

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Forefield Infant School**

Crosby

LEA Area : Sefton

Unique Reference Number : 104872

Inspection number: 181919

Headteacher : Mrs H E Munro

Reporting inspector : Mr D Twist  
1492

Dates of inspection : 15 - 18 November 1999

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

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**Forefield Infant School - 3**

**INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school :	Infant
Type of control :	County
Age range of pupils :	4 - 7
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
School address :	Forefield Lane Crosby Liverpool L23 9 SL
Telephone number :	0151 924 6235
Fax number :	0151 932 1759
Appropriate authority :	The Governing body
Name of Chair of Governors :	Mrs D Moore
Date of previous inspection :	July 1995

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr D Twist, RgI	Science Design and technology Art	Attainment and progress Leadership and management
Mrs J Hughes, Lay Inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Mrs D Hiscock	Under-fives Information technology Geography History	
Mr P Snelling	Mathematics Music Physical education	Teaching Efficiency
Mrs L Traves	English Religious education Special educational needs Equal opportunities	Curriculum and assessment

The inspection contractor was:

**Primary Associates Ltd**  
West Lancs Technology Management Centre  
Moss Lane View  
Skelmersdale  
Lancashire  
WN8 9TN

Telephone: 01695 725000

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Alexandra House

33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

Achieves very high standards in reading, mathematics, science and information technology.

- Provides a strong start for the youngest pupils with a stimulating, practical and exciting curriculum that enables them to make good progress.
- Pupils' personal and social development are very well catered for. Relationships at all levels are excellent and this helps pupils to develop very good attitudes to work.
- Through planning well-chosen and interesting activities, and delivering them skilfully, teachers build upon what pupils can already do. This helps pupils of all abilities to make good progress.
- Support staff form a highly skilled and effective part of the teaching team.
- The school is very well led and there is a strong commitment from the headteacher, governors and staff to continuous improvement.
- Standards of behaviour are very good.
- The school is efficiently run and uses all the resources available to it very well to achieve a high quality learning and teaching environment.
- The school provides very well for pupils' well being and prepares them well for the next stage of education.

### Where the school has weaknesses

Although the school achieves well overall in English, there are two areas where its performance could be improved.

- I. There are insufficient opportunities planned into the curriculum to promote pupils' speaking skills.
- II. The quality of pupils' imaginative story writing needs to be further developed, particularly in the case of more able pupils.

**This is a very good school, whose weaknesses are far outweighed by what it does well and even in the two areas raised, performance is not below average. The areas outlined here will form the basis of the governors' action plan in response to the inspection. This will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.**

### How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made very good progress in addressing issues raised in the last inspection. Standards in information technology have been vastly improved to the point where the subject is now a significant strength of the school. Standards in the majority of other subjects have also been raised from 'broadly average' as they were described last time. The quality of teaching has been raised and is now good. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen during the inspection and the pace and rigour of pupils' work have been improved. Guidance for staff in planning for a progressively more challenging curriculum is now in place in all subjects, and lesson plans are of high quality. The effective monitoring and evaluation systems identified at the time of the last inspection have been further improved. The school's leadership is strong and effective at all levels and it is well placed to sustain its high quality and continued improvement.



## Standards in subjects

The table shows the standards achieved by seven year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in:	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	<i>Key</i>
			<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>
Reading	A	A	
Writing	B	B	
Mathematics	A	A	

Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in the 1999 tests were well above average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing when compared with the national average and with similar schools. In the light of the fact that one in five of this cohort of pupils was on the register of special educational needs, this represents a very good performance.

Inspection findings indicate that the above descriptions are broadly accurate for the current cohort of Year 2 pupils, although the proportions on course to meet and exceed the expected level are likely to be slightly higher. Attainment in reading is well above average, and in writing it is above average, although the proportion of pupils who write really well is similar to most schools. Listening skills are very good but pupils' speaking skills are average. Attainment across the different strands of mathematics and science is well above average as it is in information technology and art. Pupils' attainment in the other subjects falls into two groups. In history and music, it is typical of most schools for pupils of this age, but in design and technology, geography and physical education it is better. In religious education, attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

## Quality of teaching

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

The quality of teaching is excellent in six per cent and very good in 29 per cent of lessons. Forty two per cent of lessons are good and 23 per cent are satisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen during the inspection.

*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	Very good. Pupils show respect and consideration for the views and feelings of others and treat property with care.
Attendance	Good. Pupils are punctual and there is a prompt start to the day.
Ethos*	Excellent. Relationships are a major strength, expectations of pupils are high, and the school fosters a very good attitude to work.
Leadership and management	Strong leadership and clear educational direction are provided by the headteacher who is well supported by a committed staff and constructive involvement of the governing body. Strategic planning is effective and the school's work is closely monitored.
Curriculum	Very good for both under-fives and Key Stage 1. Activities are interesting and well planned to motivate pupils. There is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy, but other areas are also valued. Personal development is very well promoted.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good. Provision is well managed. Teachers and support staff work closely together to enable pupils to make good progress.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Very good overall, and particularly effective in promoting pupils' social awareness and in developing a strong sense of responsibility.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Good overall. Well qualified staff with a good range of expertise and experience. Accommodation is adequate, but very well used, and resources are of good quality.
Value for money	Very good.

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

## The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
III. Children get an excellent start to education. IV. Good academic standards. V. High standards of behaviour. VI. Teachers are approachable. VII. Attitudes and values the school promotes. VIII. Well informed on literacy and numeracy approaches. IX. Children like school.	X. The communication of topic contents to parents. XI. Aspects of mobile classroom accommodation. XII. Time available for children to eat lunch. XIII. Procedures for dismissing pupils at the end of the day. XIV. Notice of events.

Inspection findings endorse the positive views of parents. The school is doing everything within its control to minimise the disadvantages of mobile classrooms. In respect of the few concerns over procedures for lunchtime and dismissal, there is sufficient time allowed for pupils to eat and the school takes reasonable measures to ensure an orderly and secure exit at the end of the day. The school's normal systems of communication, including notice of events is adequate, but inspectors agree that information about current topics could be more effectively shared with parents to enable them to support work at home.

### KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to improve even further the good quality of education provided, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

XV. Further raise attainment in imaginative writing, particularly for more able pupils, by

implementing agreed strategies to:

- increase the frequency of this element of writing, including the earlier introduction of story writing in the key stage;
  - link assessment of writing with the features needed to achieve and exceed the expected level of attainment by seven years of age;
  - set individual writing targets (shared with pupils) to promote more interesting story writing.
- (paragraphs 10, 103 and 104)

(The school has already identified this area for attention and has planned to take action to bring about improvement.)

- Raise the overall level of pupils' speaking skills by:
    - identifying further opportunities within the curriculum to provide practice in speaking;
    - raising expectations of pupils' speaking as they give explanations or express opinions.
- (paragraphs 10, 105 and 107)

In addition to the above, there are some more minor areas which the governors might wish to include in the school's action plan:

- Link the criteria by which the success of action plans are judged more closely to pupils' attainment and progress. (paragraph 72)
- Plan more opportunities for pupils to build their number skills through work in other subjects. (paragraphs 11 and 119)
- Communicate the content of half termly school topics more effectively to parents to enable them to contribute to their children's learning. (paragraphs 63 and 67)

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **- Characteristics of the school**

1. Forefield Infant School is situated in Crosby, to the north of Liverpool and serves a large mixed catchment area including both privately owned and council properties. The school is bigger than most schools with 260 pupils on roll between the ages of four and seven. Eleven per cent of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals, which is below the national average. Thirteen per cent of pupils are on the register of special educational needs which is also below the national average. Of these pupils, one has a Statement of Special Educational Need. The percentage of pupils from homes where English is not the first language (two per cent) is higher than in most schools. There have been no significant changes in the school's characteristics since the last inspection.
2. Children are admitted to one of three reception classes at the start of the school year in which they are five. They attend on a part-time basis for between two and six weeks, after which they attend full time. At the time of the inspection, the vast majority of reception children were under five. Although there is a wide spread of ability, children's overall attainment on entry is just above average.
3. The school's main aims are: to provide an appropriate curriculum and a stimulating and safe environment; to provide appropriate staffing, sound financial management and links with the wider community, and to give equal opportunities for all. Current priorities for the school include implementing the National Numeracy Strategy, developing the information technology curriculum, achieving the Investors in People standard, developing the school grounds, and

implementing the revised National Curriculum.

