about the content of their child's individual education plan, the support being given and of their child's progress towards the agreed targets.

84. Parents feel that their help and support for the school is valued and appreciated. Parents play a major part in promoting the reading progress of their children. Their comments in the reading record provide useful information on their child's reading skills. A significant number of parents volunteer to help in classrooms, in the library and to provide toast in the morning playtime. More parents support the Friends of the School Association when they organise events to raise funds. Their work has provided additional equipment for the school.

85. There are good links with the community. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully continued to develop and strengthen links with local groups, such as the four local churches which pupils visit. The school also receives regular visits from the clergy. The choir is actively involved in the community and sing at a care home for the elderly as well as at events such as that at the Liverpool Anglican Cathedral. Beneficial links have been established with local industries and the school has been successful in gaining awards for designing environmental projects. Links with other organisations have brought visitors to the school from Everton Football Club, a local hotel and Dune FM Radio. The school has good links with the local secondary school.

## **The management and efficiency of the school**

### **Leadership and management**

86. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory but there are weaknesses in the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school.

87. The headteacher, who took up his post in September 1999, has a clear vision for the school. There has been too little time to effect real change but he has conducted his own audit and identified many of the weaknesses highlighted in this report. He has rightly identified the need to overhaul the management structure. Teachers with key responsibility allowances have not assumed the monitoring and managing roles necessary for school improvement. The deputy headteacher has no clear role in the day-to-day running of the school or in strategic management and planning and, similarly, other senior management team members hold no school management responsibilities other than their co-ordinating duties. The uncertainty over responsibilities and roles, together with custom and practice, has thwarted and hindered moves by some co-ordinators who have tried to make improvements and to take both key stages forward.

88. The limited team spirit at Key Stage 2 contrasts with the strong team approach of the staff who work with the children under five and Key Stage 1 pupils. Here, the staff's unity of purpose and direction as well as their enthusiasm and confidence in working together have ensured that curriculum development has kept pace with national trends and that standards have been raised. At Key Stage 1, all four key issues from the 1995 inspection have been addressed effectively and curriculum planning and assessment are now strengths.

89. At Key Stage 2 however, improvement has been unsatisfactory in the four years since the last inspection. The headteacher is aware that, although school policies and systems, such as handwriting and assessment, have been agreed there has been little monitoring and evaluation of their implementation. In-service training and advice from co-ordinators has only been acted on in part and this has slowed curriculum development, weakened the effectiveness of the literacy hour and had minimal impact on raising standards, particularly in English. Three of the four key issues from 1995 remain a concern, as too little has been done to address them. Higher attaining pupils have responded positively to handwriting practice and their presentation standards are usually good. Other pupils find it harder to present their work well. Not all teachers' short-term planning identifies clear learning targets or what pupils of differing attainment will achieve. Too often all pupils are expected to do the same, irrespective of their prior attainment. This reflects the lack of assessment information from teachers' marking and pupils' records to guide teachers in deciding the next steps in pupils' learning.

90. As mentioned in the 1995 report, the Governing Body is proud and supportive of the school. It meets most of its statutory responsibilities through its committee structure although not all requirements are met in the school prospectus or the annual report to parents. Contact addresses, information on the school's progress in relation to the last inspection action plan, details of governors' allowances and details of the professional development of staff are not included. The headteacher, as part of his initiatives to move the school forward, is working with governors to increase and strengthen their role in strategic planning and management. The recently compiled timeline for governors in monitoring, evaluation and target setting is a useful step in this process.

91. The school development plan is satisfactory and has been appropriately revised for the period to April 2000 to bring it in line with financial planning and to allow much tighter costing of curriculum and school developments. The previous plan indicated steps to be taken but these were not closely related to targets for attainment or to specific objectives. The Governing Body has few systems to allow it to monitor and analyse key information such as test results or to evaluate the effectiveness of its decisions on school priorities and areas for development.

92. The management of the provision for children under five is good. The close links between the nursery and reception year staff ensure good consistency and continuity of practice and expectation. The teachers monitor and evaluate their work and keep up-to-date with national guidance. School documents, including the school development plan, make little reference to action planning for either the nursery or the reception unit.

93. The management and administration of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The special needs co-ordinator is conscientious and effective in her administration and upkeep of relevant documents. The special needs governor has good oversight of the provision and the Governing Body is kept well informed.

94. The school is meeting most of its eight aims and is successfully implementing to a large degree its values and policies. A key strength is the provision of equal opportunities for pupils with special needs and the school's success in meeting those aims which focus on the development of attitudes and values and the acquisition of knowledge. Pupils have "*positive attitudes including reliability, honesty and trust*" (school prospectus) and the school fosters well pupils' self-esteem, self-confidence and self-discipline.

95. The school's ethos however, is inconsistent. It is very strong in the nursery, reception year and Key Stage 1 where pupils respond positively to the staff's high expectations of them. These staff are very effective in providing a positive learning environment where learning "*starts from what each child knows and enables each to develop to his/her full potential*". At Key Stage 2, the staff care about the pupils but place less emphasis on improving standards.

## **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

96. There is a good number of appropriately qualified staff to teach the National Curriculum, religious education and pupils with special educational needs at Key Stages 1 and 2. There have been several changes of staff since the last inspection giving a good blend of age, experience and expertise. The school has a lower pupil:teacher ratio than many other primary schools due to the high number of part-time teachers including the special educational needs teacher who does not have class responsibilities. Not all the teachers working with children under the age of five are trained in teaching this age group but have experience and personal interest and have undertaken professional development in aspects of the work. Three senior members of staff have additional qualifications. Each teacher, other than those newly qualified, has subject management responsibility. In several cases, such as English, science, information technology, art and music, this reflects teachers' specialist expertise and personal enthusiasm. The special needs co-ordinator is an experienced teacher and has a good knowledge of special needs' work.

97. The number, qualifications and experience of non-teaching staff are good. The school employs a high number of support staff in addition to those who provide support for pupils with statements of special educational need. Ten of the support staff are trained nursery nurses (two work exclusively with the children under five) and an additional five are trained special needs support staff. Their skills and expertise add much to the overall quality of the staff.

98. Job descriptions for all members of staff are being updated by the headteacher. Very good arrangements are in place for the induction and support of newly qualified teachers. Experienced staff act as mentors and provide good guidance. Teacher appraisal is well established. However, professional development aspects and training priorities are not yet linked closely to the school development plan. Appropriate training has been given in implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The staff handbook is out-of-date and there is little information to guide new members of staff or other adults who come into school to support pupils and staff.

99. Taken overall, the accommodation is satisfactory and adequate for the effective delivery of the curriculum. However, the buildings are over a hundred years old and have high ceilings and high windows. Various additions over the years have provided appropriate toilet and cloakroom facilities but access is difficult especially when classes are using the school hall. The lack of its own school field, the poor state of the playground surface and the recent removal of the climbing ropes in the school hall because of structural weakness, limit the physical education curriculum. The building used for dining shows signs of deterioration. Internal decoration and maintenance in the teaching buildings is good. Although these buildings have many limitations, staff work hard to make the best use of them and to create an attractive learning environment. At Key Stage 1, this is done especially well with corridors, alcoves and rooms used as one learning area. The use of the corridor as a base for a Year 1 class is not ideal but the two Year 1 teachers work as a team and utilise the larger adjoining classroom as a shared work area. In both teaching buildings, classrooms vary in size and some are cramped, especially for the older pupils. In some rooms, the lack of access is aggravated by the number, size and arrangement of tables. The upstairs rooms in the smaller building offer much potential for group work but these are poorly organised and unattractive compared with the vibrant atmosphere downstairs in the reception and Year 1 areas.

100. The nursery is spacious with a kitchen area, small office, built in sand pit and raised platform areas. The children have access to a secure, outdoor area with grassed and hard surfaces. However, the nursery is in need of some re-decoration and there is much unexploited potential in ways to organise and use the available space to create an interesting and challenging learning area.

101. The caretaker and the cleaning staff work hard and the school is kept clean to a good standard. The separate hard areas outdoors for Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils are of a good size and well marked out for play activities. However, the paving is uneven and pools collect in a few places when there is rain. During the inspection, several pupils fell and suffered cuts and grazes because of the unevenness. The school has been successful in making its outdoor areas more pleasant by creating garden areas and seating areas with benches and tables.

