

INSPECTION REPORT

Davenhill Primary School,

Aintree,

Sefton.

Unique Reference Number : 104868

Inspection Number: 181918

Headteacher : Mr M. A. Jones

Reporting inspector : J.P.Sudworth

2461

Dates of inspection : September 27th- October 1st, 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706739

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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

School address : Aintree Lane,
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Telephone number : 0151 526 1162

Appropriate authority : Governing Body

Name of chair of governors : Mr A. Cassie

Information about the inspection team

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
J.P.Sudworth Registered inspector	History Geography	Characteristics of the school Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management
M. Bowers	Science	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources Provision for pupils with special educational needs
L. Brock Lay inspector		Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community
P. Martin	Mathematics Physical education	Assessment The efficiency of the school
L. Spooner	English	Equal opportunities The curriculum
J. Sweeney	Art Design and technology Information technology	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
J.M. Watkins	Under fives Religious education Music	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics and standards by the age of eleven in these subjects are above average.
- There is a very good climate for learning in the school.
- Very good account is taken of pupils' individual needs.
- The overall quality of teaching is good.
- Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and physically challenged pupils play a full part in the life of the school.
- Provision for pupils' social development is very good.
- The headteacher and senior staff provide effective leadership.

WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS WEAKNESSES

- Standards of performance in music are below those found in most schools.
- Assessment is not as clear in other subjects as it is in English, mathematics and science.
- Progress in speaking skills is not as well developed as other English skills.
- The most able under-fives are not challenged often enough to do the best they can.
- There are not enough disabled toilets.
- The school's policy for ensuring registers are readily available is not followed consistently.

The school has many good features. Measures to address the few shortcomings will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

Overall progress since the last inspection has been good. Standards in English mathematics, science, information technology and religious education are now higher than they were and there is more challenge for the more able in the oldest classes. Resources for information technology have recently been increased considerably. There was not enough evidence to judge the degree of improvement in design and technology.

Curriculum planning has been strengthened significantly and account is usually taken of the different abilities of pupils, including those with special needs and the more able. Assessment procedures are now clear and thorough in English, mathematics and science. Assessment is not yet consistently effective in other subjects and the school has drawn up plans to improve this.

The effective leadership given by the headteacher and senior staff, the commitment of the staff and governors, clear aims and a supportive atmosphere for development, all ensure that the school is well placed to make further improvements.

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	
			<i>well above average</i>	<i>A</i>
			<i>above average</i>	<i>B</i>
			<i>average</i>	<i>C</i>
			<i>below average</i>	<i>D</i>
			<i>well below average</i>	<i>E</i>
English	B	B		
Mathematics	B	B		
Science	C	C		

These results reflect good progress during Key Stage 2 [juniors] from the standards these same pupils achieved in the tests when they were seven. This good progress was also observed in English and mathematics during the inspection. Attainment in these two subjects by eleven is above average. In science progress is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 2 and good for the oldest pupils. Standards in science are in line with national expectations by the time pupils leave.

When children first come into school, the range of ability is broadly average. They make good progress in personal and social development. Their progress in the other areas of learning is satisfactory. Standards by the age of five are good in personal development and those expected for the age group in all the areas of learning.

In the 1999 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds the proportions attaining the expected level in reading and in writing were in line both with the national average and with similar schools and all the children achieved at least the expected level in mathematics. In Key Stage 1 [infants] good progress is being made in English and mathematics. The proportion reaching the expected level in these subjects by the age of seven is above average. In science progress is satisfactory overall and children meet the expected standards by the age of seven,

Progress is satisfactory in information technology overall in both key stages and good for the oldest pupils. Pupils are on target to meet the expected standards at seven and eleven. In religious education progress is satisfactory through the school and attainment meets the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus. Standards of musical performance are below those found in most schools. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards in design and technology. Progress is satisfactory in other subjects in both key stages and standards at seven and eleven are similar to those found in most schools.

Physically challenged pupils make very good progress and other pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

QUALITY OF TEACHING

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

98% of all the teaching seen was at least satisfactory. Half the lessons observed in Key Stages 1 and 2 and two-thirds of the lessons seen with the under-fives were good or very good. Teachers have worked very hard to prepare for the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy and this was reflected in the good quality of teaching observed in English and mathematics.

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

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Most pupils behave well in lessons and around school.
Attendance	Close to the national average. There are very few unauthorised absences.
Ethos	The ethos is very good. Relationships and attitudes are good. Pupils are encouraged to work to the best of their ability.
Leadership and management	The school is managed effectively. The headteacher provides good leadership and is well supported by the senior staff.
Curriculum	The curriculum meets national requirements and teaching programmes are thoroughly planned. Assessment for English and mathematics is very effective and it is good in science but there is not an established pattern of assessment in other subjects.
Pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall and very good for the physically challenged pupils.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Social development is very good. Spiritual, moral and cultural development is good.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	The numbers of teachers and support staff are above average. The resources for teaching and learning are good. The accommodation provides ample facilities to deliver the National Curriculum.
Value for money	The finances are managed efficiently. Most pupils make good progress. The school gives good value for money.

** 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">• The school makes parents feel welcome and encourages them to get involved in its work.• It is easy to approach the school with questions or problems.• Children make good progress.• The standards of behaviour are good.• Most children like school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some parents feel they do not have enough information about what is taught.• A few think there is too little homework and a small number believe there is too much homework.• There are inadequate disabled toilet facilities.• A few parents have found it difficult to find out about school policies.

The inspectors found a very positive working atmosphere in the school and agree that the behaviour of most pupils is good. Good progress is being made in English and mathematics in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and in science by the oldest pupils.

The school has held meetings for parents about literacy and health education. School newsletters are informative. However, not all parents are aware of the topics to be taught in their children's classes.

The inspectors found satisfactory arrangements for homework in both key stages.

There are not enough disabled toilets. Additional toilets were to be installed during the summer holidays but the work has been delayed.

All policies are available in the school office.

Key issues for action

In order to improve quality of education still further, the school should:

a) build on the very good assessment strategies in English and mathematics by introducing, as planned:

- ◆ a more consistent approach to setting learning targets in other subjects;
- ◆ clear, but manageable, procedures for assessing pupils' progress towards them;

[see paragraphs 43, 53, 159, 164, 178, 185 and 191 in the main report]

b) improve the quality of pupils' speaking skills by:

- ◆ increasing the range of opportunities for pupils to explain ideas in greater depth;
- ◆ challenging pupils to use a greater range of vocabulary and expression;
- ◆ sharing more widely the good practice found in a few classes;

[see paragraphs 11, 41, 114 and 118 in the main report]

b) ensure that the most able under-fives work more frequently at a high level by:

- ◆ identifying those who need further challenge;
- ◆ planning extension activities more precisely;

[see paragraphs 40, 45 and 109 in the main report]

b) raise standards in music by:

- ◆ increasing opportunities for all pupils to develop appropriate performing and composing skills;
- ◆ improving teachers' confidence and competence in music;

[see paragraphs 24, 36, 88, 173, 175 and 177 in the main report]

e) ensure that the school's procedures for making registers readily available are followed consistently;

[see paragraph 70 in the main report]

f) increase, as planned, the disabled toilet facilities.

[see paragraph 93 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:

- ◆ incorporate more precise targets and success criteria into school development planning so that the progress can be monitored more easily.

[see paragraph 83 in the main report]

Introduction

Characteristics of the school

1. The school is a very large county primary school catering for boys and girls in the 3-11 age group. It is situated in Aintree Village, a well established residential community some seven miles from the centre of Liverpool. In the area around the school the majority of the population lives in owner-occupied, semi-detached houses, though a minority of the dwellings are owned by the Housing Corporation. Almost a third of the pupils come from beyond the immediate area of the school, predominantly from Netherton, Liverpool and Knowsley, areas with significant levels of deprivation. The proportion of adults in the area with higher education is below the national average. A below average 9.6% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The ability on entry, indicated by the Local Education Authority baseline assessment, is broadly average.
2. The school is much bigger than average with 488 full-time pupils. At the time of the inspection the Reception classes both contained a single age group. The remainder of the school is divided into phases – Key Stage 1, lower Key Stage 2 and upper Key Stage 2 – and there are four single-age classes and one mixed age class within each phase. The school has a Nursery, which 60 children attend for either the morning or afternoon session. Children come into Nursery in September at the age of three and transfer the following September into Reception as four-year-olds on a full-time basis. Most of the children in the current Reception classes have had school nursery experience.
3. The school is an area school for pupils with physical disabilities and there are 11 pupils currently who have special physical needs. There are 124 pupils in the main school [25%] on the register of special educational needs, which is above average. There are 11 pupils in the main school and two in the Nursery with statements of special educational needs. This is an above average proportion.
4. There are only five pupils who are not white and of these four come from homes where English is not the first language. This very low percentage reflects the low ethnic minority representation in the catchment area of the school.
5. The school aims to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of each child and to prepare children for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. It seeks to provide each child with a broad and balanced curriculum which is relevant to his or her particular needs. It is the school's intention that at the end of a child's primary education the child will be a happy confident learner, fulfilling his or her potential, being able to apply initiatives to everyday circumstances and having respect for self and others.
6. In the School Development Plan literacy, numeracy and information technology are continuing priorities with the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, the National Mathematics Strategy and the National Grid for Learning. Other priorities are science, religious education and collective worship, personal, social and health education and working towards the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark.

Key indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998/9	35 (37)	35 (31)	70 (68)

National Curriculum Test Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	30 (31)	30 (32)	35 (34)
	Girls	30 (28)	31 (27)	35 (28)
	Total	60 (59)	61 (59)	70 (62)
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	86% (86%)	87% (86%)	100% (91%)
	National	85% (80%)	86% (81%)	90% (84%)
Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	30 (32)	32 (33)	34 (35)
	Girls	31 (27)	33 (27)	33 (27)
	Total	61 (59)	65 (60)	67 (62)
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	87% (87%)	93% (88%)	96% (91%)
	National	n/a (80%)	n/a (81%)	n/a (84%)

Attainment at Key Stage 2¹

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998/9	35 (33)	39 (35)	74 (68)

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	31 (23)	30 (17)	33 (18)
	Girls	32 (32)	28 (19)	31 (20)
	Total	63 (55)	58 (36)	64 (38)
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	85% (81%)	78% (53%)	86% (56%)
	National	73% (65%)	72% (59%)	83% (69%)
Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	18 (17)	27 (19)	26 (24)
	Girls	24 (29)	23 (28)	22 (26)
	Total	42 (46)	50 (47)	48 (50)
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	56% (68%)	67% (69%)	64% (73%)
	National	n/a (65%)	n/a (65%)	n/a (72%)

¹ 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 Absence	School 1998/9	94%
	National comparative data	93.8%
Unauthorised Absence	School 1998/9	0.1%
	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	13%
Satisfactory or better	98%
Less than satisfactory	2%

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

Attainment and progress

7. The range of ability on entry is broadly average. Children make good progress in personal and social education, reaching levels of confidence, concentration and co-operation by age five that are often above those expected for the age group. Satisfactory progress is made in each of the other five areas of learning and by the age of five most children achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes recommended for the age group. Children with special needs make good progress but more able under-fives are not challenged enough to achieve as highly as they might.