## Key indicators

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1  
for latest reporting year: 1999

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	46	52	98

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	39	39	39
	Girls	49	48	49
	Total	88	87	88
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	90 (89)	89 (89)	90 (91)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	40	40	42
	Girls	49	49	50
	Total	89	89	92
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	91 (91)	90 (91)	94 (93)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

## Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	5.93
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0
	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	35
Satisfactory or better	100
Less than satisfactory	0

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

### **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

#### **Attainment and progress**

4. Children show a wide range of attainment when they enter the reception classes, but overall, their grasp of basic knowledge and skills is slightly above average for their age. They make good progress through their reception year and the vast majority are on course to exceed the expected levels of attainment by the time they are five, in four out of the six areas of learning for under-fives. These are language and literacy, mathematics, personal and social development, and knowledge and understanding of the world. In the areas of creative and physical development, children are in line to meet expectations.
5. In personal and social development, children's confidence to tackle new activities grows quickly and they learn to co-operate in pairs and groups and treat each other with respect. These features of their development, together with the good relationships that they form allow children to establish a very good attitude to learning.
6. In language and literacy, children make good progress in developing early reading and writing skills. They learn to enjoy sharing books with adults and are beginning to use their knowledge of letter shapes and sounds as they attempt simple writing tasks as part of their play.
7. In mathematics, most children can sort and count with accuracy and are learning mathematical vocabulary. They are making good progress in recognising and sequencing numbers.
8. In knowledge and understanding of the world, children make good progress in scientific understanding and in learning about their personal history and the area in which they live. Information technology skills are developing very quickly. They make steady progress in their creative and physical development, as they make bold pictures, learn songs and create play situations together. Children show appropriate control of their movement in dance and gymnastics and have good manipulative skills, which they use when building with construction sets or making models.
9. Over the past three years, the school's results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 have not varied significantly, and have been consistently above the national average and that for similar schools. In the 1999 tests, seven year olds achieved results which were well above average in reading and mathematics, and above average in writing. The proportion of pupils exceeding the expected level was also well above average in reading and mathematics, and was average in writing. In teacher assessments in science, the proportion achieving the expected level was above average and the proportion exceeding it was well above average. Of this cohort, some 22 per cent were on the register of special educational needs. Inspection findings indicate that for the current Year 2 cohort, results are likely to be slightly higher.
10. Attainment in English is above average and progress is good. Reading is the strongest area with high levels of fluency and understanding, Writing is above average overall, although only an average proportion exceed the expected level and progress is slower than in reading. Pupils spell well and handwriting is satisfactory. Listening skills are very well developed and contribute significantly to pupils' learning. Speaking skills vary but are average overall. A few pupils are articulate and fluent speakers, but many find it difficult to give extended explanation or opinions. English is developed well through other subjects of the curriculum, as pupils record science results for example and make good use of the computers in information technology.

11. In mathematics, attainment is well above average and progress very good. Pupils' number skills are very good. In mental arithmetic they are confident in working out simple calculations and can explain their approach. In other aspects of mathematics such as shape and space, pupils show good understanding, and can name most common shapes and describe their properties. Pupils handle data skilfully as they produce simple graphs. Information technology is well used in this respect, as pupils use simple spreadsheets. Pupils use their mathematics skills in other subjects, but these opportunities are not yet fully planned for.
12. In science, attainment is well above average and progress is very good. Pupils are confident in carrying out investigations and they are developing a good awareness of the scientific method. They can predict, observe with accuracy and make rational conclusions, and they understand the nature of a fair test. Pupils' knowledge and understanding are good across the areas of life processes, materials and physical processes.
13. Standards in information technology are very high and pupils are making very rapid progress. Since the previous inspection, when standards were found to be below the expected level, attainment and progress in this subject shows a marked improvement.
14. In religious education, pupils make satisfactory progress towards meeting the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. They are aware of the importance of events in the Christian faith and understand the way in which prayer is used by people of different religions to communicate with God.
15. Of the non-core subjects, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are similar to those found in most schools in history and music, where progress is satisfactory. In art, geography, design and technology and physical education, standards are better than usual and pupils make good progress.
16. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress across the school. They are well supported with work that is matched to their abilities, and as a result, their basic skills are developing at a good pace.
17. In relation to the previous inspection, standards have been maintained in the three subjects of history, music and religious education, but in all other subjects, the attainment and progress of pupils shows improvement.

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

18. Children under the age of five show very good attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic and listen carefully to instructions. They are capable of listening for sustained periods, such as in a music lesson when they listened to a nursery rhyme tape and, specifically, for the sounds made by different instruments. Children work well together as, for example, during information and communications technology lessons, when some children supported others with clear instructions when they were a little unsure about what to do next. Children respond extremely well to the guidance teachers offer and they have established excellent relationships with adults.
19. Children under five are very familiar with the high expectations of staff and they behave very well. They cope effectively in all social settings, paying for their own lunch in the cafeteria or sitting with rapt attention during Good Work assemblies. Children are extremely well mannered and demonstrate a mature approach to most activities. For example, one boy asked a nearby girl during a reception design and technology activity "Will you help me cut this out,

please?" She replied "Just wait a minute while I finish this" and came to help him shortly afterwards.

20. Personal development of children under five is excellent. They look after their own personal needs and are able to run errands and complete tasks independently. They go to the library with a reading book without direct adult supervision, take off their shoes before entering the library without being reminded, and are happy to discuss the stories they enjoy most. Children respond very well to the many opportunities the staff offer to extend their independence.
21. Pupils in Key Stage 1 also show very good attitudes to learning. They are keen to learn and to respond to teachers' questioning during lessons. The majority sustain their concentration and remain on task. They are enthusiastic about the work they undertake, partly because it is so practical. Pupils demonstrate an exceptional ability to work co-operatively and collaboratively, as pupils in a Year 2 mathematics lesson demonstrated when devising tally charts for dividing sweets.
22. Behaviour is very good throughout the key stage and this has a very positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. They respond very well to instructions and observe the school codes and conventions in all aspects of their daily lives. This helps the school to function as a very calm and orderly environment. Pupils behave very well in the playground and enjoy developing ball and skipping skills with the lunchtime staff with whom they enjoy excellent relationships. Pupils are willing to take turns and they share resources unselfishly. They are sensitive to the needs of others and exhibit very mature behaviour. There have been no exclusions from school in the past year.
23. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. Pupils of all ages mix well together and this underlines the community ethos on which the work of the school is based, and helps to create a mutually supportive school community in which each individual is valued and, in turn, appreciates the role of others. Pupils respond well to praise and encouragement and teachers respect their talents.
24. Pupils' personal development is excellent and makes a significant contribution to the school community. They demonstrate very mature attitudes to the roles and responsibilities they are offered by staff. They deliver registers to the office and Year 2 pupils take turns to be library monitors making sure the library area is tidy and attractive and organising the book stock. They run messages very well and can be trusted not to waste time once out of the teacher's sight. Pupils are happy to stand at the front in assembly and talk about the work they have completed during the week. Others perform drum routines for the school, taking turns to lead. All cope very well with the cafeteria system at lunchtime. They queue in an orderly fashion, make their decisions about what to eat and then pay for the food at the till.
25. Parents are very positive about the values, attitudes and behaviour of their children. They report that their children enjoy coming to school very much.
26. Since the last inspection, pupils have maintained their very strong attitudes to learning and high personal standards of behaviour. The quality of relationships has improved still further as has the effectiveness of children's personal development. These findings represent a considerable achievement for pupils and teachers for which all should be commended.

### **Attendance**

27. Levels of attendance are good throughout the school, including children under the age of five. Pupils are punctual and there is a prompt start to the day. Attendance levels are slightly better



than those reported at the time of the previous inspection.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