102. The overall provision of resources is very good, especially in English. The school has a high number of books with many stored rather than on open access to pupils. The school libraries have a good range of fiction and non-fiction books. All subjects have sufficient resources to enable them to be taught appropriately. Separate stock and store rooms in the two buildings results in some duplication and stockpiling. The range and sufficiency of information technology equipment is satisfactory but many of the computers are old and pose occasional problems. Not all the machines are compatible and the newer machines have CD ROM facility and offer a much wider range of programs. The special educational needs resources are good and there is a wide range and number of materials to support staff in planning ways to support these pupils as well as resources to enhance pupils' learning.

103. Visitors to school as well as visits to places of interest add to the overall provision.

### **The efficiency of the school**

104. As at the time of the 1996 inspection, the school "*is efficiently managed*". The overall efficiency is satisfactory. Whilst there are strengths in financial control and school administration there are some less efficient aspects in use of time and space.

105. Financial management of the budget is sound. There are clear budgeting procedures and forward planning is carefully undertaken. The school receives a relatively low amount per pupil compared with other schools nationally but the governors maintain a balanced budget and the school has a healthy contingency fund. Although the annual budget takes account of the priorities of the school development plan, not all aspects are fully costed. As highlighted in the last inspection, this limits the ability of the governors to have a full strategic view of the financial implications of their educational decisions. Furthermore the school does not evaluate fully the effectiveness of its expenditure decisions in terms of the improved or sustained educational performance of its pupils. The revised development plan has more easily identifiable success criteria and can now be used a tool to help governors evaluate the effect of their spending. Appropriate financial information is provided to committees of the Governing Body and decisions are carefully recorded. The governors have adopted the financial procedures recommended by the Local Education Authority. Procedures for obtaining value for money are good and the school makes appropriate use of a regional purchasing organisation. Subject co-ordinators have delegated spending powers and the school has developed effective financial procedures to support them in carrying out their responsibilities. However, the school is extremely well resourced and insufficient consideration has been given to ensuring that budget allocations are directly related to need. Day-to-day financial control is good. As part of school administration, procedures are smooth, efficient and well managed. Good financial records are kept and all the recommendations made in the last audit report from the local authority have been addressed.

106. Funding for pupils with special education needs is being used to employ a part-time special needs coordinator and classroom support assistants. This is providing good value for money as the coordinator is solely responsible for the management of special educational needs and this work is well managed and efficiently conducted. She uses her time well to work with groups of pupils in all years throughout the week. The work is focused on the targets in pupils' individual education plans and complements work being done in class. Withdrawal from class is undertaken in a smooth and efficient manner with minimum loss of classroom time or interruption to others.

107. Funds raised by parents have been used to purchase additional resources including sports equipment.

108. The deployment of staff to year groups and the allocation of responsibilities is satisfactory. Team teaching in the reception classes and joint planning throughout Key Stage 1 has a positive effect on pupils' progress. All teachers have sessions when they are released from contact with their classes. This time is usually used as an opportunity to mark pupils' work or to prepare lessons and there is no systematic use of the time to implement subject development plans or to monitor the quality of teaching and subject standards. Good use is made of support staff and volunteers in school and they make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress. However, there are occasions when support staff are present in lessons but not participating, especially in the literacy and numeracy hours and opportunities are missed to use their skills in observing pupils or assisting in class discussions.

109. The accommodation and available learning resources are generally used satisfactorily to enhance learning. The continued use of the old dining hall ensures the school hall is available for use at all times. This is particularly well used for music and choir practices as well as physical education, games and assemblies. The large Key Stage 2 resource area acts as a useful overflow area for classes but the number and range of activities taking place simultaneously, particularly in the afternoons, limits the opportunities for focused learning or teaching. This space is not being used to best advantage to create learning zones or to support pupils' independent learning skills especially in the literacy and numeracy hours. At Key Stage 1, space is used well to provide theme-related activities. Corners, nooks and crannies are used well to set up play areas, such as the cave and wood, and sand and water activities.

110. Time is generally well used but there are some inefficiencies. Sessions start promptly and pupils work through until the end of lessons with little time wasted. In some lessons, time targets are very effectively used to help pupils manage their learning and ensure that tasks are completed. In a small number of lessons, usually at Key Stage 2, too much time is lost in teacher explanations and pupils have too little time to complete their work.

111. The school provides good value for money given its lower than average funding and its achievements. However, the school has not made the expected progress since the time of the last inspection and standards could be higher. This has been achieved in physical education and music but there is scope for even further improvement. Pupils enter school with attainment close to the average. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly in line with the national average but pupils come from a range of social and economic backgrounds. Pupils leave school with levels of attainment which meet national expectations in all subjects. Although good progress is made by most pupils under five and by those at Key Stage 1, progress slows at Key Stage 2. The school promotes well pupils' positive attitudes, good behaviour and pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good.

## **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

### **Areas of learning for children under five**

112. At the time of the inspection, all of the nursery children and 30 of the 45 children in the reception year were under the age of five. In the nursery, one child attends full time and 58 children attend part-time. The nursery teacher has recently returned following maternity leave. One nursery nurse has accompanied the children into the reception year but will return to the nursery when additional children start in January. The two reception classes share a large room, corridor and adjacent areas.

113. The children show a wide range of attainment on entry to the nursery and school. Some are below average in language and literacy, mathematics and personal development whilst others have a good vocabulary, converse easily and have a good general knowledge. Overall, on entry to school attainment is above the Local Education Authority average and close to the national average. The children make at least satisfactory progress in all six areas of learning. Progress in personal and social development is good and there is some good progress in knowledge and understanding of the world and in physical development. Progress in the reception year is boosted by the good quality of teaching in literacy and numeracy. By the age of five, and certainly by the end of the reception year, most children have attained the Desirable Learning Outcomes in personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. A significant number of children are working towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum especially in reading, writing and number. The strengths in literacy, numeracy and ethos have been sustained since the last inspection.

### **Personal and social development**

114. By the age of five, many have attained the Desirable Learning Outcomes. The children settle into the nursery and reception classes well and quickly learn the pattern of the school day. This is helped by the open welcome to parents to come in with their children, and in the nursery, to stay until they are happy that their child has settled. During the inspection, many nursery and reception children were very content to say farewell at the door and then to choose their own activity. The children who attend the nursery in the afternoon are often tired after a busy morning and some occasionally show fractiousness and an inability to concentrate other than for very short periods. Their progress is slower than the morning children who are more willing to work together and to persevere with activities. They learn to share equipment and to put it away after use. The nursery children know where things are kept and what to do when it is group time or snack time. They wait their turn and help others. Most manage to put on coats and hats without adult assistance but need help with buttons and zips. In the reception classes, the children take care of their own personal needs and manage to dress and undress with very little help. Many show a good level of maturity in getting on with others, waiting patiently for all to be ready and allowing others to have their say. They are very interested in what is happening. They are ready and willing to try new things and having tasted mango chutney were quite reflective in their comments about its texture and flavour. Relationships are good and the children are confident and self-assured.

115. The quality of provision and teaching is good in the nursery and reception classes. There is a common calm, encouraging approach and staff deal sensitively and quietly with children who are upset or who are behaving inappropriately. The well established organisational routines and clear labelling of where items are kept supports the children in being independent and self-reliant.

## **Language and literacy**

116. By the age of five, most children have made at least satisfactory progress and have attained many or all of the Desirable Learning Outcomes. In both the nursery and the reception classes, children enjoy stories and listen for an appreciably long time. They join in with familiar songs and rhymes and are keen to talk to adults about their experiences. Although there are a few children who say little, there are more who show good progress in using phrases and extended sentences. In the reception classes, the children talk confidently in front of the whole class and often spontaneously respond to each other or to comments made by the adults.

117. Many get off to a really good start in reading and writing. In the nursery, the children are developing an awareness of story lines, characters and book language. A small number are aware of the author and want to know what it says on the front of the book. They follow the story and talk about what has happened. When looking at books on their own, they handle them correctly and talk about the pictures. Higher attaining children identify letters of the alphabet and retell stories with a good degree of accuracy. In the reception classes, many children have made good progress in recognising the letters of the alphabet and their sounds. They are beginning to put sounds together in words like "zip" and to read many words by sight. Several are reading simple books and others are close to reading independently.

118. Not all of the nursery children are showing an active interest in mark making. The girls more often choose to work at the writing table and make lists or send letters. All are learning to recognise their name and one or two write their name or letters in their name without aid. The children are making satisfactory progress in forming letter movements and patterns. In the reception classes, the children have made a good start in writing on their own as well as copying an adult's writing. The children use their letter sound knowledge to give the initial and end sounds of words and are beginning to write in sentences. Many write their names without help.