8. The percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 and above in the 1999 English tests for eleven-year-olds was well above the national average. The percentage attaining Level 5 was close to the national average. The overall English results in 1999 were above both the national average and the average for schools in similar areas. These results represent good progress from the test results the same children achieved at age seven. Results over the three years 1996 to 1998 have consistently been above the national average.

9. In the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 tests in both reading and in writing the percentages reaching Level 2 and the percentages attaining Level 3 were in line with the national average. Compared with schools in similar areas the proportions reaching the expected level in reading and in writing were average, the percentage achieving the higher level in reading was just below average and an average proportion reached a Level 3 in writing.

10. Inspection evidence indicates that most are currently making good progress in listening, reading and writing during both key stages and the percentages of pupils attaining the expected standards in these aspects by the ages of seven and eleven are above the national average. Standards in speaking and handwriting are broadly in line with the national expectation by the end of both key stages and reflect satisfactory progress.

11. By the age of seven the large majority listen carefully to explanations and instructions and by the age of eleven they show an understanding of the main points in a discussion. Most talk confidently when describing what they are doing or what is happening but by seven only a minority of children are able to use language at a greater depth, for example, to explain cause and effect during science investigations or why characters in a story behave in a certain way. By the age of eleven pupils are not sufficiently skilled in expressing opinions about more complex issues or questioning others' ideas and opinions.

12. The large majority read accurately, fluently and demonstrate a good understanding both of stories and factual text by the age of seven. Overall attainment in reading is above average by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils read a range of fiction and non-fiction books confidently. They demonstrate a good understanding of significant themes, characters and events. They know how and where to find information in the library and make good use of it.

13. Most seven-year-olds are developing good writing skills, using a variety of forms including story and descriptive writing. The more able demonstrate good levels of imagination, expression and accuracy. By the end of Key Stage 2 attainment in writing is above average. Written work is often lively and thoughtful with interesting and expressive vocabulary and good appreciation of spelling, grammar and punctuation. The large majority of pupils present their work in a joined, clear and fluent handwriting style.

14. Pupils have good opportunities across the curriculum to read for information and to write in a variety of forms including factual reports and letters. This contributes significantly to the good progress made in English skills.

15. The 1999 results in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 were very high when compared both with all schools nationally and with similar schools. All the seven-year-olds in the school attained at least the expected level in mathematics and an average number reached the higher Level 3. In the same year the results for eleven-year-olds were above both the national average and the average of similar schools in the proportions of pupils at Level 4 and at Level 5. This was a very marked improvement from the 1998 mathematics results. The improvement was most marked for boys, with two out of five of them attaining Level 5. These results at eleven represent good progress from the levels the same pupils achieved when they were aged seven and from the standards found at the time of the last inspection.

16. This improvement is being sustained and the work seen during the inspection indicates that pupils are on target to reach standards of attainment above the national expectation by the ages of seven and eleven. Boys and girls are making similar rates of good progress in both key stages. The successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, and in particular the high priority given to teaching strategies for mental mathematics, has contributed significantly to this raising of standards.

17. By the age of seven, children recognise and order numbers up to and, in some cases, beyond 100 and use mental recall of addition and subtraction facts to solve problems. They recognise and name shapes such as spheres and cuboids and describe their properties using appropriate mathematical vocabulary. They investigate how to measure parts of the school and present data from surveys in bar charts. Year 6 pupils recall multiplication tables up to 10x and have a good range of strategies for solving problems mentally and on paper. They work competently with fractions, multiply three- and two-digit numbers together and carry out calculations involving two decimal places with money and length. They use a wide range of appropriate mathematical language. Their mathematical skills are applied appropriately in other subjects, for example, when using scale in geography or displaying their findings on evaporation in science. In Key Stage 2 pupils have fewer opportunities to use problems from the world outside the classroom to extend and apply their skills.

18. Overall science results in the 1999 tests for eleven-year-olds were average compared with both the national figure and with the results of similar schools. This was a very good improvement from 1998 and reflected the effect of new subject guidance in Year 6 and the above average ability of many of the pupils. There was a very good improvement in attainment at the higher levels for both boys and girls. The proportion attaining the expected level for seven-year-olds in the 1999 national assessments was above both the national average and the figure for similar schools at Level 2 and close to average at the higher level.

19. From the inspection evidence, current attainment in science at the end of both key stages is in line with the national expectation. In Key Stage 1 overall progress is satisfactory and there are examples of good progress in some lessons. The overall progress in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory but in Year 6 good progress is resulting from the good quality of teaching. The oldest pupils are gaining knowledge and understanding of science at a good rate and also developing good practical investigational skills. They independently organise fair tests to determine the accuracy of their predictions about the effect of heat, wind and surface area on the rate of evaporation. Standards by the end of Key Stage 2 have improved since the last inspection.

20. Pupils are on target to attain the national expectations in information technology at the end of both key stages. Children make satisfactory progress overall in both key stages and the oldest pupils are making good progress. Key Stage 1 children can produce simple sentences of text, and programme a Roamer when working on directions and drawing planned routes in geography. By the age of eleven pupils can import pictures and designs from other programs into their texts, for example from 'Encarta' to 'Word' and combine several picture and writing programs. They enter their own data which they have collected in scientific experiments into spreadsheets. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection.

21. Standards in religious education at the end of each key stage are those expected in the locally Agreed Syllabus. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection. Progress is satisfactory in both key stages. Pupils are gaining a sound understanding of Christianity and other religions, their impact on life-styles and of religious concepts such as ritual, sacrifice and pilgrimage.

22. Progress in history and in geography is satisfactory in both key stages. By the age of seven they have a sound knowledge of the topics they have studied. By the end of Key Stage 2 they have the knowledge, skills and understanding expected for their age in both subjects.

23. Standards of attainment in art at the end of both key stages are typical for the age group. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school as they are introduced to a good range of techniques and are given opportunities to examine and comment on the work of famous artists. There was insufficient evidence of work either during the inspection or from the previous year to allow an overall judgement to be made on pupils' attainment and progress in design and technology in either key stage.

24. Overall standards in music at the end of each key stage are below those found in most schools. This represents unsatisfactory progress. The small minority who learn an instrument make good progress but for the majority of pupils in both key stages there are insufficient opportunities to develop the skills of performing and composing alongside the knowledge they are acquiring by listening to music.

25. Pupils make sound progress in physical education at both key stages as they extend their range of skills and take part in a satisfactory range of activities. By the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment is similar to that found in most schools.

26. The very good account taken of pupils' individual needs, helps to ensure that boys and girls, pupils of different abilities and the few from ethnic minority backgrounds are all making at least appropriate progress. Pupils on the early stages of the special educational needs register make good progress towards the targets in their Individual Education Plans. Good use is made of time in withdrawal groups to address literacy and numeracy difficulties and teachers take account of their needs within ordinary lessons. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils with statements, including those who are physically challenged, make very good progress in their formal learning and in the development of their movement and communication skills.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

27. Pupils' attitudes to learning throughout the school are usually good. The great majority listen attentively and show an interest in their work. They respond positively to teachers' instructions and readily offer their ideas in class discussions and when answering questions. They settle sensibly to written and other tasks. Only occasionally do pupils become restless in lessons or fail to complete enough work. The standard of presentation in pupils' books through the school is good and reflects the care and pride which they have taken. Respect is shown for books and other equipment, which are handled with care.

28. Standards of behaviour throughout the school are good and this confirms the view of the great majority of parents. There were no temporary or permanent exclusions in the year prior to the inspection. Relationships within the school are good. Adults provide good role models and pupils show respect for them and for their peers. They get on well with one another and co-operate freely when working together in class. Physically challenged pupils are well supported by other children who, on occasions, offer very good support and assistance without fuss or hesitation. A welcoming smile and a friendly approach is afforded to visitors, who are treated with courtesy. Outside the classrooms, in the dining halls and playground, behaviour is usually good, though there is sometimes excessive noise in the dining area. Pupils walk on corridors and enter assemblies in an orderly and quiet manner. Their positive attitude makes a valuable and significant contribution to the school's warm, friendly ethos. Pupils enjoy earning certificates for good behaviour and seeing their achievement listed on the school's newsletters to parents.

29. The personal development of pupils is good. They accept opportunities to take responsibility sensibly, for instance when operating the overhead projector and cassette recorders in assemblies. They volunteer for lunch time litter patrols and staff the snack shop at break. Computer monitors set up a computer programs during lunch time for younger children. Older pupils help to look after younger ones on occasions like wet play times. Pupils think of others outside school, giving good support to appeals such as Comic Relief.

Attendance

30. Attendance at the school is satisfactory and broadly in line with the national average for primary schools. Holidays taken in term time account for a significant proportion of the authorised absence. There is only a small amount of unauthorised absence. Records for the current term show that the school is well on target to maintain the national average. The administrative staff keep good records using the computerised system and there is early identification of any emerging problems of poor attendance.

31. Most pupils are punctual to school which allows a prompt start to lessons. Registration periods are efficient and provide an orderly start to the day. Most pupils enjoy school and attend willingly, a fact confirmed through the meeting for parents and through the parental questionnaire.

Quality of education provided

Teaching

32. 98% of all the teaching seen was at least satisfactory. Half the lessons observed in Key Stages 1 and 2 and two-thirds of the lessons seen with the under-fives were good or very good. Teachers have worked very hard to prepare for the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy and this was reflected in the good quality of teaching observed in English and mathematics. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, particularly in Key Stage 2.

33. The quality of teaching benefits from the thorough preparation which is based on clear, whole-school, medium-term planning. Class teachers work as year group teams on lesson planning. In English and mathematics the detailed learning targets are based on careful assessment of individual progress and a good understanding of the learning objectives within the subjects. This gives a clear sense of purpose and helps teachers to ensure that time within lessons is well used and focussed on the knowledge, skills and understanding that teachers want the pupils to acquire. There is usually an appropriate balance between teacher explanation and activities for pupils to develop and consolidate their understanding.

34. In the previous inspection report concern was expressed about inadequate support for pupils with special educational needs within class lessons and about lack of challenge for the more able in Key Stage 2. There has been considerable improvement in these two aspects. In most lessons planning takes account of the different stages of development. Teachers target questions to allow all pupils to participate in discussions and the tasks provided enable pupils to work at a suitable level of challenge. Support staff are used very well to help pupils with special educational needs to work towards the targets in their Individual Educational Plans. Physically challenged pupils are integrated well into lessons, participating fully wherever possible.

35. Pupils who are withdrawn for small group or individual work have clearly designated tasks which match the targets on their Individual Education Plans. The work provides appropriate challenge. Teachers mark work alongside each pupil in a positive manner noting progress, sharing success with each pupil, carefully assessing and recording their attainment before identifying the next task to complete. The quality of this teaching is good.