### Teaching

28. The quality of teaching is good. During the inspection about one in three lessons were excellent or very good, about half were good and about a quarter were satisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. There was no significant difference in the quality of teaching across the year groups. Teaching is better than it was at the time of the previous inspection.
29. There are no major differences in the quality of teaching for pupils under five in the reception classes and that of older pupils in the infant classes. Purposeful play is used very well with the youngest children, as seen for example when reception children filled differing sized containers during their work on capacity. Activities chosen for lessons are particularly well suited to the learning objectives, whilst being practical and interesting. For example one mathematics lesson on capacity began with 'How many children can we fit into this box?'. Homework and home links play a major part in giving pupils a strong start with their reading. For example key words are sent home to be learned and reading books are regularly taken home by pupils to read with their parents. In some lessons, teachers create valuable opportunities to extend children's explanations through their questioning and they spend time drawing out pupils' ideas. At times however, more intervention is needed to fully develop pupils' speaking skills in play situations. The quality of teachers' questioning is usually very high. Most lessons begin with a check that what has been learned previously has been remembered and understood.
30. Teachers' planning is very detailed. It ensures that there are clear objectives for the lesson, and these are often shared with the pupils. This means that they also know clearly what they are expected to have learned by the end. A further strength of the planning is the way in which the classes in each year group plan together. All three classes use the plans that are finalised at the meetings and this ensures that pupils cover the same content regardless of the class they are in. Support staff are also involved in these meetings and this involvement contributes towards the high quality that they achieve in their teaching. These meetings are also used to evaluate how well the week's work has gone and to share assessments of pupils' progress. The outcomes of these assessments are then used to help plan the next week's lessons.
31. Teachers manage pupils calmly but efficiently so that a purposeful working atmosphere is maintained at all times. Relationships between pupils and adults are excellent. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the content that they teach and they demonstrate and explain new ideas to pupils effectively. This was seen very clearly in an information technology lesson when the use of icons was explained to reception pupils and in literacy when Year 2 pupils were introduced to diary writing and the techniques used for this. Support staff make a significant contribution through the high levels of skill they demonstrate when working with particular groups. Teachers use resources well to help their explanations and add interest to them. In mathematics, for example, torch flashes were cleverly used to develop pupils' counting skills. Worksheets are carefully designed to match the abilities of the pupils who are completing them. Homework becomes a natural extension of work in the classroom when pupils are given the task of finding things out.
32. Although there is no unsatisfactory teaching, there are occasional weaknesses that make some lessons more ordinary. Now and again teachers' questions require only one word answers and do not encourage pupils to explain their learning. Not enough time is given for them to expand their answers fully. The match of work to pupils' different abilities is occasionally insufficient so levels of challenge are inappropriate for some.
33. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. The tasks given to them are well

matched to their abilities, and teachers and other adults give them as much support as possible. The few pupils with English as an additional language are integrated well and given appropriate attention by teachers and support staff within the resources available to the school and in the absence of specialist help.

34. The teaching of literacy and numeracy are both strong. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the national frameworks and how best to teach to them. This shows in literacy in the high quality introductions to lessons where direct teaching of skills such as phonics is very effective. In numeracy, the mental arithmetic sessions are thoughtfully planned and usually offer pupils a high level of challenge.

### **The curriculum and assessment**

35. The curriculum provided by the school for children under five is very good in all areas of learning. It is very well planned, with many interesting practical experiences provided. For example pupils were introduced to the vocabulary of capacity in mathematics through an activity which required them to drink fruit juice, thus giving them first-hand experience of phrases such as 'contains more than' and 'holds about the same as'. This catches their interest, promotes good attitudes to learning from the earliest stages and prepares them very well for Key Stage 1. Provision for children with special educational needs is good. Difficulties are identified early and steps taken to provide appropriate help and support.
36. At Key Stage 1, the curriculum is broadly based and well balanced. All National Curriculum subjects and religious education are covered and policies and schemes support teachers' work in all areas. The curriculum is both rich and relevant. It is enhanced through a wide range of interesting and practical activities, such as art weeks and visits from the local fire brigade. Such experiences also contribute to the pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Activities that link a variety of subjects develop the pupils' understanding very successfully. For example, during the inspection period subjects such as history, art and literacy were combined in a topic on fire. This is a strength of the school's curriculum. Provision for information technology throughout the school is exceptional. Children have access to very high quality learning experiences in this area, from the earliest stages. For example, they use computer art to reproduce the work of artists such as 'Mondrian', and learn how to use word processors to make books.
37. Planning is very good throughout the school. It is extremely thorough and well organised, identifying the key skills to be learned in each subject. It ensures that all ability levels are catered for appropriately and that pupils make progress from year to year. Teachers plan together regularly, to ensure that curriculum provision is consistent within classes and across year groups and they achieve this very well.
38. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Work is planned which closely matches the needs of the children. Targets for pupils are clearly defined and shared with both the pupils themselves and their parents. Progress towards the targets is closely monitored. They receive high quality support both in class and in small group sessions.
39. The school's provision for literacy is very good. Lessons are very well planned and organised and work is well matched to the ability of the pupils. A high priority is given to providing good quality resources, using time well and creating a very stimulating literacy environment. Very good use is made of children's literacy skills in all other subject areas and this is a strength of the curriculum.
40. Provision for numeracy is also very good. The school has adapted the National Numeracy

Strategy well to meet the needs of all pupils. It is using this as a basis for updating the existing policy and scheme of work. The school has very successfully introduced regular mental maths activities and time in lessons is used constructively.

41. Homework is well used throughout the school to support and extend children's learning in literacy, numeracy and topic work. A strength of this provision is the way in which teachers give practical and research tasks for children to do at home. For example, in history, pupils were asked to interview their grandparents about life when they were young.
42. Provision for personal and social education is very good. The school provides well for health, sex and drugs education through its personal and social education programme, and through other subjects including science and religious education.
43. The school provides a drum club, which is attended regularly by around 50 Year 1 pupils. The music teacher runs this and it has a positive impact upon the standards achieved in music lessons for these pupils.
44. Pupils under five and those at Key Stage 1 have very good equality of access to the curriculum and equal opportunities for achievement. An exception to this is the lack of specialist support available from the local education authority for a small number of pupils with English as an additional language. School provision, however ensures that these pupils make steady progress.
45. Assessment arrangements for all pupils, including those under five and those with special educational needs, are very good. They are thorough and comprehensive, particularly in the core subjects. Clear targets are set for individuals and groups of pupils, in mathematics, English and science. Their progress is monitored regularly and the next learning steps carefully planned. Assessment of reading is excellent and is a strength of provision. It contributes greatly to the high standards achieved by the school in this area. The involvement of children and parents in the assessment process is also a strength. Pupils know their own targets well and are involved in setting these, and monitoring their own progress. They are encouraged to evaluate their work. Records of assessments are written in language that pupils can readily understand. Results of assessments are regularly shared with parents and they are invited to contribute to the target-setting process in conjunction with staff and pupils.
46. The school has made significant improvements in this area since the last inspection.

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

47. The school makes very good overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In particular, provision for pupils' social development is excellent and is a strength of the school.
48. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. It is very good for children under five. Collective worship and the religious education programme ensure pupils develop an understanding of Christian beliefs and a strong moral grounding. In a Key Stage 1 assembly, for example, pupils learned how sharing talents and gifts makes individuals feel much better about themselves. The real strength of the school's provision comes through the cross-curricular personal and social education programme, which offers many opportunities for pupils to exercise their imagination. The target boards used in classrooms also contain a strong spiritual dimension. One, for example, asked pupils to consider "Have you made someone happy today?". Staff provide pupils with many opportunities to think about their own feelings and emotions. Class 5 pupils considered "What makes you Special?" at the beginning

of the year. During the inspection, pupils in Year 2 reflected on the changing seasons, which one they liked the best and why. Although several thought of the more obvious ideas such as winter, Christmas and presents, others were able to think beyond material wealth and nominate such times as summer "because it's sunny and my dad takes me for walks on the beach". The teacher was quick to emphasise the importance of such feelings and memories and drew effectively on her own personal experiences to highlight this. The older pupils are beginning to understand that the natural world and creative arts can combine to play an important part in the development of the human spirit. Spirituality is also well promoted through carefully considered displays in classrooms and the hall. For example, the display of helping hands coupled with prayers "Take my hands, Lord Jesus, Let them work for you", alongside a collection of religious artefacts and books in one hallway. Pupils say class prayers three times per week and one of these is nominated by pupils who have a special person to remember who is sick. The school is making a collage to exhibit in the Christian Way of Life exhibition, which forms part of local millennium celebrations. This project is a good example of spiritual and community links combining to extend pupils' learning. Teachers also ensure that spiritual elements are present across all areas of the curriculum and plan to include this dimension in lessons. In one literacy session in reception, children studied the rhymes in 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star'. While discussing the stars, one girl commented that you can see them in the night sky "because God turns the sun off at night".