119. The provision and quality of teaching is good and has strengths particularly in teaching reading. The reception teachers are following guidance from the Local Education Authority and introducing the literacy hour gradually. The children are well used to the class "big book time" and the teachers place appropriate emphasis on teaching letters and looking at how words are formed. The staff have collected a good range of books, resources and activities, including appropriate computer programs, to promote the children's awareness of letters, words and sentences. This is less evident in the nursery. The sessions of teaching handwriting in both the nursery and reception classes are promoting progress but there are limited opportunities for the children to write as part of their play or as part of the routines of the day. Good records are kept of the children's reading progress but opportunities are missed to observe and record the children's progress in writing.

## **Mathematics**

120. The children make at least satisfactory progress in both the nursery and reception year. By the end of the reception year, the children have attained most if not all of the Desirable Learning Outcomes, especially in number. Many in the reception year are showing good progress and indicating possible Level 1 attainment by the end of the year.

121. In the nursery, the children recognise and name correctly shapes such as a square and circle. They count to five and some to ten. When counting the candles on their dough cakes, three children knew that the one with nine had the most and the one with two candles had the least. They checked their answers by counting the candles one by one. The children know that some sand containers hold more than others and that sometimes when things are shared out there are some left over. The reception year children correctly identify shapes and match and sequence every day objects. They recite number rhymes and play number games such as dominoes. The higher attainers 'add on', supply the missing number in a simple sequence and are beginning to solve simple problems using numbers up to 10. A significant number of children can count to 20 with little adult help and a few can count backwards from 10.



122. The quality of teaching and provision is good. In the nursery and reception classes, the teachers are following the National Numeracy Strategy and placing a high focus on number and its use. In class sessions, they keep a good pace and have expectations of the children. Counting activities are made fun and good use is made of resources, such as teddies on a washing line to look at number order. Lesson planning is detailed and support staff are well informed and prepared for leading group work.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

123. The children make at least satisfactory progress in developing their knowledge of the world. By the age of five, the children have attained many of the Desirable Learning Outcomes. A scrutiny of last year's work shows that the children experience a wide range of topics and activities. During the inspection the children celebrated the festival of Diwali.

124. In the nursery, the children develop a sense of time and place through daily routines. They talk about events and what they have done and will do, and celebrate imaginary birthdays in the home corner. When making models with the construction kits, they try different joining pieces and a small number are beginning to incorporate axles in their wheeled vehicles. They taste different foods such as naan bread.

125. The reception class children have a good awareness of the routines of the week and of the layout of the school. They know that maps help people to find their way and that symbols represent real things. They know that Hannukah and Diwali are religious festivals linked to light. They have looked at different sources of light, experimented with torches and looked at shiny things. Two children concentrated hard on feeling for objects hidden in the sand and then explained how they were shiny. They are making good progress in using the computer independently. They click on icons and know how to use a graphics program to draw a Christmas card and make it look like a stained glass window. Most children use scissors safely to cut round objects and to cut off required lengths of paper. They are developing an awareness of how things can be joined by folding, gluing or using paper fasteners, as in their jointed teddy bears.

126. The quality of provision and teaching is good overall but is stronger in the reception classes where the strengths lie in the richness of the topics which are well structured and meaningful to the children. The reception teachers provided a stimulating experience of music, food, clothes and stories to promote the children's awareness of Diwali and to give a flavour of another culture and its traditions. In the nursery, opportunities are missed to develop themes and topics and to use information technology including the computer and tape recorder as part of everyday activities.

### **Physical development**

127. At five, the children have achieved the Desirable Learning Outcomes. They make good progress in controlling their movements, making use of space and developing hand-eye coordination. The nursery children play confidently outdoors with the large toys. Many have made good progress in learning to scoot and to pedal with both feet. They steer and follow the marked tracks sensibly. A small number of children, more often boys, are very confident and able to pedal and steer backwards without bumping into others. Two children kept the seesaw going for a long time without over-balancing or losing momentum. They run, jump and hop safely and are learning other ways to move such as "bunny jumps". They handle small toys and tools with developing skill.

128. In the reception classes, the children walk, run, hop and skip competently. They are beginning to appreciate the meaning of "find a space" and to remember and perform a sequence of movements. When moving to music, they respond to the rhythm and make high and low shapes by bending or stretching their arms and legs.

129. The quality of teaching and provision are good. The nursery children have daily sessions outdoors using the wheeled toys as well as weekly physical education lessons in the school hall. With undressing and dressing, these tend to take up most of the morning or afternoon session but successfully promote development in other areas of learning such as the children's listening skills. Children with special educational needs take part and are assisted in doing what they can. The reception children have physical education lessons, daily playtimes with Key Stage 1 classes and also weekly sessions using the wheeled toys. The teachers make good use of commercial materials to structure lessons and their clear demonstrations of the types of movement needed promote at least satisfactory progress.

### **Creative development**

130. Satisfactory progress is made in creative development and by the age of five, the children have attained national standards. Over the year in the nursery and reception classes, the children experience a wide range of opportunities to paint, use different materials and media, listen to and make music and take part in imaginative role play.

131. The nursery children draw and paint independently. They also learn how to mix paint, how to thin colours with water, and how to compose a picture. They know the names of many percussion instruments and how to play them. Two children kept a steady beat as they walked around together playing the tambourine and drum.

132. The reception year children build on these skills. Their drawings and illustrations for class books show increasing awareness of detail and proportion. They are aware that Vincent van Gogh was a famous artist and have imitated his style and use of colours in painting flowers. They mixed dark and light colours to represent how they felt and in making self-portraits, used a range of materials including wool for hair. In their play in the office or home corner, they take on roles and often use different voices. They know several songs and hymns, sing in tune and distinguish between fast and slow rhythms. They explore tempo and duration well and produce matching rhythms. Pupils use the percussion instruments in a controlled way.

133. The quality of provision and teaching is good. There are special strengths in the music provision in the reception classes as one teacher is the music co-ordinator. She uses her expertise well to introduce musical notation as part of appreciating, composing and performing music. The adults teach the children new skills but also given them time and opportunity to develop their own ideas. However, the children, especially in the nursery, do not have open access to a wide enough range of materials to encourage skills in combining and mixing different media.

## **English, mathematics and science**

### **English**

134. Standards in English are satisfactory at the end of both key stages. There are strengths in reading and spelling at Key Stage 1 where standards are higher than in writing.

135. Standards at Key Stage 1 have risen year on year since the 1995 inspection. In the 1999 national tests, the percentage of Year 2 pupils who reached Level 2, as expected for their age, was well above the national average in reading and broadly in line in writing. Nearly all pupils reached the level expected for their age in reading and one in three pupils reached the higher Level 3 in reading, which was similar to the national average. However, no pupil reached Level 3 in writing. Inspection evidence shows that most pupils are on line to achieve similar standards but there is the potential for Level 3 attainment in writing.

136. In the 1999 end of Key Stage 2 tests, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4, as expected for their age, was broadly in line with the national average. As seen nationally, attainment in reading is higher than in writing. Over half the girls reached Level 5 in reading and one in three in writing. This was well above the national average and their high attainment brought the school's overall results to above the national average. Inspection evidence however, indicates that current standards are not as high, although the majority of the Year 6 pupils are on line to reach Level 4 and possibly reach the school's target of 72 percent Level 4 attainment in 2000.

137. At the end of both key stages, standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory. Many pupils are articulate and converse, question and put across their point of view. However, there is a significant number of pupils of all ages who are less skilled in recounting, explaining or answering questions at length. Most pupils make satisfactory progress and cope well in oral situations in all subjects. They listen attentively and appreciatively to stories. Year 4 pupils listened carefully as their classmates described the qualities of people special to them. In science and design and technology, pupils are encouraged to give sensible and valid suggestions on how others could improve their work. When the teacher took on the role of the squirrel in the class story, Year 2 pupils posed relevant questions to find out more about the character and used the information to respond in character to similar questions when sitting in the "hot seat".

138. Standards in reading are good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. By the end of the reception year, many pupils are already reading independently and by the end of Key Stage 1, they are fluent, accurate readers. When reading aloud they use good expression and phrasing and often interact well with the text, commenting on events and laughing at the humour. Pupils have a good sight vocabulary and a good knowledge of letter patterns which they use to identify unfamiliar words and to guide their spelling. They know about the contents and index pages in information books but are less secure in their reading and comprehension of non-fiction. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils cope well with any text including Shakespeare. Although they have good skills in working out new words, many are less skilled in skimming texts to get the gist, or scanning to find key words and phrases.

139. Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in reading. The high emphasis placed by staff on sharing books and developing pupils' awareness of words and letters is also seen in the word games and books sent home for parents to share with their children. The good quality and the frequency of comments made by teachers and parents in pupils' reading records show the good rate of progress and any difficulties shared. Pupils make good progress in understanding how stories work and how sentences are structured. Year 1 pupils made good progress during the inspection in remembering the sequence of events in "The silver Christmas tree" and who gave which present to whom. Progress is satisfactory overall but slows at Key Stage 2 as the teachers give lower emphasis to teaching reading strategies and helping pupils to interpret the text. Pupils are making good progress in experiencing a range of chapter stories, short stories, poems, leaflets and plays. However, they make slower progress in appreciating more complex word patterns, author style, issues within stories and the use of language to put forward argument and viewpoints. At both key stages, pupils with special educational needs and those receiving additional literacy support are making good progress, especially in word recognition.

140. Standards in writing are satisfactory but many pupils, especially the higher attaining pupils are not doing as well as they could. This is most marked at Key Stage 2 and particularly at lower Key Stage 2. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are writing independently and often using joined handwriting. Although they write at some length and include speech and interesting phrases, the overall standard is lowered by their inconsistent use of appropriate punctuation. Spelling standards are good. Pupils have little difficulty in spelling common words and making sensible attempts at unfamiliar ones. Year 2 pupils' own stories, such as "Ozzie" and "Goodnight", show good use of knowledge from other stories and a developing awareness of how to start a story to attract the reader's interest. Pupils illustrate their work well and know how to use simple word processing to write and present their work for others.

141. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils write accounts and reports competently. They are less effective in using different styles of writing for different purposes and their word processing skills are just satisfactory. Work by Year 6 pupils last year included few examples of narratives or writing which had been redrafted and revised. Not all pupils have a neatly formed handwriting style and although they have a good knowledge of grammar, punctuation and spelling rules, many make mistakes when copying or omit appropriate punctuation.

142. Progress in writing is good initially but then slows and is satisfactory overall at both key stages. Younger pupils get off to an early start in handwriting, spelling and writing stories, accounts and reports. Last year, when writing as the wolf to the three pigs, Year 1 pupils showed not only an awareness of apologetic language but also how to organise a letter. Year 1 pupils are already writing unaided and are well aware of the need for capital letters and full stops to demarcate their sentences. Pupils develop a good knowledge of word patterns and apply this well in spelling. This is partly assisted by the practice of teaching handwriting through letter patterns. Writing develops well at Year 2 but higher attaining pupils' progress is slowed by the lack of development of the use of punctuation, speech and effects such as emboldened print for emphasis. This is also very apparent at Key Stage 2. Pupils make satisfactory progress over the key stage in developing their awareness of grammar and writing style but the rate of progress in lessons is often slow reflecting the often slow pace of teaching and insecurity of teachers' knowledge. Handwriting progress is inconsistent. The inclusion of handwriting as an independent activity in the literacy hour is not helping many pupils as they continue to form and join letters incorrectly.

143. Pupils' attitudes to English are good at both key stages. Pupils enjoy reading and are keen to read to others. They talk about their favourite books and authors and find poems that they like. When the pace slows, a small number of pupils become restless but they usually settle well to their tasks and even when these are mundane, most try their best. Key Stage 1 pupils know the routines of the literacy hour well and organise themselves with little fuss. They concentrate hard and in the plenary, are keen to talk about what they have done. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy their group sessions and look forward to letter games and reading times.

144. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and for pupils with special educational needs. It is satisfactory at Key Stage 2 although there are weaknesses in the teaching of the literacy hour particularly for Year 3 and Year 5 pupils. The literacy co-ordinator's teaching is at least good and sometimes very good. Her enthusiasm, detailed planning and conscientious preparation of support materials act as a good example for others and the Year 2 pupils in her class are enthusiastic about reading and writing. During the inspection, all Key Stage 1 teachers were using the same story as the basis for class reading, sentence and word level work. The story was used well to teach information about story structure, sentence order, speech, verb tenses and spelling patterns. All the teachers identified clear learning objectives for each lesson and changes were made to plans for the next day based on an evaluation of the lesson. During guided reading sessions, notes were taken of pupils' reading strategies and responses. At Key Stage 2, these elements of good practice are less evident. The teachers are not as knowledgeable about English as they need to be to ensure they consistently promote pupils' progress and raise standards.

145. As mentioned in the last inspection, the quality of planning at Key Stage 2 varies and in some cases is superficial. Few teachers identify clear learning objectives for each literacy hour. The guided reading book and carousel of activities for pupils to work at independently is in most cases the same for all pupils regardless of their prior attainment. There is too much copying into books from cards or from the board and very little use of information technology to support either reading or writing progress. Reading, spelling and grammar exercises are given as homework.

146. A weakness at Key Stage 2 is the unsatisfactory assessment and recording of pupils' progress. Although the teachers have agreed that marking is a key assessment procedure, very few use marking to indicate to the pupils what they have done well and what they need to do to improve.

147. Pupils' own records of the books they have read gives a good indication of the number and book types preferred. However, the teachers have no evidence of pupils' strengths and weaknesses in reading or their developing skills in reading fiction and non-fiction. In writing, there is little to record pupils' progress in spelling, handwriting, drafting, word processing and writing in different styles and formats. The portfolio of pupils' writing has not been updated and offers insufficient assistance in helping teachers to attribute an attainment level to pupils' writing.

148. The school meets the statutory requirements of the English curriculum. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the areas for improvement. Although it was identified as an area for development in the last inspection, she has not been able to monitor teachers' planning at Key Stage 2. A strength of provision is the excellent range and number of books in the school. The co-ordinator is rightly "levelling" the books to assist pupils in their choice of reading material.

## **Mathematics**

149. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection in raising the profile of mathematics in the school. Sufficient time is now devoted to teaching the subject. Standards are satisfactory but given pupils' attainment on leaving Key Stage 1, standards could be higher at Key Stage 2.

150. In the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 national tests, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2, as expected for their age, was well above the national average and the average for similar schools. Nearly all pupils reached Level 2 and one in four attained the higher Level 3 which was broadly in line with the national average. Inspection of work by current Year 2 pupils indicates that the vast majority are working at least at the required standard for their age.

151. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 in the end of Key Stage 2 tests in 1999 was similar to the national average and the average for similar schools. This was a marked improvement on the 1998 tests when the results were well below average. The school attributes this partly to the difference between the two cohorts and partly to the rigorous and focused teaching that took place during revision and booster classes. However, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was below the national average. Inspection evidence shows that the standard of work of many of the Year 6 pupils is currently below the expected Level 4 and that very few are working towards the higher Level 5.

152. The introduction of the numeracy hour has increased the focus on mental arithmetic at both key stages. This is having a significant effect on boosting pupils' progress and raising attainment, particularly at Key Stage 1.

153. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils add and subtract to 20 successfully. Most pupils pair numbers to ten and add together three numbers to make twenty. They are aware of odd and even numbers and higher attaining pupils have formed their own rule that all numbers ending in 1,3,5,7 or 9 are odd. They count in fives and tens and have an understanding of place value. They recognise and name the basic two- and three-dimensional shapes. They measure accurately using standard and non-standard units and are beginning to understand the concepts of volume and area. When explaining what they have done or how they arrived at an answer, they use relevant mathematical terms and appropriate strategies such as splitting the tens and units when counting.

154. Standards of attainment are variable in Key Stage 2 reflecting the quality of teaching. Where the teacher is adopting a rigorous approach to oral and mental mathematics, most pupils are making good progress in understanding number relationships.

155. By Year 6, pupils are confident in handling number to 1000 and above. They round numbers to the nearest 100 or ten and recall number and multiplication facts. However, not all are secure in general rules such as an even number coming from the addition of two odd numbers. Pupils classify shapes by their properties and have some understanding of rotational symmetry.

156. Progress in Key Stage 1 is good overall. Pupils make satisfactory progress initially and then progress accelerates for an increasing number of pupils towards the end of the key stage. Progress is satisfactory at Key Stage 2 although it varies within the key stage. Pupils are making good progress in the class of mixed Year 5 and 6 pupils where the teacher is the mathematics coordinator. The good teaching and weekly input of the headteacher at upper Key Stage 2 is having a positive effect on pupils' progress.

157. Year 1 pupils are becoming more confident in counting and adding numbers to twenty. They are beginning to subtract numbers, to identify missing numbers in number sequences and to record their findings using relevant mathematical signs. They solve simple problems and explain how they did it. Pupils in Year 2 respond positively to challenging questions during mental arithmetic sessions and to the consistent high expectations of their work during lessons. Most are making good progress. Year 3 pupils are confident in counting forwards and backwards using digits and multiples from various starting points. They add and subtract numbers quickly and accurately using strategies such as rounding up and down, halving and doubling. Their knowledge and familiarity with numbers reflects their progress and attainment at Key Stage 1. In other Key Stage 2 classes, many pupils' attainment is below that expected for their age. A significant minority have an insecure knowledge of number especially in their ability to multiply or divide. In some classes, there is little rigour and challenge and the pace of learning is slow. On a number of occasions teachers missed the potential of the oral/mental section of the numeracy hour to discuss strategies. Not all the work is planned to meet the needs of individuals and groups. The higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged in many lessons. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress when work is matched to the targets in their individual education plans.