36. In most subject areas teachers have a good knowledge of the topics they teach. They have worked hard to ensure that they have a good awareness of the targets in the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy. There have been weaknesses in teachers' information technology knowledge and skills. The co-ordinator has worked hard to increase the level of computer competence and confidence of his colleagues and the benefits of this are now being seen in the improved quality of teaching skills. Where music is taught by teachers with specialist expertise, the quality of lessons is often good. However, many teachers have insufficient music knowledge to direct practical activities in an extended and meaningful way and this is limiting the quality of musical performance and composition.

37. Teachers usually have appropriately high expectations of both the quality and quantity of work, particularly in English and mathematics, and this has a positive impact on attainment and the progress made in lessons. Only occasionally is work pitched at too difficult a level for the class to make satisfactory progress or insufficient demands are made on pupils to complete work and they become restless. The pace of work in most lessons is at least satisfactory and it is often good. This helps to maintain pupils' interest, keeps them focussed on their work and makes them feel that they are making good progress.

38. The positive working atmosphere in most lessons results from the good relationships between teachers and pupils and among pupils. This encourages pupils to participate well and to do their best. Classroom organisation and management of pupils are usually good and little time is lost in moving from one activity to another.

39. In the best lessons teachers share clear objectives with pupils so that there is a focus for the lesson and include a good balance and sequence of activities to make efficient use of the available time. They draw on very good subject knowledge to explain the main points of the lesson very clearly, using visual aids where appropriate. Careful questioning encourages pupils to reason out, articulate and justify their answers and the range of questions is carefully chosen to enable all to participate. Pupils are challenged to extend their thinking and acquire higher level skills by, for example, analysing patterns of observations in science or evaluating art work.

40. In the lessons observed with the under-fives the overall quality of teaching was good, with some very good features, particularly in relation to children's personal and social development. Relationships are very good and children have settled quickly into the Nursery and Reception classes where teachers have high expectations for children's behaviour and social development. A good range of activities is provided in all three classes and effective use is made of additional adults in the classroom. Careful use of observation ensures that children with special needs are identified and they are supported well. However, the planning of extension activities is not precise enough and the most able children are not always challenged sufficiently.

41. The quality of English teaching is good overall in both key stages. Teaching was good in four out of every five lessons seen in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, good or very good teaching was observed in half of all lessons seen. Teaching of English is particularly strong at the end of the key stages. Teachers have introduced the National Literacy Strategy very successfully. Their hard work is evident in the detailed lesson planning which includes clear targets and is very well matched to the needs of all pupils. Good use is made of opportunities in other subject areas to develop listening, reading and writing skills but less attention is given to improving pupils' speaking skills, although a few good examples of discussions were observed.

42. Teaching in mathematics is good overall in both key stages. It is never less than satisfactory in either key stage and there is some very good teaching at Key Stage 1. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced very successfully across the school. The clear objectives for lessons are based on clear medium-term plans and targets for individual pupils. Strong features of the teaching are the encouragement of all pupils to develop their mathematical thinking during the mental mathematics session at the start of lessons and the recap of what has been learnt in the concluding lesson summary.

43. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously and ensure that pupils' progress is carefully monitored. The evaluation of pupils' work is used particularly effectively in English and mathematics to set the next learning objectives. In English marking of pupils' work is good in Key Stage 2 where teachers' comments help pupils understand how they might improve their work. In other subjects teachers' remarks in books are primarily encouraging rather than indicating targets for future work.

44. The school has consulted parents about homework arrangements and used the results of the survey to draw up a clear policy. Most parents are now satisfied with the amount of homework their children have, although a few think there is too little and a small number believe there is too much homework. The policy is being implemented satisfactorily. Reading practice, spellings, tables feature regularly in the appropriate year groups and writing assignments and number work are also included. Pupils also have opportunities to carry out personal research related to class topics. Homework is providing valuable additional practice, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

The curriculum and assessment

45. Curriculum planning in both the long- and medium-term for the under-fives in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. It covers the six areas of learning and leads to the nationally agreed Desirable Learning Outcomes for pupils of this age. In weekly planning, learning objectives are generally clear and specific. However, they are not always sufficiently precise to ensure that the most able children are fully extended. The care given to choosing activities which involve all children in the early weeks of the year has contributed to the ease with which children have settled into school routines.

46. The curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2 is broad and balanced and complies with requirements for all National Curriculum subjects. A significant emphasis is placed upon literacy and numeracy. The school follows the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. In addition, a comprehensive personal and social programme is in place for each key stage. Sex and drugs education is appropriately delivered through science as part of the National Curriculum and there is a drugs awareness programme for pupils in Years 5 and 6.

47. The school's literacy teaching takes good account of the guidelines of the National Literacy Strategy and provision in both key stages is very good. This has a positive impact on the quality of learning and the standards attained in the subject. Pupils' writing skills are used well in both key stages to support and enhance learning in other subjects. However, more work could be done to identify clearly ways in which pupils can develop their speaking skills in all subjects of the curriculum. The National Numeracy Strategy was introduced fully at the beginning of the school year and aspects of it had been introduced during the previous year. This, combined with the arrangements for teaching mathematics in ability sets is already having a very positive effect upon the quality of mental mathematics and the pupils' understanding and use of number operations. Satisfactory opportunities are provided for pupils to use their numeracy skills in other subjects of the curriculum, principally science and geography.

48. All subjects have an appropriate policy. Long- and medium-term planning is good and provides well for continuity and progression of learning. This reflects a significant improvement since the previous inspection which found that curriculum planning did not place sufficient emphasis on these aspects. The school reviews provision annually to take account of mixed-age classes. Teachers plan together in year groups and this offers pupils in different classes similar curricular provision. Weekly lesson planning is very good in literacy and numeracy. Learning objectives and related activities for pupils of differing abilities are clearly set out. This practice is not as consistent or well established in other subjects of the curriculum.

49. The school is fully committed to equal opportunities. The application of the very good policy can be seen in all aspects of the life of the school. This makes a significant impact on the pupils' curricular and social achievements. Pupils who are physically challenged are well integrated into all aspects of school life including physical education and drama. Where pupils are withdrawn from lessons for special needs support, tasks are related to specific learning targets and often complement the work being undertaken in the classroom.

50. The school makes good curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs. In some cases this is partly through withdrawal groups to enable pupils to work specifically towards the targets in their Individual Education Plans. In most lessons teachers' planning takes account of the needs of those with special educational needs. Planning for pupils who are physically challenged is very well organised and of a high quality involving a multi-disciplinary team. In literacy and numeracy teachers plan differentiated work to match pupils' needs and this is well matched to the learning targets within Individual Education Plans. The progress of pupils with statements of special educational needs is reviewed three times in each school year and that of other pupils with special needs twice a year, with parents involved at each stage of the process.

51. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities including sport and many pupils participate in these. Educational visits make a positive contribution to both learning and social development. Each year, pupils in Years 5 and 6 are given the opportunity to take part in a residential adventure weekend. This is organised so that all pupils can take part if they wish, whatever their personal circumstances. Satisfactory provision is made for sport, including competitive sport and the school takes part in inter-school competitions.

52. The school's procedures for measuring pupils' attainment and progress are good overall, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. They are very good in English and mathematics and are effective in identifying higher attaining pupils in these subjects. The school uses a range of tests in English and mathematics, including commercial standardised tests, end of key stage national tests and non-statutory end of year tests. The results of these are carefully analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum and teaching and set targets for future attainment. The results are then used very well in ensuring that strengths are built upon and weaknesses are improved. In mathematics, pupils' results are used to assign them to particular mathematics teaching groups so that they can build effectively on their prior attainment.

53. In addition to the well established and very good procedures in English and mathematics, good assessment procedures have been introduced in science, but in other subjects the school's systems for measuring attainment and progress are less well developed. However, the school has firm plans to introduce procedures based on learning objectives in each subject and to use these to inform the planning of future work. There are collections of work in English, mathematics, geography and religious education containing samples of work at different levels. These are currently limited in scope but serve a useful basis for future development to aid teachers' assessment of attainment and progress.

54. Pupils are also involved in reviewing and assessing their own performance. In conjunction with their class teachers, they set their own relevant termly targets in English, mathematics and science. These are also kept by the teacher and used in planning lessons so that pupils make sound progress in meeting these targets.

55. All pupils with special needs have very good assessment records of their progress and development which ensure that accurate and relevant decisions are made at the team meeting when identifying the next set of targets. Records of significant events in each pupils' educational programme, for example the visit of a speech therapist or physiotherapist, are included in pupils' diaries. Comprehensive minutes of review meetings are kept together with the reports of outside agencies, parents' attendance and other comments.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

56. The school makes overall good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, including that for the under-fives. Social development is very good. This concurs with the views of most parents who feel that the school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on their children.

57. Spiritual development is good, and the daily act of worship makes a positive contribution to this. There are separate arrangements for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, linked by a common theme. This strategy is effective and enables the topics covered to be discussed at a level appropriate to the pupils concerned. The special arrangements for Reception children ensure that they are able to participate fully in worship which is meaningful to the age group. Appropriate records are maintained and good use is made of the expertise of visitors such as the ministers from local churches, one of whom also leads discussions with Year 6 pupils about philosophy. Other opportunities for pupils include some religious education lessons where they are asked to consider the dilemmas of biblical characters as they faced difficult situations, in relation to their own emotions such as happiness, anger and jealousy. Several teachers have succeeded in fostering pupils' delight in the enjoyment of favourite stories, a love of writing poetry and an eagerness to explore numerical problems.

58. Moral development is good. A code of conduct is prominently displayed in classrooms and other parts of the school. It emphasises respect for people and property and it is carried out well in practice by the great majority of pupils who fulfil the high expectations of their teachers. Sex education is taught in a moral framework, presented in the context of family life, loving relationships and a respect for others. Older pupils are educated on issues of smoking, alcohol and drug prevention. Concern for the environment is fostered through visits to places of interest, surveys of the school grounds and the attempt to solve the litter problem by rotas of pupils who act as 'litter pickers'.

59. The schools provides very well for pupils' social development. Relationships are good. When asked to work or play together they do so co-operatively, such as when collaborating on a joint task or playing as a team in an inter-school match. Concern for the less fortunate is fostered through fund-raising for charities such as Comic Relief.

60. Many opportunities are created for the development of responsibility. From their earliest times in Nursery the youngest children are expected to recognise their name card and place it in the appropriate box on arrival at school. Pupils of all ages are given 'jobs' to carry out within the classroom and are entrusted to change their own reading books in the resource areas. Older pupils are asked to take on responsibilities as librarians, computer monitors and snack sellers. They set up the equipment for assemblies and replace it, help to look after younger children during wet playtimes and assist in the care of a variety of resources. They undertake some responsibility for their own learning, such as homework projects.