49. The quality of the acts of collective worship is satisfactory. Whole-school assemblies help to develop pupils' listening and appraising skills. Music is usually an integral part of an assembly and over a two year cycle, 14 different composers and styles of music are covered to extend pupils' musical appreciation. Occasionally, staff could provide a better focus for the spiritual dimension of the assembly. The best assemblies are reverent occasions, which offer pupils the opportunity to experience positive and relaxed silence and also to develop a sense of community. The weekly Good Work assemblies are very good examples of pupils learning to value the worth of individuals and their achievements. During a reception assembly, the teacher leading it went to great pains to help these very young pupils feel at ease in the large hall. She established an intimate and comfortable atmosphere using music, candles and visual aids, where children could celebrate the work of their peers and also develop a sense of awe and wonder at the beauty of the glittering stars they had created. This linked well with the tinkling music played by others on a variety of bells and silver mobiles. They sang joyfully and the whole proceeding was very appropriate for the age of the pupils.
50. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The headteacher and all adults working in the school have high expectations of pupils. They are taught the difference between right and wrong and are encouraged to consider a variety of moral issues. For example, reception children had listened to a visiting speaker earlier in the term on how to care for dogs. They were encouraged to consider various acts of kindness and cruelty to dogs and to discuss how best to treat animals. Staff encourage pupils to develop a good understanding of the values of Christianity and how to care for each other. One little boy in reception remarked "It's nice to say 'Thank you' to someone who helps you, isn't it?". Adults provide very good role models for their pupils. Pupils are encouraged to think about less fortunate people and the school helps pupils and parents to raise considerable sums of money for a range of charitable organisations. For example, the school worked in partnership with a number of other local schools to produce a Christmas Carol tape to raise money for charity.
51. One of the school's outstanding strengths is the provision it makes for pupils' social development. It ensures excellent provision through a strong commitment to personal and social education, which is integral to the whole curriculum despite having no formal policy in place. The co-ordinator for this area is very committed and ensures all staff pay attention to this fundamental aspect of provision. Social interaction has a very strong teacher focus and

this underpins the work of the school. Pupils are encouraged to be supportive of one another. When one little boy in reception was asked to choose someone else to take the register back to the office, he chose a child with special educational needs who usually receives high levels of adult support during lessons. The two children completed their errand independent of any adult help and returned quietly to class. Teachers are consistent in offering pupils opportunities to mix socially and for a specific purpose, without an adult presence, and this extends pupils' social skills. The school helps pupils to develop a good understanding of citizenship, offering visiting representatives from local service providers and charities, opportunities to come into school and discuss their role in the local community. Extra-curricular provision creates interesting opportunities for pupils to participate in activities such as a drum club and choir, which attract up to 50 boys and girls and football activities run by parents.

52. Provision made for pupils' cultural development is good. Staff use the local environment well to extend pupils' understanding of the wider world. Arts weeks are a regular feature of the school and a poet has visited to help pupils appreciate better the nuances of the written word. A theatre group has also visited and a recent 'Elizabethan Workshop' provided cross-curricular links with art and music. Grandparents have been involved in a recent toy project, talking to pupils about the toys which they and their children played with. This helps pupils understand more about chronology and their own family background and has helped them to appreciate better, aspects of their own parents' childhood. One boy was able to explain what a catapult was during a 'Show and Tell' session as few of his peers had seen one. The school makes good use of the expertise of previous staff to extend pupils' cultural development. One retired teacher comes back to talk to pupils about what the school was like when she was a girl. This helps pupils to understand the ways in which the school has changed over the years.
53. There is also good provision made for pupils to learn more about the richness and diversity of other cultures. Good quality artefacts are available to pupils and these help to bring multicultural education alive. They study religions such as Judaism and specific festivals such as Hanukkah and Chinese New Year. Staff encourage them to understand and value the beliefs of others. The school has also participated in a local education initiative to raise funds for a school on St Kitts, which was devastated by Hurricane George. Pupils are taught to appreciate the differing styles of artists such as Picasso and Mondrian and to listen to a range of musical styles. In one assembly, for example, the theme of sharing was extended by the drum group who performed for the school. The teacher leading the group explained how the drums in Africa had been used to share news among communities.
54. Parents are very happy with this aspect of the school's provision. They believe the school is successful in promoting positive values and beliefs in their children and the inspection supports their views. The school has improved the good standards reported in the previous inspection.

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

55. The headteacher and all the staff make very good provision for pupils' educational and personal support and guidance.
56. Staff know their pupils extremely well and show a very high regard for their well being. The school monitors pupils' overall progress and development well. Initial baseline assessments provide a good indication of what children can do and staff take time to ensure this is completed carefully. The induction period is well considered and the school takes account of parental feelings when organising this process. In organising reception classes, staff take time to ensure a good balance of gender and age so that, as children move up the school, they have good role models to follow. Staff liaise closely with the adjoining junior school to ease the transition process for Year 2 pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are identified at a

very early stage and are supported very well by the special educational needs co-ordinator and by their teachers and support staff.

57. The school promotes pupils' welfare, health and safety well. Staff are vigilant in their duty of care and lunchtime supervisors are provided with effective guidance to maintain the school's policies. The lunchtime staff are trained to support pupils' personal and social development and they make a strong contribution to this aspect of the school. The school bursar ensures lunchtime staff receive all the training they require and they also meet regularly with the school's health and safety co-ordinator. Pupils enjoy warm relationships with the lunchtime staff. In one classroom, pupils all called out "goodbye" to their dinner lady as registration began. She beamed at them as she left. Such warm relationships ensure lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions for all pupils. Effective arrangements are in place for the provision, administration and recording of any first-aid treatment.
58. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are excellent. Teachers use consistent strategies in the management of pupils' behaviour, which are unobtrusive but extremely effective. Pupils understand the rules and flourish in the very positive ethos on which the school is centred. Staff accentuate positive behaviour and pupils celebrate particularly notable effort and achievement in the weekly Good Work assemblies. Support staff make a significant contribution to this area of provision as they help to maintain a very positive learning environment for the whole class whilst promoting the individual attainment of pupils with special educational needs. Lunchtime supervisors extend this promotion of an orderly environment in the playground where they organise ball skills practice and skipping for pupils.
59. Effective child protection arrangements are in place. The designated teacher for this area is very conscientious in her role and ensures staff receive updated guidance on new procedures. She has been trained and liaises with outside support agencies as appropriate. Pupils are made aware of how to increase their own self-protection through the personal, social and health education programme.
60. Procedures to monitor pupils' attendance and punctuality are excellent. This is due to the extremely efficient systems adopted and implemented by the administrative staff. The school tracks pupils' attendance regularly and identifies trends and potential concerns before they become habitual. The education welfare officer liaises closely with the school and together they make every effort to support families with problems. He values the school's systems very highly. Most parents are conscientious about informing the school of any reasons for absence. However, the school is very prompt at contacting parents if they do not know why a pupil is absent. The headteacher emphasises the importance of regular and punctual attendance to parents.
61. Parents are very appreciative of the warm and caring ethos promoted by the school and consider this one of its strengths. Inspection findings confirm their views. The school has improved the standard of its provision since the last inspection, particularly with regard to child protection training for the designated teacher.

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

62. The school maintains a good partnership with parents and the local community.
63. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. The school prospectus is clear and provides parents with a well-written overview of what each pupil should learn. The governors' annual report to parents illustrates school life well for the reader. Newsletters are

frequent and informative. An events list is sent home at the start of each term, along with information on the termly topics to be studied. Most parents feel well informed about school life and the curriculum their children study. However, a few express a desire for more information about broad contents of topic work and this could be more effectively communicated. A few would also like longer notification time for school events. All letters to parents are displayed in school and spare copies are attached to the office window for ease of access by parents. Although inspection findings confirm that the school makes every effort to establish effective communication with parents, the headteacher is already considering ways to improve home-school communication through a new parent helper booklet and numbered newsletters. Curriculum evenings to inform parents of new initiatives such as literacy are organised by the school and are generally well attended by parents. Parents are already encouraged to read and sign the school's discipline and behaviour policy but there is no full home-school agreement in place yet. The headteacher plans to use the restructuring of the governing body in January 2000 as an ideal opportunity to plan this.