158. Pupils generally show good attitudes. When presented with a challenge, pupils show an improved interest in their work. In brisk lessons, pupils really enjoy their mathematics, are keen to start and show high levels of concentration and perseverance to complete the task. Most pupils work happily alone. When the pace is slow, pupils' work rate drops. Some become restless.

159. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1. It is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 2 but there are strong features in the teaching for the oldest pupils. The quality of teachers' planning for the numeracy hour is inconsistent. At Key Stage 1, it is detailed and follows the guidance of the National Numeracy Strategy but at Key Stage 2, the planning often fails to identify clear learning objectives and the activities do not all promote mathematical understanding. Common strengths in better lessons are thorough organisation, good management of resources and clear objectives which are communicated to the pupils. In a Year 6 lesson, these aspects meant that every pupil made good progress towards understanding the properties of quadrilaterals. A most effective ploy was the teacher's use of an investigation of how New York 'cops' patrol residential blocks.

160. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the National Numeracy Strategy. Appropriate emphasis is given to all aspects of mathematics but mathematical skills are not always developed in other curriculum areas, such as science and history. The co-ordinator is well qualified, has a clear vision for the subject and is aware of the need to monitor and evaluate classroom practice. The school is beginning to analyse test scores to inform future practice. The absence of a whole-school marking policy for mathematics means the quality varies from very good to occasionally unsatisfactory with no guidance to pupils on how to improve.

161. Resources are good, clearly labelled and accessible. Whilst appropriate records of progress are kept at Key Stage 1 there is no system at Key Stage 2 to document pupils' acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding.

## Science

162. Standards are good at Key Stage 1 and in line with the national average at Key Stage 2. Given pupils' good attainment on leaving Key Stage 1, standards could be higher at Key Stage 2.

163. Teacher assessments of Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment in 1999 were above the national average. Nearly all pupils attained Level 2 as expected for their age and one in five attained the higher Level 3. This sustained the good standards of the previous two years and showed a rise in standards from the 1996 inspection.

164. In the 1999 end of Key Stage 2 national tests, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4, as expected for their age, was above both the national average and the average for similar schools. One in three pupils attained the higher Level 5 which was also above the national average. These results showed a marked improvement compared with those of 1998 and with the results in the previous inspection. Taking the previous three years 1996 to 1998, pupils' test results were well below the national average and pupils were almost six months progress behind other pupils nationally. The rise in attainment this year is partly due to difference between the pupil cohorts and mostly due to the revision sessions before the tests rather than to improvements in the science curriculum.

165. Inspection evidence indicates that Year 2 pupils' attainment is above the national average. Pupils make good progress and many are already working at Level 2. Pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 2 and Year 6 pupils' attainment is in line with that expected for their age. Pupils with special educational needs receive effective support and make good progress overall.

166. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have well developed scientific knowledge and skills. They name the parts of the body correctly, are aware of the link between healthy eating and dental care, and know that plants need water, light and nutrients to grow. They carry out simple investigations such as finding out what materials snails will and will not travel across. Eight Year 2 pupils showed a secure understanding of how electrical circuits work and made sensible predictions of outcomes when testing materials for conductivity. They were certain that metal is a good conductor. Pupils record their findings in different forms including Carroll diagrams and report sheets.

167. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have refined their investigative skills. They predict, test and report on the methods used and the results obtained but do not yet have sufficiently well enough developed skills to interpret their results and draw their own conclusions. Pupils have a secure understanding of life processes and living things and physical processes. They know the difference between soluble and insoluble substances and are able to suggest ways such as sieving and filtration to separate them. Higher attaining pupils use their knowledge of evaporation to explain that some changes can be reversed and explain how they intend to test their hypotheses. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of condensation and air pressure, and classify a range of substances and materials by whether they are solid, liquid or gas. Pupils write up their reports using appropriate scientific terms.

168. Progress at Key Stage 1 is enhanced by the good quality of teaching. Pupils talk about what they know and from discussion new aspects are introduced. Year 1 pupils are making good progress in understanding aspects of light. They know that light comes from many sources and that electricity is essential to operate some objects. They are learning to make sensible predictions, test them and write their own reports on outcomes. When finding which colours lit up best in the dark, they predicted, tested and discussed why it might be that gold and silver did not come out well in their test compared with yellow and orange.

169. At Key Stage 2, pupils build on this knowledge and make satisfactory progress in acquiring scientific facts. Year 3 pupils are learning the names of bones and Year 4 pupils the names of teeth. Progress in conducting their own tests and investigations is more variable. Higher attaining Year 4 pupils were aware of the need to all start at the same point when measuring their arms to make it a fair test, but others showed little regard to this in practice. By Year 5, pupils know to control variables and suggested using a calibrated jug to ensure the same amount of water was used in all their tests.

170. Pupils' attitudes to science are good at both key stages. They listen attentively to their teachers, are willing to take an active part in discussions and are prepared to listen to others' contributions. Even the youngest pupils in Key Stage 1 work well when not directly supervised and when older pupils are given the opportunity to carry out tests, they organise themselves sensibly and share resources. Year 5 pupils worked very well in pairs and used good scientific questions such as "Why is this happening?" to discuss how to solve situations. When investigating more difficult scientific problems, many pupils are prepared to sustain their concentration to complete the task. However, pupils' work is often poorly presented.

171. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and there are very good features. Teaching is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 2 with examples of good and very good teaching for pupils in the mixed Year 5/6 class and the Year 6 class. The Key Stage 1 teachers have secure knowledge of science and have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Short-term planning is very detailed with different provision for pupils according to their attainment. Group activities are well managed and worksheets provide helpful formats for pupils to record what they do. The teachers' good questioning techniques help pupils to review what they know and to make connections between information. A Year 1 teacher seamlessly moved the pupils' thinking from sources of light to light at different times of the year to light at different times of the day. The good pace and challenge ensured all pupils made good progress in the lesson. The best teaching at Key Stage 2 echoes these qualities. The teacher's planning sets clear objectives, questioning and review strategies clearly promote progress, and pupils are provided with real opportunities to experiment and develop scientific strategies. However, in other lessons the planning does not always include clear and detailed learning objectives or activities which fully meet the needs of all pupils, particularly the higher attainers. A scrutiny of last year's work showed that, in some classes, all the pupils had done the same work and there was much needless copying from sheets or the board.

172. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the teachers are following the policy and topic based scheme of work. Recent national guidance has been incorporated but is the early stages of being put into practice. Assessment procedures are fully in place at Key Stage 1, where teachers are successfully using national assessment guidelines to monitor pupils' progress. This information, together with that derived from teachers' evaluations of lessons, is used effectively to set targets for individuals and groups of pupils and to inform planning. At Key Stage 2 there is no consistent system to assess and record pupils' on-going progress and teachers are using their own methods. Few lessons are formally evaluated to assess pupils' attainment against the objectives for the session. Although examples of science work are included in pupils' portfolios, they are not annotated or assessed against National Curriculum levels of attainment. There is no school portfolio of assessed science work to guide teachers in assessing and marking pupils' work.

173. The good collection of resources is well organised, accessible and used well. The small amount of staff training to boost teachers' confidence and to develop their planning skills has been effective in promoting investigational work in Key Stage 1 but not in all classes at Key Stage 2.



## Other subjects or courses

### Art

174. Pupils' attainment in art is as expected for their age at both key stages as in the last inspection. Pupils' progress is at least satisfactory and often good in both key stages, but especially at Key Stage 1. Pupils with special educational needs take full part in art and often do as well or better than others.

175. At Key Stage 1, pupils develop a range of skills and techniques in using and combining different materials. They study the work of famous artists and book illustrators. They produce their own chalk pictures of yellow birds in the style of Paul Klee. Having looked carefully at birds' feathers they weave textured patterns on speed looms. A group of Year 1 pupils made good progress in printing their Christmas paper. They drew and etched out their design on a polystyrene tile and then used paint and rollers to print it out. Changes were made as pupils realised how much paint was needed and how colour changes created different overall effects.