61. A satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities is available. These include art, music and sport as well as fitness and computer activities. A residential visit, attended by approximately 100 pupils provides very good opportunities for them to mix socially as well as to participate in adventurous and character-building activities such as raft-building and abseiling. Pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem is raised when they take part in the leading of assemblies and each week the award of certificates for a wide range of individual achievement is celebrated by the whole school. Year 2 and Year 6 pupils performed for an appreciative audience at their end of year concerts.

62. Physically challenged pupils play a full part in school life and their presence makes a positive contribution to the good school ethos, engendering a sense of care for others which is very apparent in the thoughtful behaviour of most pupils. Those with special needs are included in all activities within the classroom and the school. The pupils who are physically challenged take part in many extra-curricular activities, for example older pupils take part in the dance club and the school promotes excellent social relationships between them and other class members. At break times they are able to play with classmates whose attitudes are developed beyond care and concern to one of acceptance and friendship. All pupils with special needs work co-operatively with other class members in groups and adults have a friendly relationship with them.

63. Provision for cultural education is good. Tuition for individual pupils, to learn to play a string or brass instrument, is enhanced by ensemble experience, and the opportunity to perform before an audience. All pupils listen to a range of music both in the classroom and before assembly. The school has had an 'artist in residence'. Pupils study the works of famous artists and visit an art gallery as part of their lessons. The introduction of the literacy strategy has enhanced most pupils' knowledge of authors, and their appreciation of children's literature. They learn about their own heritage during the course of visits to places of historic interest, and take part in folk dancing as part of their programme in physical education.

64. Multi-cultural awareness is successfully fostered through religious education, history and geography. Pupils are given insight into the beliefs and customs of other societies as well as the multi-cultural nature of Britain today.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

65. The school is a caring community in which to learn. All staff have a clear commitment to the welfare of pupils and have good relationships with the pupils they teach. Class teachers know their pupils well and this is evident in the thoughtful observations seen in the end of year reports. Teachers are diligent in consulting parents about anything which may affect pupils' enjoyment of school.

66. Pupils with special educational needs are helped to achieve the objectives of their Individual Education Plans through support and supervision within class and in their withdrawal groups. Pupils who are physically challenged usually have very good support throughout the school. Those pupils who require support for toileting and at meal times receive very good levels of care. In classrooms on many occasions the carers of older pupils work with a group of pupils giving the physically challenged pupils the opportunity to work independently, raising their self-esteem and confidence. Support staff take great care to ensure that pupils are placed comfortably in standing frames and other body support equipment.

67. The school monitors academic progress well and good information is passed on at points of transition. There is a pupil profile and a record of achievement and a system in place for setting appropriate targets. Teachers take careful account of the Individual Education Plans of those pupils who have a special educational needs. Great care is given to physically challenged pupils who make very good academic and personal progress.

68. The school caters well for the personal development of its pupils. It provides an appropriate programme of personal and social education, which includes health education including drugs awareness, personal safety and sex education. Parents are appreciative of the sensible way in which sex education is handled. It takes into account pupils' levels of maturity and is delivered well within the context of family relationships. There is no system in place currently for monitoring the effectiveness of personal and social education and the school is now looking at ways of recording pupils' progress. Visits from the school nurse, the police, fire and ambulance services and railway safety officers contribute to pupils' understanding of health and safety issues.

69. The effective procedures for monitoring and ensuring good behaviour are clearly understood by staff and pupils and are implemented consistently throughout the school. Pupils and most parents are confident that bullying is not a problem in the school and any incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Children value the rewards for good behaviour and good work and staff rarely need to use sanctions. Nursery children are given a secure start and quickly learn the routines. The provision for their personal and social education is good. Those children entering the Reception class have a positive introduction to school life. This includes an opportunity to visit school to sample some of the activities. Pupils are supportive of each other and know where to seek help should they need to do so.

70. There are satisfactory procedures for child protection. The policy is currently being updated. The designated teacher has had training for her role and is due to attend a refresher course. She conducts training for all staff and they understand their role in the early identification of concerns. Care staff have received training in safe handling techniques and nine members of staff are fully qualified to administer first aid. All teaching and non-teaching staff have received emergency first aid training. Accident reporting procedures are appropriate and fire drills are carried out regularly to ensure all are familiar with the procedures. However, procedures for ensuring that registers are available when required are not carried out consistently by all staff. The health and safety co-ordinator and the caretaker carry out risk assessments of the premises. There are suitable procedures for the safety of pupils when on visits out of school.

71. Attendance registers are well kept and regularly monitored. Good attendance is encouraged and the reasons for absence rigorously followed up. Parents are reminded of their responsibilities regarding attendance.

72. Arrangements for the induction of new pupils are good and there are effective arrangements in place for the transfer of Year 6 pupils to high school. Standardised transfer records are sent to the high schools and pupils have an open evening and an induction day in the school of their choice. The school contacts agencies concerned with pupils' health, safety and welfare as appropriate.

Partnership with parents and the community

73. There is a good partnership between the school, parents and the community it serves. The school provides appropriate information through newsletters and meetings to inform parents about school developments. Amongst the information sent to parents is a copy of the National Numeracy Strategy, good information for parents of children new to the school, information on sex education and a user-friendly prospectus. Parents have attended a workshop on literacy, followed by the opportunity to observe lessons. There has been an information evening on sex education. Twice-yearly parents' evenings provide opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress with the teachers and the annual report to parents informs them of their children's academic and personal progress. Parents at the meeting held before the inspection expressed a wish for more information on what is to be taught so that they can offer maximum support to their children. The school has sought parents' views on a number of issues and the responses have been analysed and acted upon where appropriate.

74. A very high percentage of parents indicate in their responses to the inspection questionnaire that they are made welcome in the school. A number of parents, grandparents and governors help in school with a variety of activities, including supporting literacy. The Friends of Davenhill are active in raising funds for the school through a variety of social and fund-raising activities. They recently contributed £5,000 to purchase ten computers. The school works hard to involve parents in the life of the school and this is appreciated by most of them. Courses for parents in computing are currently being organised as well as a "Parents as Educators" course.

75. Parents are kept fully aware of the progress of pupils with special educational needs. In particular, parental involvement in special needs reviews is effective in helping to ensure that appropriate decisions are taken and progress is maintained. Reviews are organised on a twice-yearly basis with an additional interview for those with statements of special educational needs. Parents' views are sought and valued and they are asked to write their comments on the interview record. Where considered appropriate, pupils are asked to record their opinions about their achievement. At Year 6 the end of year review includes the appropriate staff from the receiving secondary school to ensure a smooth transition.

76. The school places great value on its community links. Pupils regularly visit the local church and its minister teaches philosophy to Year 6 pupils. The local Methodist and Baptist ministers regularly lead assemblies. Adults use the school hall for Yoga and Year 2 hold a tea party for grandparents. The school considers people in the local and wider community who are less fortunate than themselves and a great deal of time and effort goes into collections and activities for charities. Visitors to school include rail safety officers and the fire, police and ambulance services who talk to pupils about personal safety. A fitness instructor works with 25 pupils for extra-curricular activities. Pupils go on visits out of school and older pupils enjoy an adventure weekend.

77. The headteacher is on the committee of the Education Business Partnership and planned developments include a Young Compact scheme which links Year 6 with pupils in Year 7 at high school. Representatives from industry and commerce are on the school's Governing Body. There are good links with the local high school to which most pupils transfer. The school participates in inter-school sports and welcomes and supports students on work placements. All these good links enhance pupils' personal development and raise their awareness of the importance of the school in the local community.

The management and efficiency of the school

Leadership and management

78. The school is managed effectively. At the time of the previous inspection the Governing Body, headteacher and senior management team were seen to be providing committed and caring leadership and working together effectively to meet their legal responsibilities. This is still the case.

79. The very good ethos in the school reflects the school's very clear set of aims and values. All staff are committed to the welfare of pupils and to encouraging them to do their best. This promotes positive attitudes and good relationships and contributes to the good progress made. Very good account is taken of pupils' individual needs, both in social development and in learning. There is now a much better match between the work set in lessons and the range of ability than at the time of the previous inspection.

80. The headteacher provides good leadership. He has a good understanding of the school's strengths and a clear vision of the improvements he wants to make. He provides good support to his staff and ensures that communication is good despite the wide-spread site. In consequence, there is a good team spirit and a shared sense of purpose. He is well supported by his deputy and the senior staff. Some members of the senior management team have heavy workloads, as most senior staff members co-ordinate more than one subject across this large school. They discharge these roles very effectively, including leading initiatives such as the implementation of the National Literacy and Mathematics Strategies, preparation for a new Agreed Syllabus in religious education and the National Grid for Learning. The very clear long- and medium-term planning which has been drawn up as a result of these initiatives provides a very clear structure for pupils' learning in these subjects. Target setting is less consistent in other subject areas.

81. The governors provide committed support to the work of the staff. Many have longstanding connections with the school, both as governors and as parents, and they are kept well informed about events and developments. The Governing Body has recently re-established a system of committees, which was working well at the time of the last inspection. This will again allow some delegation of its responsibilities. It is too early in this new cycle to judge the effectiveness of these arrangements.

82. There have been significant improvements in monitoring pupils' work and progress since the last inspection, particularly in English, mathematics and science. The governors have allowed extra funding within the budget to enable co-ordinators in mathematics and science to have additional time to monitor the standard of work in their subjects in lessons. The deputy headteacher was already evaluating attainment and progress in English. Monitoring in these curriculum areas is good. It is inconsistent in other aspects.

83. The School Development Plan contains an appropriate range of priorities and includes clear responsibilities, time-scales and resource implications. However, the success criteria are not always specific enough to enable the governors to measure progress towards the targets that have been set. The review of progress in school developments, which is presented to governors each year, contains little hard data to support its conclusions. In contrast, when the 1998 mathematics and science national test results at age eleven fell below the school's expectations, a detailed analysis was undertaken and this led directly to changes in approach and to much improved results the following year.

84. The end of year reports for parents did not meet all the statutory requirements at the time of the last inspection. This issue was addressed promptly and the new format includes all the necessary information. All other legal responsibilities are also met.

85. The management of the special needs provision is very good. The school fully complies with the current Code of Practice on the identification and assessment of pupils with special needs. There is an appropriate governor designated as the responsible person. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator's role is very effectively filled by two members of staff, who have good amounts of time to work with small withdrawal groups and individual pupils and to devote to administration. There is a very effective division of responsibility. Regular inter-disciplinary team meetings are held to assess individual pupils' progress and to agree the next appropriate learning targets. The high quality of this specific planning contributes significantly to the good overall progress of pupils with special educational needs and the very good progress of those with statements of special need.

86. Within the very positive ethos there is a strong commitment to promoting equal access by all pupils to the full range of opportunities that the school provides. The school monitors pupils' achievements to ensure that boys and girls, pupils of different abilities and the few from ethnic minority backgrounds are all making at least appropriate progress.