64. The quality of the annual written reports to parents is satisfactory. The best contain reasonably detailed, evaluative comments in English, mathematics and science. They are individualised and show that staff know their pupils well. However, some reports lack sufficient evaluative comment for parents to gain a clear understanding of how well their children are doing and the progress they have made. There are few targets for development included and reporting of the foundation subjects is brief.
65. Parental involvement in the school is good. A large number of parent and family helpers work in school each week and they make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers ensure they have a good understanding of what support they are required to give and this maximises the impact of their presence. For example, during a Year 1 design and technology lesson, the parent helper was able to support pupils as they decided how to cut out and assemble a model with moving parts. Her presence enabled the teacher to concentrate on supporting another group of pupils. Not all parents can come into school but the majority are supportive of the school's work at home. Parental support for literacy is good. They are very conscientious about completing the home school reading diaries and many try to engender a love of books by taking their children to the public library. They ensure homework and reading are completed and some help with the topic work. As a result, homework is of good quality and supports pupils' learning well. The majority of parents attend parent and curriculum evenings and they are happy to be involved in formulating school policy. For example, parents were asked to consider what level of sex education the school should adopt. They were also recently involved in planning a new 'Healthy Eating' lunchtime menu for the cafeteria and this has proved a great success. Parents are also active fundraisers for the school and make a significant contribution to learning resources.
66. Enrichment of the curriculum through links with the local community is good. Planned educational visits are made in support of a number of curriculum areas and a variety of visitors in school extend pupils' understanding of the wider world. Particularly effective liaison takes place with the Sefton Ranger who supports environmental work across the curriculum. Good liaison with a national supermarket enabled pupils to visit the store and gain valuable learning when researching the topic of healthy eating. They were able to walk around the store and pick out suitably healthy foods which had the healthy eating symbol attached and went for a 'behind the scenes' tour of the store, eating a 'healthy snack' in the staff restaurant afterwards. Pupils were able to describe what they had seen and eaten. Their parents were able to attend a session devoted to healthy eating by the store's nutritionist and this helped them to compile the new lunch menus. A national fast food chain also sent a representative into school to talk to pupils about healthy eating. The youngest children are offered the opportunity to visit a local playgroup, linked with work on the topic "Ourselves". They are able to think back to what it



was like when they were at playgroup. In return, playgroup children come to the school and play on the field during the summer months as a gentle introduction to the school environment. The school works in partnership with local secondary schools and colleges of further education. Some of their older pupils help Key Stage 1 pupils with their dance routines, for example, and students attend on work placements. Sefton Orchestra has played for pupils and the school has been involved in a joint music project with a local high school. All these links have a very positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress and broaden their awareness of their local community.

67. Parents are generally positive about their relationship with the school although a small minority would welcome more information on the topics that their children study.
68. The school has maintained the good standards seen at the last inspection.

## **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

### **Leadership and management**

69. The school is very well managed. The headteacher, with the active support of the governors, provides strong direction to the work of the school and has a clear vision for its development. Along with the deputy and staff, they are effective in moving the school forward and there is a strong commitment to continuous improvement. The school is successful in achieving the aims set within the governors' mission statement, and these are clearly evident in aspects such as the quality of both the teaching and the curriculum. High standards of attainment and strong personal development are central to the school's ethos. Relationships are excellent, the atmosphere is friendly but purposeful and the staff are committed to maintaining an effective learning environment in which pupils are expected to work hard. Equality of opportunity is offered to pupils and the school complies with its statutory responsibilities.
70. The staff, headteacher and governors form an effective team and together they have responded well to the previous inspection report and have taken effective action on all the issues raised. Standards of information technology have been raised to the point where the subject is now a strength of the school and makes a good contribution to other subjects of the curriculum. The quality of the curriculum and the effectiveness of teachers' lesson planning have been improved and are now of a high standard. Shortcomings in the pace and rigour of work have been addressed and the vast majority of lessons now offer challenging activities for all groups of pupils. The high expectations of the headteacher have had a significant impact on the improvement in standards of teaching.
71. The headteacher monitors the work of the school both through direct observation of teaching and scrutiny of pupils' work samples on a regular basis. Issues arising are addressed through staff inset and targeting of any areas of pupils' work that require attention. A high priority has been given to raising standards in literacy and numeracy and the school has been successful in responding to national requirements in these areas.
72. The development planning process is thorough and fully involves the governors and staff. The school development plan sets out clear and manageable whole-school priorities for action and is regularly updated as individual issues are addressed and others arise. Financial planning is closely aligned with the school's priorities. An aspect of the development plan that is more ordinary is the setting of criteria to judge the effectiveness of actions. On occasions, these could be more closely linked to the impact that the actions are expected to have on pupils' attainment and progress. Subject co-ordinators show very good leadership in providing

guidance to colleagues. They maintain an effective overview of standards in their areas, auditing the quality and effectiveness of the curriculum and drawing up personal action plans to promote further improvement.

73. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed. There is an effective programme to give them support in lessons and well-considered and manageable targets are set for them to help build basic skills. The progress they make against their targets is regularly reviewed and most are coping well with their work and making good progress. In the case of pupils whose first language is not English, there is little support available to the school in the way of bilingual help or dual language texts. However, teachers and support staff do their best to provide appropriate experiences such as talking over books together, and as a result, these pupils are making satisfactory progress.
74. The provision for pupils under five is managed very well. There is a very good curriculum, which is practical, exciting and enjoyable, and which motivates children to learn. The teachers and support staff work together as a strong and effective team. Under the leadership of the early years' co-ordinator, they plan their work together and share their good ideas.
75. The governing body takes an active involvement in the development of the school and is well-informed on matters such as the school's performance, and current curriculum priorities. There is a good match of expertise to responsibility, and the committee system is highly effective. The recent development of the school's information technology facility is a good example of how all committees made a valuable contribution to a major school improvement. The premises committee organised the design and siting of the suite, and health and safety representatives ensured that relevant requirements were adhered to. The curriculum committee explored the learning requirements to be met, the staffing committee oversaw the deployment of relevant expertise to support pupils' work, and finally the finance committee ensured that the plans were viable and sustainable within the school's foreseeable budget. The day-to-day administration of the school is very good and the work of the office team makes a major contribution to the smooth running and efficiency of the school.
76. Many of the 'future plans' for the management of the school, referred to in the previous report, have now come to fruition and the contribution made by all members of staff to the continuing development of the school is a key element in its success.

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

77. The school has more than sufficient, suitably qualified staff to meet the demands of the National Curriculum and a very good match of staff qualifications to the responsibilities they hold. There is also a good level of support staff who are very skilled and well qualified to make a very valuable contribution to the progress of pupils with special educational needs. The full-time information and communications technology assistant has a very positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress and this is a strength of the school's provision.
78. Arrangements for the induction, appraisal and professional development of staff are very good. The school handbook provides useful guidance for new staff on general school procedures. Effective systems are in place to support newly qualified teachers although there were none on the staff at the time of the inspection. The deputy headteacher is the mentor trained to support newly qualified teachers. She has a clear understanding of the most useful support such staff require. The structure of the classes into year groups also affords an additional tier of support for staff as they plan and meet regularly together. Midday supervisors are offered training in a number of areas and this adds to the high quality of their work. Professional development is closely linked to priorities identified in the school development plan and the co-ordinator works

closely with the headteacher to identify areas of particular need among staff. The school also tries to run 'in-house' training as much as possible, to reduce costs and increase effectiveness. An important aspect of the excellent relationships identified across the school community is the readiness of staff to share individual expertise and to work closely in whole-school and year group teams. This has a very positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress and on the quality of the learning environment.

79. The school's accommodation is adequate for the delivery of the curriculum. This is due, in no small part, to the hard work of staff and in the imaginative use of all the available space. The recent transformation of the cookery area into an innovative information and communication technology suite is an excellent example of what can be achieved. The impact on pupils' learning has been very significant. However, the mobile classrooms do not have running water and this adds difficulties to some of the creative work undertaken. The school grounds are well kept and the building is very clean and well maintained. Staff create a bright and stimulating learning environment through thoughtful displays which reflect the value placed on pupils' work and ideas.
80. Resources for learning are good in all subjects and for children under five except in outdoor play, for which there is no distinct provision. Under-fives are, however, able to develop the appropriate physical skills in the large hall. Book provision is a strength of the school's resources and supports the school's literacy strategy very well. Books and artefacts to support pupils' knowledge and understanding of other religions and cultures are also good.
81. Levels of staffing, accommodation and learning resources are similar to those reported at the previous inspection.

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

82. Financial planning is excellent. The governors, headteacher, bursar and senior management plan very carefully for the school's future development. They are particularly careful to ensure that their plans and actions can be sustained at a time when the number of pupils has temporarily dipped. Because of this they have kept a substantial sum in reserve to maintain staffing levels over the next two years. Part of these reserves is also to be used to equip and furnish the new classroom, soon to be built.
83. Financial and day-to-day administration in the school runs very smoothly, with routine organisation and management excellent. Duties are shared between the bursar and school secretary who work well together. Management of the budget is very good and governors receive regular updates on the progress of spending. The bursar plays a significant part in keeping these wheels turning smoothly through the first rate systems that operate. The few recommendations of the last auditor's report were quickly implemented.
84. The school development plan does not show as clearly as it might the impact changes are expected to have on attainment and progress. This makes it more difficult for the governors to evaluate the effects of their spending decisions on improvements to standards.
85. The school uses its staff well, with teachers and support staff deployed to best advantage. Support staff make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress and they move skilfully to the groups that most need them. They are good at ensuring that pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in class activities. The work in information technology could not be sustained without their high quality contribution.
86. The main building has been imaginatively adapted and is used very well. For example,

cloakrooms have been remodelled and brought into everyday use. The main corridor and open areas off it are alive with activity. For example, there is an extensive bank of computers and other information technology equipment attractively arranged for pupils and very accessible to them. The school has a good level of high quality learning resources, which are effectively organised by co-ordinators. The money the school allocates to literacy, numeracy and to special educational needs is spent well. The quality of teaching and support provided by the special educational needs teacher is good and helps these pupils towards their learning targets. Teaching during the literacy and numeracy hours benefits from the high quality books and materials the school has purchased; it has achieved good value from this expenditure.