176. At Key Stage 2, pupils build on these skills and knowledge particularly in drawing. Progress slows as there is little systematic development of pupils' skills and some work, such as repeating patterns, is very little different in quality or complexity from that seen at Key Stage 1. Pupils apply their skills in paintings, collage and modelling. Year 3 pupils have created a scene from "Charlotte's Web" and Year 6 pupils have made papier-mâché balloons to illustrate "Around the world in 80 days". However, pupils have little opportunity to develop their own ideas or to return to and practise a technique. Year 4 pupils made good progress in using a computer program to create and print their own repeating pattern. Others used water to thin their paint and produce different tones for their painted design. The good observational work seen in the last inspection is not as evident in current or saved work.

177. Pupils' response at both key stages is good. They enjoy art, show interest in and discuss others' work. They remain on task well and are sensible when using equipment such as rollers and scissors. They work well together and offer help and advice to each other when required. Many show pride in their work but Year 1 pupils are also willing to identify how it could be improved.

178. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and occasionally very good. The teachers have high expectations and pupils are given the opportunity and the encouragement to refine their own ideas to ensure the best product. Pupils in one class printing Christmas patterns were challenged by the teacher to think, to do and then to think again about the effect they were creating. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. Teachers' planning identifies what is to be achieved and explanations to pupils are usually clear. However, the quality of teaching support and intervention during group art sessions varies and this affects pupils' progress. Too often, the teachers merely supervise and opportunities are missed to develop pupils' skills.

179. The stated time given to art at Key Stage 2 is in line with national averages. In many classes, art overlaps with design and technology and the art skills and knowledge are not clearly defined in topic planning. Some use is made of art diaries to record examples of pupils' work but this does not provide a clear picture of pupils' progress and skill development. The range and quantity of resources and teaching materials are good but their potential is under-used.

## **Design and technology**

180. Attainment is as expected for pupils' ages and reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Pupils, including those with special needs, make satisfactory progress at both key stages. However, progress is limited at Key Stage 2 by the small amount of time given to the subject and by the relatively few projects that involve pupils in the full design–make-evaluate process.

181. At Key Stage 1, pupils make at least satisfactory progress in understanding the process of designing and making. They look at how things have been made and work on their own ideas. As they discover the limitations of a first draft, they modify their designs. During the inspection, all Key Stage 1 pupils were designing a Christmas card that would incorporate a pivot, lever or similar mechanism. Year 1 pupils looked at commercial cards and came up with a range of interesting adaptations such as a lever to help Father Christmas climb a chimney. They listed what they would need and gave good descriptions of how they would make it. Year 2 pupils produced clear design briefs listing all necessary equipment and materials. In suggesting improvements, they used relevant terms and referred to successful techniques in previous work such as flaps and tabs in their owl cards which involved cutting, folding, overlaying and joining and the pneumatic techniques in their 'pop up' minibeast puppets.

182. At Key Stage 2, the work is part of topics which combine many subjects. Whilst these have been updated, some of the tasks lack challenge for pupils. The designing of papier-mâché balloons by Year 6 pupils is more closely related to art than design and technology. Younger pupils are building on the skills and knowledge acquired at Key Stage 1. Year 3 pupils identified the effective features of familiar board games to include in their own farm game and Year 4 pupils worked on ideas for a leaflet to attract visitors to Tatton Park Farm. Pupils' making skills develop satisfactorily. They use a range of materials, including wood, card and foodstuff, and a variety of tools.

183. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work. Their attitudes are very good and they work hard showing real perseverance. Year 1 pupils re-addressed a design brief many times until they had produced a suitable design for their card. Year 4 pupils co-operated well in giving constructive criticism which helped some to improve their ideas.

184. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. There is a satisfactory mix of teacher instruction and opportunity for pupils to try things for themselves. Staff are clear about what they want the pupils to achieve but occasionally expect too much in the time available. Key Stage 1 staff have devised a useful worksheet to guide pupils as they record what they intend to do. In the better lessons, the teacher gives on-going feedback to the pupils and encourages them to improve their work.

185. The new subject leader is enthusiastic and has produced a detailed development plan to ensure greater consistency in practice. She is also developing a very detailed scheme of work based around nationally provided materials.

## **Geography**

186. Pupils' attainment at Key Stage 2 is as expected for their age. Although no lessons were observed at Key Stage 1, a scrutiny of work in books, displayed work and discussions with pupils indicate that standards are higher than expected for pupils' ages. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection when standards in both key stages were judged to be broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2. Throughout both key stages, pupils with special educational needs make good progress due to the good quality of support given.

187. At Key Stage 1 pupils develop an understanding of place, location and how these affect lifestyles. They develop a good awareness of the purpose of maps, how to read a simple key and how to locate features using two-figure co-ordinates. They know ways to record the weather and Year 2 pupils can explain typical weather in the four seasons of a temperate climate. They talk confidently about the effects of weather on trees and plants and know how the weather affects the types of clothes people wear.

188. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a secure understanding of different climates. For example, Year 6 pupils describe accurately the main weather features of polar, temperate, desert and tropical areas of the world. They demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of how climate affects the way people live but are less secure in using a range of scales to describe different types of weather and climate. Younger pupils in the key stage have studied farming in Southport; they can classify different types of cereals and vegetables and know why the area is good for growing crops. Pupils make satisfactory progress in using mapping skills and in finding information to answer their own questions about geographical phenomena such as volcanoes.

189. In the Key Stage 2 lessons observed, pupils listened attentively and many were keen to share their ideas and opinions and to take part in discussion. They watch videos carefully and work collaboratively.

190. A scrutiny of Key Stage 1 teachers' planning and the level of pupils' knowledge and understanding by Year 2 indicate that teaching is at least satisfactory. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. The teachers provide appropriate resources and give the pupils opportunities to discuss what they know and exchange ideas and opinions. However, the level of challenge, particularly for higher attaining pupils, is not always set high enough. When this happens, pupils coast through lessons and make insufficient progress.

191. Key Stage 1 teachers use the topic planning framework well to provide a stimulating programme of learning. This planning framework is not used as rigorously or creatively at Key Stage 2 and there is little evidence of work at lower Key Stage 2. Lesson planning lacks the detail required to ensure that all pupils make good progress. Pupils' attainment and progress are carefully monitored throughout Key Stage 1 but teachers at Key Stage 2 have yet to agree a system that will provide an evaluative record of pupils' attainment and progress.

192. Resources are of a good quality and well organised. Field trips to such places as Tatton Home Farm and the local coastal environment make a good contribution to the pupils' understanding of some of the issues that affect the environment and the way people live.

## **History**

193. Pupils make good progress at Key Stage 1 and their attainment is higher than expected for their age. At Key Stage 2, progress is satisfactory and attainment is as expected for pupils' ages. This sustains the judgement of good standards made in the previous inspection in respect of Key Stage 1, but indicates a fall at Key Stage 2. Pupils' skills in investigating and drawing information from historical sources are satisfactory rather than "very good". Pupils with special needs in both key stages make good progress largely due to the good quality support from assistants.

194. Year 1 pupils are developing a satisfactory understanding of how people's lives have changed since Victorian times. Through looking at photographs and book illustrations and comparing it with their own experience, they know that Christmas trees were decorated differently from those of today and the Victorians used candles as electricity was not available. They are developing an appropriate understanding of chronology through looking at the daily sequence of events and also through work on story structure. By Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of times past. They know that Guy Fawkes lived about four hundred years ago. They recount the main events of the Gunpowder Plot and explain simply why it took place and what the consequences were.

195. At Key Stage 2, pupils develop skills in conducting their own research. The majority of pupils can extract and synthesise information using resources such as encyclopaedias and CD ROMs but lower attaining pupils make slow progress in this as they lack the skills to locate and extract key information. Although Year 5 pupils have compiled their own summaries of the lives of famous explorers, progress is slower in comparing and contrasting findings and questioning facts and sources. Pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of civilizations and events in the past and how they have influenced life today. They know about aspects of the day-to-day lives of the Ancient Egyptians, Vikings and people in Tudor times as well as in Britain during World War 2.

196. Pupils are interested in the subject. They work well in groups and pairs and share resources sensibly. When questioned about their work, most are confident to explain what they know or what they have found out. Year 6 pupils handled nautical artefacts carefully and enjoyed looking at them and talking about their possible provenance.

197. It was possible to see only one lesson in Key Stage 1 and therefore an overall judgement on teaching cannot be made. Good quality planning throughout the key stage and the level of pupils' knowledge and understanding by the end of the key stage indicate that good provision is made for pupils to make progress. The teachers plan activities carefully to match the needs of pupils; they evaluate lessons on a regular basis; meticulously assess the progress of individual pupils and use this information well to inform further planning. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. Opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their knowledge of the past and their skills in historical enquiry but teachers' expectations are not high enough of what pupils can achieve. Planning does not consistently identify what pupils are to learn from the activity and, too often all pupils are expected to do the same irrespective of their prior attainment. As a result, some lower attaining pupils struggle with their work and higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Many teachers use open-ended questions well to promote pupils' suggestions and interpretations and also to check pupils' knowledge and understanding.