87. Overall progress since the last inspection has been good. The effective leadership given by the headteacher and senior staff, the commitment of the staff and governors, clear aims and a supportive atmosphere for development, all ensure that the school is well placed to make further improvements.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

88. The school has a good number of appropriately qualified teachers to meet the demands of the National Curriculum, with a good balance of age and experience among the staff. There is a good range of qualifications. There are few teachers, however, who are confident in teaching creative music and this limits the quality of pupils' performing and composing. The staffing arrangements take good account of pupils with special needs, including those who are physically challenged. There is a good number of learning support assistants who are guided well by the teachers and are thoroughly prepared for what they have to do. Learning support assistants for pupils with special needs are effectively deployed, giving good support to pupils who are physically challenged and also supporting other pupils in their classes.

89. Outside agencies support physically challenged pupils effectively, physiotherapists work to weekly timetables, speech therapists give advice to staff, the local authority specialist support teacher works very effectively with individual pupils assessing their levels of attainment and supporting them in their work. The school's allocation of occupational therapists' time is not satisfactory and the need to provide staff with further advice on the full range of appropriate software to support physically challenged pupils has recently been considered through the provision of a specialist teacher with specific knowledge and experience.

90. The professional development of teachers is effective and takes account of the objectives identified in the School Development Plan. Individual teachers attend specific courses and share the outcomes with other members of staff. Much of the recent training has centred on the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy, which are progressing very well and contributing to the raising of standards. Other recent training has included the use of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority materials to support information technology and science.

91. There are good induction arrangements and every teacher has an annual appraisal interview with the headteacher and members of the senior management team. All teachers have been observed teaching the literacy and numeracy hours although this is not directly linked to the appraisal initiative.

92. The school accommodation provides a bright environment for learning, which is clean and well maintained. Classrooms are of average size and, considering the early date of the inspection in the school year, are beginning to be enhanced by attractive and stimulating displays. The school layout is spacious and very good use has been made of the study rooms off corridors as a base for the recently acquired computer suite and the main library. Another room has been converted into a special educational needs resource and group learning centre. Other rooms have been strategically chosen to be subject resource areas or storage spaces for specialist equipment for pupils with special educational needs. Corridors are long and spacious and support computer work stations. Other areas outside classroom have been carefully arranged to provide extra library space. Well kept grounds include playing fields and a wild area. Two large halls are timetabled for physical education, clubs and assemblies. One room has been designed as a physiotherapy area. Whilst great efforts have been made to ensure that parallel classes are situated in close proximity to each other, the Nursery and Reception classes are at opposite ends of the school. This makes it difficult for equipment to be shared.

93. Toilet facilities are basic and unattractive. The provision of only one disabled toilet results in pupils who are physically challenged having to queue at play times and lunch time. Car parking is cramped for the size of school and results in difficulties in accommodating the special transport for the physically challenged at the commencement of the school day. The school has continually campaigned for these faults to be rectified. Additional disabled toilet facilities and an extension to the car park were due to be completed before the inspection but there has been a delay in implementing this.

94. The overall quality and quantity of resources for teaching and learning are good. Resources for promoting and developing literacy are satisfactory. They are good in mathematics and science and they are very good in information technology. The libraries are well organised and the books are in good condition. Resources in all other subjects and for pupils who are under five are at least adequate.

The efficiency of the school

95. Since the last inspection, there has been an improvement in the way the school manages its resources. Procedures for financial planning are now good. The senior staff and governors use the available funds effectively to meet the school's aims. The headteacher and governors exercise good control of the budget, and carefully match available funds to plans for the school's development. For example, the Governing Body recently allocated funds to allow co-ordinators in mathematics and science to monitor teaching in their subjects, with the intended impact of improving standards further. The governors prudently examine different options to cater for possible changes in levels of funding in order to reduce the adverse effect of these on pupils' education.

96. Specific budget allocations are used wisely. All funds available to the school, including special grants, such as those for a national information and communications technology project and for improving National Curriculum test results and the considerable amount raised by parents, are used effectively. The headteacher and governors monitor budget spending carefully.

97. The funding for special needs is used effectively to promote pupils' learning. Staff are suitably deployed and provide very good value for money, working with individual pupils, providing resources for specific pupils' needs, or offering specific advice on the requirements of individual pupils. There is appropriate movement on the Special Needs Register with examples of pupils moving from high to lower stages and being taken off the register when they no longer need additional support.

98. The school uses teaching staff well, and teachers are deployed effectively. Support staff, particularly those who work with physically challenged pupils are used well, and they make a significant contribution to the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs. The school's accommodation is well managed. The halls are well used for physical education lessons and assemblies and the school has made good use of the corridors outside classrooms to extend the working space available to pupils. The grounds are well used at playtimes and dinner times and for games when appropriate.

99. Day-to-day financial control and administration are very good. The office staff are capable and conscientious and collaborate well with teachers, governors and parents. As a result of their efficient administration, members of staff and governors are able to focus on the pupils' education. The headteacher has drawn up effective plans to deal with the few, mostly minor, recommendations in the most recent audit report.

100. The costs per pupil are high, partly as a result of the extra funding awarded because of the number of physically challenged pupils and the extra monies provided over the previous year. Taking into account these costs, the good quality of teaching and above average standards attained in English and mathematics by the time pupils leave school compared with their average levels of attainment on entry, the school provides good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

Areas of learning for children under five

101. The range of ability on entry is broadly average. Personal and social education is well developed in the Nursery and Reception classes and children make good progress in this area, reaching levels of confidence, concentration and co-operation by age five that are often above those expected for the age group. Satisfactory progress is made in each of the other five areas of learning and by the age of five most children achieve the Desired Learning Outcomes recommended for the age group. This represents a satisfactory standard of attainment.

102. Most children settle very quickly into the routines of Nursery and make the transition into the Reception classes with ease, alongside those who have had pre-school provision elsewhere. Most relate confidently to the adults who work with them and are eager to explore new learning. By the age of five they have a good understanding of right and wrong, are able to talk about matters of interest and explain how things work. Most are willing to listen to others. In both Nursery and Reception they select activities for themselves and persevere with them well for their age. In each of the classes there are good opportunities to share toys, take turns and tidy away equipment.

103. By the age of five attainment in language and literacy is, for most children, that expected for the age group and this reflects the satisfactory progress made. In Reception the National Literacy Strategy provides good opportunities for children's learning. In all three classes children handle books carefully. They enjoy listening to stories and offer their observations about them. They join in with action songs and rhymes. Nursery children are provided with activities which promote early writing skills. Reception children recognise letter sounds, practise writing them and copy under the writing of teachers. By the age of five most can write their names without support and a few are beginning to read simple sentences and write them independently.

104. Attainment in mathematics is similar to that found in most schools which represents satisfactory progress. Children count, sort and match objects in Nursery, and use graded containers in sand and water play. They successfully cut out and name common plane shapes and use form boards and jig saws to develop spatial awareness. These activities continue in Reception where there is an emphasis on the understanding of mathematical language and concepts. By the age of five children can use terms which compare size and they carry out non-standard measures of length. The highest attaining pupils are able to read, write, order, add and subtract numbers and solve problems using numbers to ten.

105. Children make satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world, and most achieve the standard expected for their age. During the inspection, apples collected during a walk in the school grounds provided a good subject for Nursery children to use a magnifying glass, talk about their observations, make printed patterns and plant the seeds. By the age of five they are able to sort and classify materials, and draw and label the parts of a flower. In Nursery they use the computer to develop colour recognition and matching. In Reception they acquire 'mouse' skills by using the appropriate software.

106. Physical development by the age of five is that expected for the age group, which represents satisfactory progress. In Nursery there is good provision for the development of gross motor skills such as running and climbing. A good strategy is in place for the development of skills in the use of scissors. By the age of five most handle them and other equipment such as brushes, cutters and rollers with increasing dexterity. They use small apparatus such as hoops, balls and ropes with developing skills. They are able to adapt their movements for example, during "traffic light" games, to the large space of the hall, on the command of the teacher.

107. Satisfactory progress is made in creative development and the overall standard achieved is satisfactory. Both Nursery and Reception children have opportunities to work with paint, collage and malleable materials such as dough. The home corner, role play areas and dressing up clothes successfully promote imaginative play. Children build a repertoire of songs and by five they can name a range of percussion instruments and enjoy using them to make music in class lessons.

108. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Detailed Individual Education Plans provide clear targets for their progress and there is good additional adult support. Other children whose progress is giving cause for concern are identified early and appropriate action is taken.

109. In the lessons observed the quality of teaching was good, with some very good features, particularly in relation to children's personal and social development. Relationships are very good. In both Nursery and Reception teachers have high expectations for children's behaviour and make clear explanations about the routines. They create situations where it is easy for them to talk in front of the class. Classrooms are well organised into learning areas and useful observational diaries are maintained to note children's attainments. These are used most effectively in relation to problems and difficulties. A good range of play activities is provided in all three classes. Good use is made of additional adults in the classroom. Reception teachers have adopted the literacy and numeracy strategies for which they make detailed plans. However, expectations for the highest attaining children are not always high enough. The observation and recording of achievements are used effectively to support those with special needs but not always to target activities for the most able children and to challenge them to reach their potential.

110. Information for parents is good. Useful booklets of guidance in mathematics and writing are available and there is a helpful notice board in Nursery. Admission arrangements are good and have a positive impact on the ease with which children start Nursery and transfer to Reception. Home visits and pre-admission visits to Nursery by parents and children are encouraged. Well thought out arrangements for Reception children during the initial weeks of their first term include playtimes and assemblies at separate times from the rest of the school. These are proving to be very beneficial. The Nursery teacher conducts her own baseline assessment at the start of the Nursery Year and completes a Record of Achievement for each child at the end of their time in Nursery. This is forwarded to the child's Reception teacher. A locally agreed baseline assessment is carried out for each child during the first half-term in the Reception and is re-visited later in the year. The information is used to provide for their future learning. Although there is no overall co-ordinator for the Early Years phase and despite the difficult geography of the building, useful links are maintained between the members of staff involved. Resources are satisfactory, easily accessible and appropriately stored.

English, mathematics and science

English

111. The percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 and above in the 1999 English tests for eleven-year-olds was well above the national average. The percentage attaining Level 5 was close to the national average. The overall English results in 1999 were above the national average and the average for schools in similar areas. This represents good progress from the results these pupils attained at the age of seven. Results over the four years 1996 to 1999 have been consistently above the national average.

112. In the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 tests in both reading and in writing the percentages reaching Level 2 and the percentages attaining Level 3 were in line with the national average. Compared with schools in similar areas the proportions reaching the expected level in reading and in writing were average, the percentage achieving the higher level in reading was just below average and an average proportion reached a Level 3 in writing.

113. Inspection evidence indicates that the percentages of children attaining the expected standards in listening, reading and writing by the ages of seven and eleven are above the national average. Standards in speaking and handwriting are broadly in line with the national expectation by the end of both key stages. Attainment for both key stages indicates an improvement since the previous inspection when standards across the subject were reported as in line with national expectations and appropriate for the pupils' capabilities.