87. Time is fully used with lessons beginning and ending punctually. Registration is carried out very quickly. The good level of efficiency evident at the time of the previous inspection has been built on and is now even stronger.
88. The attainment of the majority of pupils on entry is a little above average. By the time they leave, their attainment is well above the national average in reading, mathematics and science. Their results are very good compared to pupils in similar schools. Pupils' attainment in information technology is very high. The cost of their education is slightly above average but the quality is high. The school gives very good value for money.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

89. The majority of children are in line to exceed the expectations set out in the Desirable Learning Outcomes for five year olds, in the areas of language and literacy, mathematics, personal and social development and knowledge and understanding of the world. They are on course to meet expectations for creative and physical areas of experience. The good progress they make is influenced by the effective partnership between teaching and support staff that impacts directly on the children's learning. Appropriate links are made between learning in reception and the forthcoming National Curriculum well before the children reach their fifth birthday. Provision for children under five has improved since the last inspection. For example, there is a stronger focus on mathematical thinking, in line with the National Numeracy Strategy expectations. The school has also enhanced the provision it makes for the personal and social developments of the children and they make very good progress as a result.

#### **89. Personal and social development**

90. Reception children have their own times for assemblies and playtimes and these help to provide a safe and very supportive environment. As a result, pupils settle well into routines. Teachers have high expectations of them when they are learning and this helps children to develop a sensible attitude to their work. Children are ready to learn beyond the classroom as well as in it, eagerly bringing work from home. There are very good relationships at all levels and adults use praise very well. This gives children greater confidence and encourages them to tackle new activities. Children behave very well, sharing equipment and taking turns and helping to tidy up at the end of a session. They treat each other with respect and co-operate very well. For example they will often move to allow others to sit alongside when looking at each other's work. As a result of this, children make good progress. The arrangements to introduce and familiarise children before they start school are good. Their gradual induction builds their confidence in new situations and helps to ensure an enjoyable start to school life.

#### **90. Language and literacy**

91. Children listen with enjoyment and respond readily to stories, rhymes and songs, often with delight and they make good progress in this area. Their early speaking skills are developing through some carefully planned teaching opportunities. Teaching is good and the questions that teachers ask help children to hold onto ideas and pursue them, helping them to understand more. As children investigate containers and water and sand, they learn new vocabulary to help them express their thoughts accurately. Adults are sometimes used well to support children's vocabulary development in a range of activities, participating for example, in role-play such as in the 'school' area. In the best learning situations, children are given time to explain and describe events and offer opinions.

92. By five, most children know all their letters, and are eager to share books. Most are beginning to read print using a range of skills that they have been taught including the use of picture clues and initial letter sounds. Effective emphasis is placed on early reading skills and children make a good start on the reading process by sharing books with adults. They use them well and are beginning to understand how different sorts of books work. Higher attaining children notice that some give them information and others tell them stories. Children recognise an increasing number of words and convey their meanings using letters and words and simple sentences. They 'write' letters to friends in the writing corner and are learning to use computers to create messages. Children for whom English is their second language are given effective support in their understanding of simple story books, often talking about pictures and spotting key words

in the text with support staff. This helps them to make satisfactory progress.

92. **Mathematics**

93. The teaching of mathematics is good and as a result, children exceed the expectations of five year olds and make good progress. Teachers focus on developing mathematical thinking through practical activities, and this helps children to make rapid progress. They are now sorting, counting, investigating and using mathematical terms. Opportunity for structured play gives them further time to explore their ideas about capacity. They order cups, use different sizes of vessels, observe and test them out practically. Most children can recognise differences in shapes and can name circles, rectangles and triangles. Good teaching methods engage children's attention very well and very good questioning allows them to explore mathematical ideas such as estimating, comparing and checking. Children enjoy counting patterns and show some confidence in number beyond ten and even 20.

93.

93. **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

94. Children are given very good opportunities to extend their knowledge. Teachers focus their teaching to ensure that groups make good progress in understanding and they have high expectations of pupils. For example, teachers set challenges such as asking children to investigate what happens to the water when they get out of the bath. This helps deepen their insight into how water behaves. The provision for information technology is exceptional. Children are given an environment in which they take big steps forward in learning about the world. They use computers to create pictures, patterns and letters and print their work using the correct icons on screen. They learn how technology applies around them, by using tape recorders and photocopiers and controlling a 'Roamer'. They develop very good making skills including cutting, folding and gluing by making models such as lanterns. There are well-planned opportunities including visits, to develop their ideas about themselves, their families, and their local area. These give them a good insight into how people and environments change over the years. Progress overall in this area is good. It is excellent in information technology.

94. **Physical development**

95. Children are on course to meet expected levels of attainment at five and overall progress is satisfactory. They confidently use a range of appropriate equipment that offers suitable levels of challenge, resulting in satisfactory progress. They respond very well to the good teaching in dance and movement lessons. They use their imagination to create shapes, balance themselves, and use the space around them well. They are aware of others close by and take care to control their movements on mats and when running, jumping and responding to signals. They are ready to show what they can do and respond very well to instructions about safety and equipment. Finer skills of control are well developed when using tools to cut, crayon, manipulate and use a mouse on screen. There is no large outdoor equipment area for children in reception classes but the school hall provides adequately for their current needs.

96. Children who enter reception with special educational needs have very good support. This is well planned and appropriate to individual needs, whether social or academic and progress is good. Teachers take care to ensure that wherever possible, children for whom English is not the first family language are engaged in whole-class activities. For example, they are included in mental maths tasks, in which they use their good number recognition skills.

96. **Creative development**

97. Children are on course to meet expectations by the time they are five. Teachers plan very good first hand activity, which allows children to explore music making, using a variety of instruments such as wind chimes to examine the differences in the sounds and materials. They play well together and use musical terms to talk about the sounds. They listen carefully to taped songs and rhymes such as Mary had a little lamb, and quickly pick up the tunes. They use materials with exciting textures to explore two-dimensional and three-dimensional effects such as a collage of fishes and produce simple pencil drawings and bold paintings, often on the subject of their choice. They express their feelings about these activities with excitement. Progress is satisfactory in this area.

## **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

### **English**

98. In 1999, pupils' attainment at age seven was well above the national average in reading, and above average when compared to similar schools. In writing attainment exceeded the national average and was average when compared to similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving higher levels in the tests was well above average in reading and average in writing.
99. Taking the years 1997 to 1999 together, pupils' attainment in reading and writing has remained steadily above average.
100. Inspection findings indicate that the majority of current Year 2 pupils are in line to meet the average for their age, by the time they leave the school. About half are likely to exceed this in reading and about one in ten in writing. Overall, attainment is stronger in reading and listening than it is in writing or speaking.
101. By the time they leave the school, the majority of pupils are very confident and competent readers. They read fluently and independently, using very good expression. Pupils understand what they have read and can retell events from stories in detail. Higher attainers show very good understanding of the main themes in books and can express their own views about characters, using words and phrases from the text. All pupils have good strategies for working out unfamiliar words. Most have a secure knowledge of alphabetical order and use this well to find words in dictionaries. They know the difference between fiction and non-fiction texts and can use contents pages and glossaries to find information in reference books. They enjoy books and talk about them enthusiastically.
102. Progress in reading is very good throughout the school, at all ability levels. This is because teachers know how to teach reading well. They also assess pupils' progress very thoroughly and comprehensively and are skilled at moving them on quickly to higher levels of challenge. Throughout the school, teachers generate an enthusiasm for reading in their pupils, who bubble with excitement during shared reading sessions as they try to predict what will come next. An example of this was seen in a reception class, when picking out nursery rhyme characters in 'Once Upon a Time'. In Year 1 classes, very good progress was made in understanding the main themes of 'Farmer Duck' as pupils were given the opportunity to become different characters and act out the story.
103. By the time pupils leave the school, their attainment in writing is above average. Children write very well for different purposes and audiences and have a good grasp of different writing styles. However, attainment for the more able pupils is lower than might be expected and their

imaginative writing, in particular, develops more slowly than their reading. Pupils attain very well in spelling. The majority spell a very good range of common words accurately. They use a variety of appropriate strategies, including phonics, for dealing with words that are unfamiliar to them. A strong feature is the way in which they use the skills they have learned in literacy lessons very well in other subject areas. There are examples of this in science, where they write up details of experiments and in religious education where they write prayers and retell Bible stories. Handwriting and presentation skills are average overall.