198. The co-ordinator is new to the role and was absent during the inspection. She monitors teachers' planning but has yet to monitor the quality of provision and standards. Resources for the subject are well managed and are of good quality.

## **Information technology**

199. Pupils' attainment at the end of both key stages is in line with national expectations as in the last inspection. The school is using National Curriculum guidelines throughout the school and pupils' skills are sufficiently well developed to cope with the work recommended for each year group. Many pupils have computers at home and are adept in using the keyboard and mouse to roam through programs and CD ROMs.

200. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils know how to operate tape recorders and to use headphones attached to the computer. They use the mouse to click on and drag icons and words on the screen. They use the direction keys on the keyboard to make choices in word and number games and type in their own writing. When word processing, pupils know the correct function keys to use punctuation and to correct their work. They delete and insert letters competently and create their graphics to accompany their work.

201. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils search databases and compile their own of information linked to their topics. They record, save and edit their own files. They know how to create spreadsheets and how to record and use data. Year 6 pupils used graphics, different fonts, print sizes and spacing techniques to create their own posters about race events. When explaining what they have done, pupils use appropriate terms and show a good understanding of computer functions and processes. In music and assemblies, pupils use sound equipment competently and older pupils set up the overhead projector correctly.

202. During both key stages pupils make satisfactory progress. At Key Stage 2, however, there is some unevenness in progress at lower Key Stage 2 as there is an over-reliance on familiar programs. At Key Stage 1, pupils are learning basic keyboard skills and the use of the mouse. They begin to write simple sentences to label computer-generated pictures of familiar stories, and word process their own reports following the visit of a barn owl to school. They also make sound progress in using a graphics program to create pictures in the style of Mondrian. At Key Stage 2, pupils develop and refine these skills. During the inspection, Year 5 pupils made good progress in understanding not only the elements of a spreadsheet but also in developing the skill of putting data into the rows and columns. Year 6 pupils also made good progress in learning how to import graphics and rotate and manipulate shapes on screen before creating their own designs by using the "tile" and "flip" functions to make a repeating pattern.

203. Pupils who attend the computer club are using and extending their skills in creating the different sections of a school newspaper. This is helping them to apply knowledge and skills in word processing and aspects of desktop publishing, including the importing of graphics and scanned material. Before publishing, pupils use print preview to check the effect and use of different fonts and colours and edit their work as necessary. More than one hundred pupils want to join the computer club so pupils have to take turns.

204. At both key stages, pupils respond well to the subject and usually work with interest, concentration and enjoyment. They are supportive of each other and give help to one another when needed. Younger pupils are confident and happy to work independently or in pairs. They try things out and many show good concentration and a willingness to persevere. Key Stage 2 pupils look forward to the sessions using the bank of computers. They are keen to use the newer computers with CD ROM facilities and more advanced software. Many are pleased with their achievements even when the older machines cause them problems. When working in pairs, pupils often tutor each other and some make good progress because of this. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and good progress when supported by others. During the inspection, the equipment for individual pupils with special needs was little used.

205. No direct teaching was observed at Key Stage 1 and it is not possible to form a judgement about the quality of teaching. When staff assist pupils working on the computers, their comments and instructions are effective in helping pupils to progress. The teachers are keeping records of pupils' use of equipment and their skill development. At Key Stage 2, the teaching is satisfactory overall and good in many sessions where the teacher works with a small group. On these occasions, individuals receive tuition as needed. Teachers' planning identifies the procedures and processes to be undertaken in the sessions and emphasis is given to the use of appropriate terms. Pupils are well managed and teachers' good relationships with pupils often lead to effective two-way discussions. The recording and assessment of pupils' progress and skill development is inconsistent. Although this has been developed since the last inspection, Key Stage 2 teachers are not using assessment information to plan the pupils' learning.

206. The enthusiastic co-ordinator has recently taken over responsibility and has worked hard and successfully to develop the subject. Her role is under-developed as there are no accepted procedures to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision and teaching across the school. The subject action plan identifies relevant areas of need and steps to be taken.

207. Although the school has a good number of computers overall, many are old and lack up-to-date software. This limits pupils' progress especially at Key Stage 2. Not all teachers are familiar with all the available software and the curriculum is narrowed for younger Key Stage 2 by the use of a limited number of programs. Tasks are well integrated with current topics. The timetabled use of the computers at Key Stage 2 ensures equitable access to the computers and the teaching of new skills, but there are many times when the computers are not in use. This is a particular concern in the mornings when few pupils use the computer as part of their literacy or numeracy experiences. The school is not linked to the Internet and lags behind in the development of the range of information technology facilities available to the pupils.

## Music

208. As noted in the last inspection, music is a strength of the school. Standards are good and pupils experience a rich musical curriculum. Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment is at least satisfactory for their age. At Key Stage 2, many pupils are achieving standards higher than expected for their age. Progress at both key stages is good. Pupils with special educational needs take full part and often achieve as well as others. A particular strength is the performing and composing of music which is well developed at both key stages.

209. At Key Stage 1, pupils learn many songs and sing unaccompanied as well as to the piano. Most sing in tune, with good expression and diction. They learn to recognise the sound and appearance of different tuned and untuned instruments and learn how to play them to create a range of sounds and effects. Pupils begin to write and read notation representing rhythm patterns, for example, names and words. Pupils also begin to recognise and identify timbre and texture in music. By the end of the key stage, they have good musical knowledge. Pupils develop a good ability to listen to and appraise music including their own performances. Those pupils who play the recorder learn to play notes and tunes correctly with appropriate fingering and breathing.

210. At Key Stage 2, pupils build on the skills acquired at Key Stage 1. Pupils develop an awareness of different forms of music and songs, such as lullabies, and learn to sustain their part as they sing in two and four parts. Their singing is well controlled. They work in groups to revise and develop their compositions showing their musical knowledge and competence in the handling and playing of instruments, often using their sounds in imaginative ways. Year 6 pupils discussed the style and form of their own work using relevant musical terms including ostinato, drone and dynamics. They re-worked their compositions to create their own musical score to accompany a poem from their current topic about "The great balloon race". Pupils also develop their knowledge of different composers and musical styles from different periods and places.

211. Pupils respond well in lessons. They work at a good pace, are interested and concentrate well. They enjoy playing the wide variety of instruments available. They work well in groups and because they have a very good grounding in music they use appropriate terms spontaneously and many show enthusiasm in listening to and appraising music. Pupils willingly promote ideas, listen to and respect those of others.

212. Teaching is good at both key stages and promotes pupils' good progress in lessons and over time. The Local Education Authority specialist music teacher takes a number of lessons at Key Stage 2. Her teaching not only promotes well pupils' musical skills but also provides good quality professional in-service training for class teachers who support her in lessons and then teach a follow-on lesson later in the week. The specialist teacher and the music co-ordinator have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and set a good pace in lessons which often cover much ground in listening, appraising, composing and performing. A commercial scheme is used well to support some lesson planning which is thorough and well linked to current themes. Teachers give good explanations and ask questions that make the pupils think. The teachers' efficient management of groups has a positive impact on the quality of the pupils' work. The teachers' own expertise in playing and singing is used well to demonstrate and model techniques and musical interpretation.

213. The detailed scheme of work links into each of topic studied. This thorough scheme provides good planning and teaching support as it addresses all aspects of the musical ethos and aims. It shows music in its widest context of knowledge and skills alongside creative and aesthetic development. The co-ordinator has organised the curriculum well and has a clear action plan, but has few opportunities to develop her role in monitoring and evaluating the overall quality of provision. The range and number of musical resources are good at both key stages. Resources for pupils with special needs have not yet arrived. The music room is small and constrains the development of some activities.

214. Music contributes highly to pupils' personal, social, spiritual and cultural development. Pupils' musical experience is much enriched by the good number of additional activities throughout the week. The co-ordinator leads most of these but several other members of staff are also involved, particularly in teaching pupils to play the recorder. The Key Stage 1 recorder group and Key Stage 2 recorder ensemble each have more than 20 members. The orchestra and key stage choirs have similar numbers but are attracting more. Pupils volunteer for these groups and practice at home. The pupils play at a high standard. From an early age, pupils develop the skills of understanding musical notation, reading music by sight, playing in time and rhythm, and playing in parts. The very good quality of the Key Stage 2 recorder ensemble, which has pupils playing, descant, treble, tenor and bass recorders, is rarely seen in primary schools. The choirs and recorder groups are often invited to perform outside school. During the inspection pupils were rehearsing for a weekend performance at Speke Hall and the Key Stage 2 choir took part in the schools' performance in Liverpool Anglican Cathedral. Pupils' work with a composer has been published.