114. At the age of five most pupils have broadly average language and literacy skills but most, including pupils with special educational needs, make good progress during Key Stage 1. By the age of seven the large majority are able to listen carefully to explanations and instructions and respond well. They talk confidently when describing what they are doing or what is happening. A minority of children are able to use language at a greater depth, for example, to explain cause and effect during science investigations or why characters in a story behave in a certain way.

115. Most children by the age of seven are developing a love of books. They are confident and enthusiastic. The large majority read accurately and fluently and demonstrate a good level of understanding both of stories and factual text. Many demonstrate good skills of working out more difficult words and meanings using a range of strategies and can confidently use their knowledge of the alphabet when searching for information. The majority are developing satisfactory library skills and are able to use the school's system with confidence when looking for a particular book.

116. Most children in this key stage are developing good writing skills. They write in a variety of forms including story and descriptive writing. Their work is well organised and clear with higher ability children demonstrating good levels of imagination and expression. Discussion with children and completed work in books indicates a good understanding and use of the more formal aspects of grammar, punctuation and spelling. Handwriting skills are satisfactory and the majority of children produce work using a neat, printed hand.

117. At the time of the previous inspection the standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were judged to be appropriate for the pupils' abilities and in line with national expectations. The school has analysed the progress of those pupils and this comparison between the 1995 scores for seven-year-olds and the 1999 results at age eleven shows that good progress was made during Key Stage 2 for that group of pupils. Evidence from this inspection indicates that by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress and that high standards are being maintained.

118. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils talk confidently and are able to communicate ideas showing an understanding of the main points in a discussion. They demonstrate careful listening by relevant responses. Although many are able to describe events clearly, they are not sufficiently skilled in expressing opinions about more complex issues or questioning others' ideas and opinions.

119. Attainment in reading for the large majority of pupils is above average by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils can read a range of fiction and non-fiction books confidently and independently. They demonstrate a good understanding of significant themes, characters and events. They know how and where to find information in the library and make good use of it.

120. By the end of Key Stage 2 attainment in writing is above average. Written work is often lively and thoughtful with interesting and expressive vocabulary. Good progress is being made in spelling, grammar and punctuation with pupils demonstrating accurate understanding and use of, for example, speech marks, prefixes, adverbs, synonyms and verb tenses. By the end of the key stage, the large majority of pupils present their work in a joined, clear and fluent handwriting style. However, although the school introduces a joined up style in Year 3, pupils do not consistently transfer their new skills from handwriting exercises to everyday on-going work until upper Key Stage 2.

121. Pupils' attitudes to English are good in both key stages. They listen attentively and concentrate well. A good feature within the literacy hour is the way that the large majority of pupils are able to work without direct supervision during the independent group work sessions. However, in a small number of lessons observed, pupils were less able to remain on task for the prescribed period.

122. The quality of teaching is good overall in both key stages. Teaching was good in four out of every five lessons in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, good or very good teaching was observed in half of all lessons seen. All other teaching seen in both key stages was never less than satisfactory. Teaching of English is particularly strong in Years 2 and 6. Teachers have responded very well to the introduction of the literacy hour and this is evident in lesson planning which complies fully with the National Literacy Strategy. All teachers have a good subject knowledge. They fully promote the knowledge, skills and understanding required through clear explanation and questioning. They provide work that is very well matched to the needs of all pupils taking full account of the targets in Individual Education Plans for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are usually expected to work at a fast pace and to produce a good amount of work. A particular strength lies in the good relationships and positive attitudes to work promoted by most teachers. This has a positive impact on attainment and the progress made in lessons. Day-to-day assessment of pupils' attainment is thorough and consistent and ensures that pupils' progress is carefully monitored. The marking of pupils' work is good in Key Stage 2 where teachers' comments help pupils understand how they might improve their work.

123. English is generally developed well through other areas of the curriculum and pupils are given good opportunities to use their skills in writing, for example in history where pupils composed a letter in the first person based on one from Pliny. However, although some good examples of discussion and debate were observed, pupils are not given sufficient planned opportunities to develop their speaking skills throughout the curriculum.

124. A clear and comprehensive English policy is in place. Long- and medium-term planning is of a high quality. It ensures full coverage of the programme of study and provides very effectively for continuity and progression. Very good assessment procedures are in place and assessment is used effectively to inform planning. A portfolio of National Curriculum levelled and moderated work is in place to provide teachers with a framework for assessing pupils' attainment.

125. The co-ordinator works hard in her leadership of the subject and monitors planning, the quality of teaching, and pupils' progress. The government's Standards Fund is effectively used to provide additional literacy support in Key Stage 2. Resources for the subject are sufficient. Most books are of at least satisfactory quality. However, some of the books in class libraries are in poor condition. Resources are well organised, easily accessible and well used. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. National Curriculum requirements are met.

Mathematics

126. In the 1999 national tests in mathematics the results for eleven-year-olds were above both the national average and the average of similar schools in the proportions of pupils at Level 4 and at Level 5. This was a very marked improvement from the 1998 mathematics results. The improvement was most marked for boys, with two out of every five of them attaining Level 5. These results at eleven represent good progress from the levels the same pupils achieved when they were aged seven.

127. The 1999 Key Stage 1 mathematics tests the proportion attaining the expected level was very high when compared both with all schools nationally and with similar schools. All the seven-year-olds in the school attained at least the expected level in mathematics and an average number reached the higher Level 3.

128. There has been a considerable improvement since the last inspection when standards in mathematics were in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and below average at the end of Key Stage 2. Inspection findings are that pupils are on target to reach standards of attainment above the national expectation by the ages of seven and eleven. The improvements that the school has made apply to both boys and girls and to pupils of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs. They are all making similar rates of good progress in both key stages. This is due to a combination of factors including good teaching, the school's successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, the high priority given to the teaching of strategies for mental mathematics, useful assessments of work done during the week and a careful analysis of test results to determine strengths and weaknesses in pupils' understanding of the subject, leading to individual and group targets being set and effective setting by ability in Years 5 and 6.

129. By the end of Key Stage 1, children recognise and order numbers up to and, in some cases, beyond 100. Pupils starting out in Year 2 mentally recall addition and subtraction facts up to at least 10 and use these to solve problems such as how much money has been spent out of the money in a purse. Pupils select the most appropriate mathematics, for example addition or subtraction, to answer teachers' questions based on these sums. They recognise halves and quarters and are familiar with the concept of doubling numbers, using this well when carrying out mental arithmetic. They use appropriate symbols when recording their work. Pupils recognise and name two- and three-dimensional shapes and describe their properties using appropriate mathematical vocabulary. They measure lengths of classroom objects and distances around the school using non-standard and standard units and represent information on bar charts, such as the weights of their favourite dinosaurs. The scrutiny of work of last year's Year 2 shows that many pupils were working at Level 3 by the end of the year, particularly in numeracy.

130. Pupils currently in Year 6 recall multiplication tables up to $10x$, and in some cases beyond this, and have a good range of strategies for solving problems mentally and on paper. They work competently with fractions, finding equivalent fractions and changing improper fractions to mixed numbers. They multiply three- and two-digit numbers together and carry out calculations with numbers involving two decimal places with money and length. Pupils understand and use a wide range of appropriate mathematical language such as vertices and faces. They use mathematical skills appropriately in other subjects, for example, when using scale in geography or displaying their findings on evaporation in science. Pupils compare the different types of triangles in terms of size of angles and lengths of sides and find perimeters and areas by counting squares and using formulae. They collect data and show it in bar charts and line graphs. They consider the likely outcomes of mathematical events, but are less comfortable with calculating fractional probabilities. Pupils at this key stage have fewer opportunities to use problems from the world outside the classroom to extend and apply their skills.

131. Pupils at both key stages enjoy mathematics. They listen carefully to teachers and confident when answering teachers' questions, either verbally or when using number fans and cards. Pupils respond well to a challenge. Year 4 pupils were eager to try out their skills with 'harder' numbers. Their enthusiasm and delight in mathematics have a significant positive impact on their attainment.

132. Teaching in mathematics is good overall in both key stages. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when mathematics teaching was found to be good at Key Stage 1 but satisfactory at Key Stage 2. It is never less than satisfactory at either key stage and there is some very good teaching at Key Stage 1. Teachers have successfully introduced the National Numeracy Strategy. Lessons are well planned, usually with clear objectives based on the medium-term plans and an evaluation of pupils' previous work.

133. A strong feature of teaching is the mental mathematics session at the start of the lesson. This encourages all pupils to develop their mathematical thinking and to use a range of strategies to solve problems. Another key feature, particularly where teaching is very good, is the way in which pupils are kept involved throughout the lesson. Pupils are fully involved in the mental mathematics at the beginning of the lesson through the use of careful questioning, and the use of resources such as plastic coins at the end of Key Stage 1 when pupils were learning about the addition of money. During the introduction to the main theme, pupils use number cards, fans or coins to answer the teachers' questions. In this way, all pupils take part, and the teacher is able to assess the class's understanding. The work that each group of pupils does during the lesson is well matched to their prior attainment and sets them a challenge to which they are keen to respond. At the end of lessons, teachers help pupils to summarise and revisit the main points of the lesson, for example, about the properties of three-dimensional shapes.

134. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously and often write encouraging comments. However, there are a few written comments which help with future recording of individuals' progress and attainment, particularly for older pupils at Key Stage 2. A satisfactory amount of homework is set. This helps pupils to practise skills and reinforce knowledge.

135. Another key feature in the success of the school's mathematics programme is the very good assessment of pupils' attainment and its use in setting targets. Weekly evaluations of lessons are used to record which pupils have attained the objectives as well as those who have achieved more or less well than expected and this information is used well in further planning. At Key Stage 2, the school analyses the results of tests at the end of the year and use their analyses to set targets for groups of pupils and to assign pupils of similar levels of prior attainment to mathematics sets in Years 5 and 6. This allows the teachers of these sets to plan the most effective series of lessons. Last year, the school provided reinforcement lessons for pupils in need of these and also ran an after-school club in mathematics.

Science

136. Overall science results in the 1999 tests for eleven-year-olds were average compared with both the national figure and with the results of similar schools. This was a very good improvement from 1998 and reflected the effect of new subject guidance in Year 6 and the above average ability of many of the pupils. There was a very good improvement in attainment at the higher levels for both boys and girls. The proportion attaining the expected level for seven-year-olds in the 1999 national assessments was above both the national average and the figure for similar schools at Level 2 and close to average at the higher level.

137. From the inspection evidence, current attainment in science at the end of both key stages is in line with the national expectation. In Key Stage 1 overall progress is generally satisfactory and there are examples of good progress in some lessons. The overall progress in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory and in Year 6 good progress is resulting from the good quality of teaching. The oldest pupils are gaining knowledge and understanding of science at a good rate and also developing good practical investigational skills.

138. In Year 1 children sequence the life stages of human beings accurately and place associated sketches in the correct order. They know that humans produce babies and that these grow into children and adults. They make good progress as they recognise the similarities and differences between children and communicate their findings through sequenced drawings. In Year 2 children know that materials can be changed through ripping, squeezing and dropping them. They know that some materials will keep their new shape whilst others will spring back to their original form. Some make very good progress to analyse whether the actions like squeezing, banging and ripping are pushing or pulling forces. Other pupils do not attempt this analytical work and progress overall is sound. Children with special educational needs make steady progress.