104. Pupils make good progress in writing throughout the school. This is because teachers are skilled at planning and providing opportunities for them to write. For example, Year 1 pupils have developed 'Forefield Café' role-play areas and children have devised menus, 'dish of the day' boards and a wide range of signs and labels for them. All pupils learn to enjoy writing through the many opportunities provided for them to become authors themselves. Class library corners contain excellent examples of books children have contributed to and they are very proud to share these. All pupils make very good progress with spelling. This is because it is systematically taught from reception onwards. Teachers also assess pupils' spelling abilities well, and quickly correct misunderstandings. Good progress is also made with punctuation skills as these are taught well during literacy sessions. Handwriting skills develop steadily, with all pupils being given regular practice in letter formation. Pupils make slower progress however, in developing their imaginative writing and this affects higher attainers in particular. The reason for this is because until recently, insufficient time was spent on developing extended narrative writing skills which were not introduced to pupils at an early enough stage. The school has recognised this and has set aside extra time each week for this area of writing to be developed more fully. These measures are already having an impact on pupils' understanding of story structure and the features that bring writing alive.
105. Children make very good progress with listening skills, because teachers have high expectations of them. From their first weeks in school, they are expected to listen to instructions and follow them carefully. They are given good opportunities to listen to each other, for example at the end of the literacy hour when they share their work. Speaking skills develop less rapidly; while higher attainers are very articulate and fluent, those of average and below average ability often lack confidence to develop their answers beyond one or two words. In some lessons, for example in religious education in a year two class, a significant percentage of children found it difficult to express their thoughts and feelings clearly. On occasions, some teachers miss opportunities to develop pupils' speaking skills because they do not always encourage them to extend their answers or to use vocabulary with increasing precision. Some teachers make insufficient use of the excellent role-play areas in each classroom, to fully support the development of speaking skills. However, children make very good progress in developing the vocabulary related to other subject areas, such as numeracy and science.
106. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in all areas of English. This is because they receive good quality teaching and support from all adults working with them. They work towards very specific targets, which they understand themselves. Good assessment strategies ensure that pupils quickly move on to the next steps in learning.
107. Teaching in English at Key Stage 1 ranges from satisfactory to very good, and is good in the majority of lessons. Where teaching is best, teachers use questioning techniques very well to assess pupils' understanding and extend their learning. They introduce and explain work skilfully and enthusiastically, ensuring that pupils understand what they are expected to learn. Work is carried out at a brisk pace. A strength of teaching in literacy is the high quality, detailed planning, which ensures that all ability levels are challenged appropriately. The quality of teachers' assessments and their usefulness in planning future learning is also a



strength, particularly in reading. In all classes, teachers closely assess pupils' progress against the learning objectives they set out. They mark work thoroughly and constructively, making useful comments about ways in which work can be improved. Where teaching is more ordinary, teachers do not always encourage pupils to develop their answers fully or provide enough instruction and support, for example, in carrying out role-play related to the story they had read, in a Year 1 class.

108. Pupils respond well to all aspects of English and particularly to shared reading sessions in the literacy hour. They enjoy the stories chosen for them, join in enthusiastically with the reading and are keen to answer questions. They work on tasks with good levels of concentration and independence, both individually and in groups.
109. Information technology makes a highly effective contribution to literacy development. Pupils' have excellent planned opportunities to use, for example, word processors, dictionary programs, phonic games and talking books.
110. Homework is provided regularly and contributes well to pupils' progress. It is centred mainly around reading and spelling. Research tasks relating to topic areas are also given. Reading diaries provide a good link between home and school.
111. The co-ordinator manages the subject very well. She is strongly committed to achieving high standards for pupils and provides very clear direction and excellent support for staff. This high quality leadership has a very positive effect on teaching and learning in English. The literacy strategy is very well established throughout the school and contributes to the high standards achieved.
112. Resources for English are plentiful, well organised and of good quality. Each classroom has a very well stocked library corner and the range of Big Books and guided group readers is excellent. The learning environment created to support literacy is very strong; classrooms and other areas of the school are rich in examples of print, lively and stimulating. Pupils benefit greatly from taking part in its creation and their work is highly valued.

## **Mathematics**

113. Pupils have achieved above average standards in mathematics national tests and assessments for the past three years. In the 1999 statutory tests for pupils aged seven, the school achieved well above average results. Within this, the proportion of pupils achieving the level expected for this age (90 per cent) was the same as the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving a higher level (37 per cent) was much higher than nationally. Compared to similar schools, results are very good. The 1999 results show an improvement on the previous year in the number of pupils attaining the higher level.
114. The attainment of the present Year 2 pupils is well above average and their numeracy skills are very good. They have a strong understanding of place value, with high attainers recognising numbers in the hundred thousands. Most are confident and quick with simple calculations, such as working out in their head the correct change from 20 pence. They are confident in working out half of given numbers up to 100 though not comfortable with working out quarters. Pupils are keen to explain how they have reached their answers and offer alternative methods that they might have used.
115. Pupils have a good understanding of other aspects of mathematics such as shape and space. They can, for example, name two and three-dimensional shapes and explain their properties. They show a good understanding of data handling when they create tally charts and transfer the

data onto pictograms. Information technology plays a major part in extending their understanding of data handling; for example when they create spreadsheets.

116. Most pupils make very good progress. The school is following the guidance of the National Numeracy Strategy and teachers place a strong emphasis on the development of mental skills. At the same time most lessons offer opportunities for pupils to use and apply their skills, using practical apparatus and resources. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and their progress is good. Their work is well matched to their abilities, particularly when they work in small groups with an adult. For example, a group of Year 1 pupils responded well in learning the number bonds to ten with a support assistant. The system by which teachers plan together on a weekly basis using the results of their assessments of pupils' progress is highly effective. It ensures that pupils are challenged at the right level from week to week and that they make good progress over time.
117. Three quarters of the teaching in mathematics is good or better, with the other quarter satisfactory. Forty two per cent of the lessons observed were either very good or excellent. Teachers have very strong relationships with the pupils and they plan, organise and manage their lessons effectively. Lessons are well balanced between sharp and useful oral mental arithmetic introductions, challenging activities and summaries at the end. The summaries are used particularly well to check that pupils have understood the main objectives of the lesson. Such progress was demonstrated in one Year 2 lesson, where pupils were learning the advantages of presenting information from a tally charts as a graph. At the beginning most children felt that the information was clearer in the chart itself but by the end were able to see how much easier it was to answer questions using the graph they had made. In all lessons there is a strong element of direct teaching during which teachers explain and demonstrate new ideas to pupils very well. Teachers give a great deal of attention to developing mathematical vocabulary; for example in one reception lesson, the question 'can anybody see a word on the board that means sort into colours?' confirmed that pupils knew the meaning of 'classify'. Much is achieved through high quality questioning which checks on what children know, leads them to build on their ideas and gets them to explain how they have arrived at particular answers. For example in Year 2 the question 'why do you think it is zero?' led on to one pupil explaining his understanding of counting in even numbers. In reception, questions such as "How can I find out which one holds more?" or for lower attainers "Can you find me a full container?" challenged pupils appropriately and helped them to understand capacity.
118. There are no common weaknesses across the mathematics teaching but now and again lessons are more ordinary because the quality of one feature is not so good. For example, in most oral mental arithmetic sessions teachers are good at aiming different questions at groups of differing abilities but occasionally the questions are not well suited to all. Questions asked by teachers are not so effective when they require only one-word answers rather than getting pupils to think more deeply and explain more widely how they arrive at an answer.
119. There are many occasions during the school day where number skills are imaginatively practised. For example counting songs are sometimes sung, particularly by younger children, and in one Year 1 class, pupils' registration was undertaken by counting numbers backwards from 30. However, although there is much instinctive taking of opportunities to apply mathematics skills, their use in other subjects such as science or design and technology is not planned in enough detail.
120. Pupils are enthusiastic about mathematics and they work very hard in lessons. They become absorbed by the interesting practical activities, and the younger ones at times become entranced by the best teaching. They show mature attitudes when they collaborate in groups, particularly in organising themselves to carry out a task.

121. Management of the subject by the co-ordinator is very good. Training for the implementation of the national numeracy arrangements has been thorough and has improved the teaching of mathematics. Both the co-ordinator and headteacher have monitored lessons and this has led to more effective teaching in mental arithmetic.