## **Physical education**

215. Despite limitations imposed by the building and not having a field of its own, the school offers a broad physical education curriculum including gymnastics, games, dance and swimming. Pupils make good progress in the development of skills at both key stages and standards are higher than expected for pupils' ages. The previous inspection found the higher attaining pupils to be underachieving. This is no longer the case. Standards have improved and much is due to the introduction of two national sports schemes that ensure good coverage of all aspects. Pupils also have the opportunity to take part in extra-curricular sports including football and netball. By the time they leave, most Year 6 pupils are confident swimmers who swim at least 25 metres.

216. Key Stage 1 pupils are confident in their movements and have good control and coordination. They use space well to skip, leap and jump without colliding with others or over-balancing. In dance lessons they make at least satisfactory progress in moving rhythmically to music and interpreting themes imaginatively. Year 2 pupils develop a good understanding of sequences and confidently add new movements to those learnt previously. Pupils demonstrate good skills involving take-off, jumping and landing.

217. Key Stage 2 pupils build on and refine these skills. They develop competence and discipline in the way they handle equipment and show good control in their movements. Gymnastics skills are well developed. Year 6 pupils practise, improve and refine their performance by increasing muscle tension to execute well controlled jumps and stable landings. Year 3 pupils made good progress in one lesson as they practised and improved their skills in controlling and dribbling balls using a hockey stick. Pupils develop well the skills of evaluating their own progress and that of others.

218. There is a good response from pupils to all physical education activities. They are well motivated, listen attentively, respond promptly to cues from the teacher and sustain their concentration. They understand the value of teamwork. Year 6 pupils gave reasoned judgements about the quality of others' work and incorporated ideas from others in their own work.

219. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. This is a clear improvement from the last inspection when there was unsatisfactory teaching. At both key stages there are examples of very good teaching. Teachers are enthusiastic and well organised. Where teaching is very good, the teacher's expectations are high and both teacher and pupil demonstration are used well to highlight points and to increase the level of challenge. A Year 2 teacher kept the lesson fast moving and her clear explanations and points to improve ensured the pupils made very noticeable progress in creating and performing a sequence of jumps. All teachers use effective warm-up and cool-down exercises and talk about the reasons for them. Games lessons are brisk, well planned and have a clear focus on physical activity and improvement in performance. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and take as full a part as they can.

220. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and well informed about recent developments in the subject. A clear framework for physical education has been developed to indicate how each aspect is to be covered during the year and the co-ordinator has a detailed subject development plan. Resources are good. The playground, used for outdoor games, is uneven and potentially hazardous in places.

## **Religious education**

221. At the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. This sustains the standards noted in the last inspection.

222. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have an appropriate knowledge of major Christian events such as Christmas. They recall elements of the story of the life of Buddha and know that the lighted candle is an important symbol of happiness in the Buddhist faith.

223. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are familiar with a range of stories from the Old and New Testaments, such as Moses, Jonah and The Good Samaritan. They know the main elements of the Christmas story and its significance for Christians. Year 6 pupils recognise some important features of a Christian church such as the altar, font and lectern and explain their use and significance.

224. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress at both key stages. At Key Stage 1, pupils develop a growing awareness of aspects of belief of major world faiths including Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism. At Key Stage 2, pupils build on this knowledge and reflect on its relationship and significance for their own lives. They make good progress when they are given time to consider the implications of information. Having considered what made Jesus a special person, Year 3 and 4 pupils discussed the qualities of people who were special to them.

225. The response of pupils at both key stages is never less than satisfactory and sometimes good. Pupils listen to their teachers attentively and volunteer comments freely. Most pupils take a full part in classroom discussions and settle quickly and quietly to the tasks set. They listen patiently and sympathetically to the ideas of other class members.

226. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1. Lessons are well prepared and thought is given to making the content interesting. The teacher's placing of pupils in a circle with a lighted candle at the centre created a positive atmosphere for Year 1 and 2 pupils to discuss the meaning of "to meditate". At Key Stage 2 teaching is satisfactory overall, but ranges from good to unsatisfactory. It is good when the teacher is well organised and is successful in creating a calm, encouraging atmosphere where pupils share their personal ideas comfortably with others. Teaching is unsatisfactory when the teacher has no clear objective for the lesson and pupils merely repeat what they know. A scrutiny of last year's work showed over-reliance on commercial worksheets and little development of more imaginative ways to record pupils' knowledge and views.

227. The programme of study meets the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. However, the school is not using a consistent system of assessment procedures to monitor pupils' progress. The subject is well resourced with books, artefacts and videos on the major faiths chosen for study. The school has close connections with the local clergy, two of whom led assemblies on two different days during the inspection. The local Church of England church is visited by various classes as part of their work in religious education and is used at certain times of the year, for example, Christmas performances.



## **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **Summary of inspection evidence**

The inspection was carried out by a team of six inspectors, including a lay inspector. Three inspectors were in school for four and a half days, one for three and a half and another for two and a half days giving an inspection of 24 days. During the days in school, the team observed 99 lessons or parts of lessons accounting for 73 hours. Additional hours were spent in other inspection activities.

The inspectors heard 34 pupils read and talked to many pupils, especially Year 6 pupils, about their work this year and in previous years. A range of assemblies, registrations and classroom routines were observed as well as playtimes and lunchtime activities. Pupils were observed entering and leaving school. The current work of several pupils from each year group was examined along with work from 1998/9, photographic and tape-recorded evidence of work in previous terms and work on display around the school. Inspectors also looked at class books, school reports, assessment records, pupils' records of achievement and teachers' planning files. The inspectors interviewed all subject and aspect co-ordinators, the special educational needs co-ordinator, the nursery teacher, the Early Years co-ordinator and the Key Stage 1 and 2 co-ordinators. Meetings were also held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, the full Governing Body and the school secretary.

School documentation was scrutinised including the school development plan, the special needs register, individual education plans, attendance records, curriculum planning from this and previous terms, examination results, minutes from meetings of the Governing Body and school management teams and budgetary information.

Parents' views were received at a meeting prior to the inspection attended by 14 parents. The inspectors also considered the information from 75 questionnaires returned and the additional comments on 13 of them.

## Data and indicators

### PUPIL DATA

|              | Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent) | Number of pupils with statements of SEN | Number of pupils on schools' register of SEN | Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals |
|--------------|---|---|--|---|
| YR - Y6      | 336   | 9                                       | 80   | 39  |
| Nursery Unit | 29.5  | 2                                       | 2  | n/a   |

### TEACHERS AND CLASSES

#### Qualified teachers (YR - Y6)

|   |      |
|---|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent) | 15.4 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher                    | 21.8 |

#### Education support staff (YR - Y6)

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 13  |
| Total aggregate hours worked each week  | 211 |

#### Qualified teachers (Nursery classes)

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent) | 1  |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher                    | 30 |

#### Education support staff (Nursery classes)

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Total number of education support staff | 4  |
| Total aggregate hours worked each week  | 70 |

|                     |    |
|---------------------|----|
| Average class size: | 30 |
|---------------------|----|

### FINANCIAL DATA

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| Financial year:                            | 1998/9  |
|  | £       |
| Total Income                               | 606,755 |
| Total Expenditure                          | 604,952 |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 1,596   |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 37,761  |
| Balance carried forward to next year       | 39,564  |

## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

336

Number of questionnaires returned:

74

### Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

|   | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school           | 43             | 51    | 3       | 3        | 0                 |
| I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren) | 59             | 36    | 1       | 3        | 0                 |
| The school handles complaints from parents well   | 30             | 36    | 24      | 7        | 3                 |
| The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught                                     | 31             | 58    | 7       | 3        | 1                 |
| The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress                                | 31             | 53    | 8       | 8        | 0                 |
| The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work                             | 45             | 47    | 5       | 1        | 1                 |
| The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons            | 50             | 36    | 12      | 1        | 0                 |
| I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home                   | 38             | 41    | 9       | 12       | 0                 |
| The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)                       | 50             | 39    | 8       | 1        | 1                 |
| The school achieves high standards of good behaviour  | 50             | 43    | 5       | 1        | 0                 |
| My child(ren) like(s) school  | 59             | 36    | 1       | 1        | 1                 |