139. The youngest Key Stage 2 pupils study the function of teeth. They gain appropriate information about the different types of teeth and learn how to look after their own teeth making a good linkage with health education. Pupils in Year 4 study the life cycle of plants, learning about the factors which make plants grow. They make satisfactory progress to revise their knowledge of the major parts of a flowering plant and establish their functions. Although hand lenses are readily available, pupils do not use them to make closer observations to produce diagrams of greater detail. The older pupils show a satisfactory understanding that the pitch of a sound can change and that the length and thickness of vibrating rubber bands causes the sound to change. There is very good progress in Year 6 lessons where pupils investigate the scientific phenomena of evaporation. They organise fair tests independently to determine the accuracy of their predictions which consider the effect of heat, wind and surface area on the rate of evaporation. They use basic apparatus for the purpose intended and collect data over time periods. This data is entered on tables and interrogated through the use of line graphs. The less advanced pupils construct bar graphs.

140. Pupils' attitudes to science are good. They listen attentively and work with enthusiasm. When required they collaborate well, taking part sensibly in discussions and using the available apparatus carefully. Occasionally, when teacher explanations are lengthy, there is restlessness or quiet inattention and some times pupils in their enthusiasm forget the classroom rules concerning answering questions and call out their responses before being asked.

141. Overall teaching is good. The lessons observed were never less than satisfactory and two lessons out of every five were very good. Teachers generally deliver good introductory explanations and demonstrate good subject knowledge. In almost all lessons teachers have high expectations and set tasks to extend the learning. Occasionally, teachers' planning does not include the use of readily available apparatus and general tasks do not challenge the more able pupils. The pace is usually brisk and pupils respond to effective planning across the classes of each year group. Where teaching is good or very good, pupils are fully involved in the investigation with adults intervening at appropriate times. Teachers build effectively on previous learning, giving pupils of all abilities the opportunities to work at their own levels of understanding. In these lessons there is a very good link between the process of investigation and the scientific knowledge being taught. This helps pupils to understand the scientific concept and enables them to recall it quickly. In all lessons the skilled support assistants are effectively deployed and correctly briefed to support both pupils with special needs and their classmates.

142. The science curriculum is broad, balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The recent evaluation of the scheme of work and the introduction of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines has enabled many teachers to identify progression in their lesson planning and plan for a full ability range of pupils in their classes. They have supported further the inclusion of investigations in the planning. Good links have been developed between science and data handling in mathematics and the use of information technology. This is particularly well developed in Year 6. The subject is resourced effectively and is co-ordinated efficiently.

Other subjects or courses

Art

143. Standards of attainment in art at the end of both key stages are in line with national expectations. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school.

144. In Key Stage 1 they are introduced to a good range of techniques including painting, cutting, gluing and collage work. They develop their observational drawing skills, producing, for example, pencil sketches of historical domestic artefacts. They examine the work of famous artists such as Degas and produce pictures of good quality in his style, for instance, based on his "Ballerinas".

145. Throughout Key Stage 2 pupils are given opportunities to examine and comment on the work of famous artists. Older pupils critically examine Lowry's style and colouring and apply what they see when producing their own paintings from photographs. The quality and range of art work displayed in the school is good. Pupils produce a range of good work, incorporating a variety of artists and materials. Monet's techniques are studied using chalks and tissue paper. Leaf shapes mounted as three-dimensional models re-create the work of local artist, Andy Goldsworthy.

146. Pupils enjoy their art lessons. They generally present their work neatly and are appreciative of the efforts of others. They listen carefully to instructions given by teachers. On the occasions when it is appropriate to work in small groups, they collaborate very well with each other.

147. Teaching in both key stages is satisfactory overall and is sometimes good or very good. In one of the lessons seen, a very good aspect of the teaching was the way the teacher periodically brought the class together to discuss critically their own efforts, instead of just allowing them to complete their work without refining their ideas. However, teaching is very occasionally unsatisfactory, when pupils are expected to produce a precise line drawing without sufficiently clear instructions and they lack the necessary skills to complete the task.

148. The subject is co-ordinated well. Schemes of work have clear aims to develop pupils' skills. Good use is made of the school environment and visits to museums and galleries for fieldwork on topics such as sea paintings and family portraits. Staff undertake courses at the Walker Gallery in Liverpool before visiting with their classes. Good cross-curricular links are developed through art work. For example, in history pupils make Egyptian masks and amulets and, in geography, they produce Kenyan clay tiles.

Design and technology

149. Art and design and technology topics are planned as alternatives within the same timetable session. During the period of the inspection all the Key Stage 1 classes were involved in an art module and no teaching of design and technology took place in the key stage. Only one design and technology lesson could be seen in Key Stage 2. There was insufficient evidence of work from the previous year to allow an overall judgement to be made on pupils' attainment and progress or on the quality of teaching in design and technology in either key stage.

150. In Key Stage 1 teachers' planning indicates a suitable range of activities for design and technology for the term. It was not possible to determine, however, whether there has been any improvement from the unsatisfactory standards in design and technology in Key Stage 1 found in the last inspection.

151. In the one lesson observed in upper Key Stage 2 pupils were having to acquire basic sawing techniques before they could apply them to the planned project. The level of skills was unsatisfactory for the age group. The pupils' response was good. They listened carefully to the teachers' instructions, used cutting tools with care and settled quickly to the task set. By the end of the lesson they were confident in using saws with an appropriate degree of accuracy and care, reflecting satisfactory progress made in the lesson. The quality of teaching was satisfactory, as the teacher built successfully on the pupils' limited previous experience of cutting techniques and ensured that safe practices were followed.

152. The few examples of products retained from the previous year were of a satisfactory standard. The small amount of last year's design work that was seen was of poor quality. It contained little evidence of accurate designing and sketching, testing and modifying of plans and evaluating results as they develop. Teachers' planning of work in design and technology for the current year throughout Key Stage 2, is satisfactory and based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines. This provides a sound range of activities, using a variety of materials. However, at present, there are insufficient opportunities to apply and develop design and technology work in other subject areas.

153. Resources for the subject are adequate for the activities planned. They are stored centrally, providing easy access for staff.

Geography

154. The overall standards in geography by the ages of seven and eleven are similar to those found in most schools. Overall progress is satisfactory during both key stages and the development of mapping skills is sometimes good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

155. In Key Stage 1 topics such as shops, jobs, homes, movement and weather provide a sound framework within which children acquire appropriate geographical knowledge and skills. They develop a satisfactory awareness of the local environment, suitable insights into contrasting locations, such as Chembakolli and Montreuil, and confident early mapping skills.

156. Pupils in Key Stage 2 develop a sound understanding of geographical themes. They increase their confidence with different types of maps as they look at land use in Keswick, St Lucia and Kenya. From local studies in Southport and Bootle, and also from considering towns and villages in Kenya, they gain an appropriate understanding of the reasons settlements develop in certain locations and of why these places change. Consideration of different climates gives them a satisfactory appreciation of how weather affects life-styles. Their study of the River Alt gives them useful experience of fieldwork.

157. In most lessons pupils pay careful attention to explanations. They enjoy participating in question and answer sessions, though they do not always have enough opportunities to answer at length. They usually collaborate sensibly when working in groups and handle apparatus and maps with care. Occasionally, some pupils are restless and chatter instead of completing their work, when they are not set clear targets for what is expected of them.

158. The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory overall in Key Stage 2, where it varies from good to unsatisfactory. In the best lessons teachers use their confident knowledge of the topics to explain concepts clearly and to set work at an appropriate level of challenge for the different ability groups. There is a good balance of activities and these are sequenced well, so that efficient use is made of the time available and pupils' interest is maintained. Effective questioning involves pupils in discussion and guides their thinking. Visual aids are used well to support explanations and to capture pupils' attention, as when an aerial photograph of the school serves to illustrate a plan view. Where teaching is occasionally unsatisfactory, there is insufficient pace or rigour in the individual tasks and pupils do not produce in their work either the quantity or the quality of which they are capable.

159. The subject is well led. There is a carefully considered scheme of work for geography which indicates clearly how knowledge, skills and understanding are to be built up through the school. An assessment portfolio gives helpful examples of the standards expected but not all teachers use a consistent system of assessment. There are adequate resources for the subject and these are well managed. Effective use is made of field trips to support work on land use, rivers and settlements.

History

160. During Key Stage 1 children, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in history. They develop a sound appreciation of how there have been changes over time in the way people live and in learning stories about people in the past such as Captain Cook and Teddy Roosevelt. By the age of seven standards are typical for the age group.

161. Overall satisfactory progress continues through Key Stage 2, and progress for pupils with special educational needs is often good. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 can appreciate what life might have been like as a slave in Roman Britain or as a Roman senator. They make sensible comparisons between life then and now. Older Key Stage 2 pupils are able to think themselves into situations in the past and answer questions in role. They can appreciate the reasons for, and the consequences of, policies such as rationing during the Second World War. By the age of eleven attainment is appropriate for the age group.

162. Pupils' interest in history encourages them to listen carefully and to contribute well in discussions. They display imagination in picturing what life used to be like. Older pupils carry out research tasks conscientiously and show initiative in collecting information. The oldest pupils show confidence when playing the role of a character from the past.

163. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Teachers usually show a sound knowledge of the topics. Explanations are clear and often supported by a good use of visual aids such as the actual quantities of a week's rations in 1942 or a pupil dressed in Roman clothing. In the best examples questioning is used to challenge pupils to explain their ideas. Use of brain-storming and role-play are used effectively in such lessons to develop pupils' understanding of the period being studied and also their speaking skills. In most lessons pupils and resources are both managed well and good use is made of the time available. Occasionally, there is a loss of impetus when the activity moves from a whole-class presentation to group tasks.

164. The planning for the subject is good and provides for skills to be built up as pupils move through the school. There are not yet consistent procedures for assessing the development of these skills. The evidence from the previous year's work, however, indicates that the intended topics have not always been completed in full by individual classes. There is a good range of resources. The subject is well co-ordinated.

Information technology

165. Pupils are on target to attain the national expectations in information technology at the end of both key stages. Key Stage 1 children can produce simple sentences of text, inserting capital letters appropriately. They programme a Roamer when working on directions and drawing planned routes in geography. Younger children can manipulate a mouse to make choices and drag items to re-position them on screen. In Key Stage Two pupils manipulate text with confidence. They can import pictures and designs from other programs into their texts, for example from 'Encarta' to 'Word'. They are able to combine several picture and writing programs into the same piece of work to produce an interesting poster or a magazine feature.

166. Children make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. They can log on and off at the beginning and end of a lesson. They are developing good, basic keyboard skills being able, for example, to use the delete and shift keys. They know something of the uses of the computer as a tool for writing and that machines have important applications outside school, for instance in controlling tills in supermarkets.

167. In Key Stage 2 progress is satisfactory overall and it is good in classes of older pupils who are filling current gaps in their knowledge. They are able to demonstrate more advanced word processing skills, such as altering text and changing font styles and type sizes to vary the appearance of a poem. Pupils can access spreadsheets and then enter their own data which they have collected in scientific experiments on evaporation and temperature. They produce graphs, plotting, for example, rainfall in the Lake District and then save information for later access. Many of the oldest pupils are able to work independently and they demonstrate good confidence and facility with computers.

168. Pupils' attitudes in both key stages are good. They are enthusiastic and enjoy having their turn. Those who are confident like to advise their friends and often offer good support and advice. While working together they show good levels of concentration and co-operation, though this is sometimes made difficult by the seating in the computer room, which is of an inappropriate size, particularly for the younger children, and causes distraction.

169. Teaching in both key stages is never less than satisfactory and is sometimes good or very good. Teacher explanations are clear and lessons have clear aims and progression for developing pupils' skills. At times however, the more able pupils could be given opportunities to work more independently at their own pace. Teachers give good support to individuals or pairs and extra adult helpers are used effectively and offer good assistance.

170. The school has good resources of modern computer hardware. The pupils' work in information technology is benefiting greatly from the school's considerable investment in its information technology suite through the National Grid for Learning initiative. Networking arrangements allow whole-class teaching sessions for all pupils at least once and sometimes twice weekly. Part of the cost of the new equipment and the adapted accommodation for it has been provided by the efforts of parents, friends and by allocation of extra money from the school budget.

171. The school's written policy and subject guidance are sound, based on Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines. The co-ordinators have worked hard to increase the level of computer competence and confidence of their colleagues and the benefits of this are now being seen in the improved quality of teaching skills. It is planned in the near future to offer similar training to governors and parents. The co-ordinators ensure that hardware is well managed and is building up an appropriate range of programs. The school has recently received funds to enable it to be linked to the Internet which will provide further breadth to pupils' computer experience.

Music

172. Overall standards at the end of each key stage are below those found in most schools. This represents unsatisfactory progress.

173. In both key stages listening and appraising skills are well developed. In Key Stage 2 a small minority of pupils learn to play a string or brass instrument. They make good progress and reach a standard which is above that normally expected for the age group. Playing in an ensemble in the 'Stringalong' Club which makes a positive contribution to the high standards achieved. However, for the majority of pupils in both key stages there are insufficient opportunities to develop the skills of performing and composing alongside the knowledge they are acquiring by listening to music.

174. By the end of Key Stage 1 children have performed before an audience, singing in unison from memory. They have begun to control the pitch of their voices but they do not yet demonstrate awareness of dynamics. They accompany songs using unpitched percussion and are able to maintain a steady beat, but do not yet play melodies or simple ostinato accompaniment.

175. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have enjoyed rehearsing musical projects, such as in a "Victorian Music Hall" and performing before an audience. Their singing is lively and enthusiastic with reasonable attention to pitch. They are introduced to the works of famous composers and music of different character, times and places. They are aware of the elements which comprise a piece of music, such as tempo, and timbre and know that these contribute to its mood. However they have insufficient experience of applying what they hear to their own music-making. There are insufficient opportunities for them to create their own musical ideas. Too seldom are they taught to play musical pieces and accompaniments, or to sing songs in several parts with an awareness of other performers.

176. Pupils' response in lessons is satisfactory overall. However the popularity of the extra-curricular music and dance club, and the obvious enthusiasm and enjoyment with which Year 2 and Year 6 pupils performed at the end of the previous school year suggests that they enjoy participating in making music.

177. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Those who have expertise, as in instrumental tuition, produce teaching of high quality. When teachers feel comfortable with the subject matter, such as when listening to, appraising or moving to music, their teaching has good features. However, many teachers have insufficient subject knowledge to maximise the opportunities for pupils to engage in practical activities in an extended and meaningful way. Those who lack confidence in their ability to teach music require help to extend their teaching styles.

178. The co-ordinator has held the role for only one term. The school has a suitable music policy and long-term plans give a satisfactory overview of the curriculum. Medium-term plans are comprehensive and cover all the required elements. There are good links with other subjects such as history, geography and science. Assessment procedures are not yet in place.

Physical education

179. Judgements in physical education are based on observations of games and gymnastics during the inspection, a scrutiny of planning documents and records, and discussions with teachers.

180. Pupils make sound progress at both key stages as they extend their range of physical skills and take part in a satisfactory range of activities. By the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment is similar to that found in most schools.

181. Children in Key Stage 1 take part in dance, games and gymnastics, including floor and apparatus work. They practise movements on and off simple apparatus with a satisfactory degree of control and co-ordination and have a good awareness of space. At Key Stage 2, pupils know the changes that take place in their bodies when they exercise and understand the value of warming up before doing so. They practise some gymnastics skills such as rolls in different directions and take up symmetrical and asymmetrical shapes to add a sound range of variety to their actions. Pupils send and receive balls competently. Younger pupils in the key stage practised techniques in passing a ball and achieved a reasonable degree of accuracy. Older pupils aimed, kicked and trapped footballs and used these skills effectively in a small-side game later. These pupils made good progress in the lesson. By the time they leave school, most pupils can swim for at least 25 metres and those who have achieved this take part in water-safety activities.

182. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates. They take part to the best of their ability and are usually well supported by the learning assistants. The school has bought suitable equipment for pupils with particular difficulties.

183. Pupils' response to physical education is satisfactory overall, and sometimes good. Most pupils are eager to participate, but in one class, nearly a quarter of the pupils did not take part. In most classes, pupils listen carefully and try hard to carry out the teachers' instructions. Sometimes, however, pupils are under-occupied, for example when waiting for other groups to put out their apparatus or for their turn on the equipment. In these cases, pupils become restless and progress slows. Pupils practising ball skills co-operate satisfactorily with their classmates so that all have a reasonable chance to try out these skills.

184. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. There are good aspects to teaching when teachers plan lessons with clear objectives and introduce activities to develop the pupils' skills towards these objectives. In these cases, pupils build on their existing skills and make good progress in learning and applying new ones. Teaching is occasionally unsatisfactory when the teacher concentrates on organising the lesson rather than on teaching physical education skills. In these cases, pupils make fewer gains in developing their abilities. Teachers ask pupils to demonstrate their work, but often do not give pupils the chance to evaluate what they have seen. Sometimes these demonstrations take place at the end of the lesson, so pupils do not have the opportunity to practise new ideas.

185. Staff give of their time to provide a suitable range of extra-curricular sporting activities, some of which involve participation in competitions. The school organises an annual residential weekend during which a large proportion of the older pupils participate in adventurous outdoor pursuits. The physical education programme meets requirements but there is not an established system for assessing and recording pupils' progress. The two halls, large playgrounds and extensive fields provide good accommodation for physical education. There is a satisfactory range of equipment and apparatus.

Religious education

186. Standards in religious education at the end of each key stage meet the expectations set out in the locally Agreed Syllabus. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils in both key stages, including those with special needs, make satisfactory progress.

187. By the end of Key Stage 1 children now develop a sound knowledge of Christian literature through Bible stories, and they are beginning to relate sensitively to difference in the context of feelings. Teachers' plans indicate that children in Year 2 will study aspects of Judaism, such as family life, later in the school Year. In the previous year they visited a synagogue.

188. By the age of 11 pupils have considered the ceremonies of Christianity and other religions and have developed increased ability to identify experiences and the impact they have on people's life-styles. They have some understanding of religious concepts such as ritual, sacrifice and pilgrimage. They are able to discuss the dilemmas facing biblical characters and relate them to their own experiences and emotions.

189. Pupils' response is satisfactory overall. When given an appropriate stimulus they respond very enthusiastically. For example, some Year 6 pupils who had been engrossed in watching a well produced video about Moses and the plagues were subsequently able to discuss events from the point of view of the participant characters with good insight, using biblical text to supplement their knowledge.

190. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory with examples of very good practice. Teaching is most effective when lesson objectives are clearly defined and tasks are clearly explained. Imaginative use of resources, together with good subject knowledge, leads to questioning which causes pupils to think more deeply. In such lessons the pace is brisk and the time is used well to provide pupils with a variety of learning activities. Where teaching is less successful lesson plans are less precise, tasks are not so challenging and the pace of the lesson is much slower.

191. Religious education makes a very positive contribution to the school's aims in respect of moral and religious values, respect for life, and an appreciation of the variety of customs and practices inherited from the past, which exist in Britain today. The subject is very well co-ordinated and there is a commitment to high achievement. A new policy has been drawn up. Long-term plans give a good overview of the curriculum and medium-term planning is effective. Staff training has been provided for familiarisation with the changes to the curriculum. Pupils' workbooks are monitored and a portfolio of work samples is currently being compiled. A skills checklist has been drawn up but is not yet fully in use. Development of the subject is in line with the intentions of the School Development Plan.

192. The quality of resources is good, they are conveniently stored, easily accessible and include posters, artefacts and multi-media materials. The school's own resources are supplemented by materials which are borrowed from a local religious education resource centre. Members of the local clergy and the advisory service make valuable additional contributions. The school is in a good position to implement the new locally Agreed Syllabus at the appropriate time.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence

The inspection was carried out by a team of seven inspectors, who were in school for a total of 28 inspector days.

During the inspection week

119 lessons or parts of lessons, representing over 82 hours, were observed;

all the work from a significant sample of pupils, including work from the previous year, was monitored;

the inspectors heard a cross-section of pupils read and held discussions with pupils about their work;

teachers' planning files and records, attendance registers and pupil records were examined;

discussions were held with teaching, non-teaching and visiting staff.

Prior to the inspection week

a meeting to ascertain parents' views was held;

school policies, other documents and records of meetings were analysed;

meetings were held with the Governing Body and with staff.

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	488	11	124	47
Nursery Unit	30	2	3	n/a

TEACHERS AND CLASSES

Qualified teachers (YR - Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	20.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.5

Education support staff (YR - Y6)

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked each week	304

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	2
Total aggregate hours worked each week	45

Average class size:	28.7
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FINANCIAL DATA

Financial year:	1998/9
	£
Total Income	879,343
Total Expenditure	886,151
Expenditure per pupil	1,698
Balance brought forward from previous year	13,215
Balance carried forward to next year	6,407

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	561
Number of questionnaires returned:	92

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	34%	58%	5%	2%	1%
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	50%	46%	3%	1%	0%
The school handles complaints from parents well	29%	43%	22%*	5%	0%
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	23%	54%	11%	10%	2%
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	29%	58%	8%	3%	2%
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	32%	59%	8%	2%	0%
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	21%	50%	20%	9%	1%
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	21%	64%	4%	9%	2%
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	25%	64%	11%	0%	0%
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	29%	60%	5%	5%	0%
My child(ren) like(s) school	52%	38%	7%	2%	1%

[Because of rounding, not all rows add up to 100%]

* This figure includes a significant number of parents who felt that they could not agree or disagree with the statement, because they had never had a complaint.