## Science

122. There are no tests in science for pupils at Key Stage 1, but the 1999 teacher assessments at the end of the key stage showed that pupils' performance was above the national average and above that for similar schools. The proportion of pupils exceeding the expected level was well above average. Inspection findings support this picture. Overall attainment is well above average and all groups of pupils make very good progress.
123. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a very secure knowledge about basic life processes. They can explain that plants require light, water, and nutrients from the soil if they are to grow, and that humans need liquid, food and rest to survive. They can describe how the heart works as a pump and beats faster when we exercise. Pupils can also classify objects in terms of natural or man-made, and those that have been alive or have never been alive. They can sort materials into groups and explain why their properties make them suited for particular purposes. When asked about changes to materials from heating, pupils explain that some changes are reversible, such as water to ice, whilst others such as bread becoming toast are not. In their work on physical processes, pupils' knowledge is well developed. They can explain in simple terms how we hear sounds and how they become fainter with distance. Some can talk about gravity and its effects and others can explain that the sun is a light source whilst the moon merely reflects light. Pupils show good scientific skills as they predict the melting behaviour of different blocks of ice, observe and record their melting rate over a full day and discuss the accuracy of their original predictions on the basis of results. Pupils have a secure understanding of the importance of a fair test when investigating, describing it as "keeping as much as you can the same to make sure it's fair". The highest attaining pupils were able to deduce that fair testing was not necessary in the case of the melting ice investigation, because the frozen balloons used were already of different shapes, and were not being compared.
124. Younger pupils in the key stage are progressing well as they build upon their earlier experiences in reception, where they have experimented with the behaviour of different materials such as wet and dry sand and closely observed a range of natural objects. Year 1 pupils have developed a good understanding of the importance of our senses and the ways in which we use them. Through relevant activities such as describing different objects when blindfolded, pupils learn that our sense of touch gives us clues about features such as shape, texture and weight.
125. The curriculum in science is well organised to provide a balanced experience across all the main strands of the subject. Lesson plans include sufficiently varied activities to provide enough challenge for all levels of ability. There is appropriate emphasis on practical tasks and investigations, and pupils are used to having to make predictions or 'confident guesses with reasons' as they describe them. There is a good range of recording undertaken, as pupils draw diagrams, write individual accounts of investigations, and make brief notes as observations are made. Information technology is well used to support the science curriculum through pupils' word-processing accounts of some of their activities and the use of spreadsheets to record findings from tasks such as a 'mini beast' hunt.
126. Pupils' work is regularly assessed and annotated samples are retained in 'special work books' and teachers keep records of their progress at the end of each unit of work in relation to expectations. Teachers' evaluations of pupils' progress are well used as they regularly meet to

plan the next programme of work for their year group and lessons learnt are readily shared between colleagues in order to improve future planning.

127. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good, and it is good or better in three quarters of the lessons seen. The features that characterise the best lessons include first rate questioning which both draws out pupils' level of understanding and prompts them to deeper insight. Teachers are skilled at focusing their main teaching at the really important elements of the topic being covered, as for example, when in Year 2, the teacher challenged the pupils to decide where the coldest part of a block of ice would be and to explain why. Good opportunities are taken by teachers to promote pupils' independence as learners. In another Year 2 lesson, for example, they were given the opportunity to use a tape recorder to capture their observations of melting ice whenever they had something to record.
128. Pupils enjoy their work and show very good levels of concentration. They respond very well to the encouraging manner shown by teachers and co-operate readily over practical tasks.
129. The subject is well managed and the co-ordinator's support for colleagues in the form of activity ideas to back up the scheme of work and guidance to assist with organisation of lessons, contributes significantly to the overall standards in science. Since the last inspection, when standards, progress and teaching were described as broadly sound, there has been significant improvement in the subject.

## **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

### **129. Information technology**

130. Standards of attainment are well above national expectations by the end of the key stage. The school has made excellent improvements in the provision of information technology since the last inspection. By the end of the key stage children can use spreadsheets on pocket books to insert data about mini-beasts from their local study of the area. They can retrieve information from a simple database and can organise facts about themselves into different categories to create a database using a card index box. They are able to use all the icons on the toolbar of a graphic software package called 'Dazzle', with fine levels of control and imagination. They develop designs of chocolate-making machines from initial paper-based drawings then enhance their work imaginatively, demonstrating a sophisticated use of the drawing and colouring tools. This is especially effective where pupils have created pictures in the style of the artist Mondrian.
131. Pupils can 'log on' using personal user and passwords and save their work to personalised directories and files. This allows them to develop independent skills and a growing understanding of computer environments. Pupils use a publishing package to create leaflets and Charlie Bucket birthday cards from their topic about Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory. This enriches their literacy skills and enhances their understanding of how technology is used around them. Many pupils are aware of the internet and eagerly bring in research from home. They are able to use their knowledge to programme control devices such as a 'Roamer' so that it follows their mapped out route.
132. By the end of the key stage, children can discuss the uses of information technology in the real world and have examined the uses of photocopiers, tape recorders and other control technology in the school, such as light switches. They have explored the effects of enlarging their writing and pictures and have investigated how each switch and button has a function. They have also looked around the local area to search for the uses of technology. This has included a trip to

Sainsbury's where they used the digital camera to capture images of visitors and examples of technology seen on a shopping trip.

133. All pupils make very good progress throughout the school, building on existing skills by using the full range of equipment. Year 1 pupils for example, were delighted to discover the effect that they could achieve by clicking the teardrop icon on their toolbar. Children aged five can draw letters and simple pictures such as waves and a lighthouse, using the mouse very accurately. Pupils demonstrate a very good attitude to information technology and this makes a strong contribution to their social development. They are encouraged to offer their expertise to support each other when learning new skills. For example, they demonstrate to each other how to use the spray tool to make smoke for a finely drawn machine. Many Year 1 pupils often help each other to negotiate the dialogue boxes on screen. They explain which key word or simple phrase to search for, such as 'save' or 'not save', and confidently say what will happen next.
134. Teaching is very good and often excellent. It is successfully transforming the children's learning, by challenging their skills and understanding to a high standard. As a consequence of this, information technology is enhancing other subjects such as literacy, mathematics, art, history, environmental work and research skills. Teachers plan exceptionally well and use very effective methods to develop pupil understanding and skills, paying close attention to any potential difficulties in the technology. For example, a pupil with special educational needs was able to relocate the colour toolbar by dragging on screen because of the excellent teacher support and their awareness that this might cause difficulty.
135. The curriculum is planned very well with all the elements of communicating and handling information, modelling and control clearly designed into each year group topic. It has recently been reorganised to take account of the new national scheme for information technology. Subject management is excellent. Information technology is a major strength of the school because the whole-school community has worked very effectively to implement their vision with the result that both pupils and staff are learning together. Recent developments have centred on the imaginative use of space beside a corridor to create the new computer suite as a spaceship. The school is taking care to build up a good range of appropriate software including CD-ROMs for different subjects such as Bible stories, talking books such as Peter Rabbit and Tizzy's Toy Box, alongside encyclopaedia for study skills. The provision of a skilled assistant in this suite positively enhances the teaching and gives pupils a good amount of prime hands-on time to develop their skills with excellent levels of adult support. Pupils' skill development is further supported by the good number and range of classroom-based computers that support modelling, word processing and publishing.
135. **Religious education**
136. Standards in religious education are similar to those found in most schools. By the end of Year 2, pupils can retell a number of familiar Bible stories, such as the story of Noah and the birth of Jesus. They are aware of some of the events of importance in both Christianity and other faiths and cultures, such as the Jewish festival of Hanukah, Chinese New Year and Christmas. Most pupils can express their ideas and feelings about concepts such as sharing and caring for friends and family members. They understand that prayer is a way in which people of different faiths communicate with God.
137. Pupils make satisfactory progress in religious education. In Year 1, pupils develop a sound understanding of the importance of light as a symbol of Judaism and Christianity. They can explain how members of the Jewish faith celebrate Hanukkah and find similarities with the way Christians celebrate Christmas. Pupils show an appreciation of what it means to be a good

friend, both in writing and practically in everyday situations. In Year 2, pupils demonstrate consideration for the thoughts and feelings of others as they listen respectfully to each other in class discussions. They compose prayers to thank God for food, as part of their work on Harvest. These show an understanding of prayer as a means of giving thanks for the good things in life and also of a growing spiritual awareness. These activities, in addition to regular teaching in assemblies, contribute well to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

138. The majority of pupils respond well to religious education. They listen carefully, for example when the teacher reads stories and when other pupils are speaking. However, some pupils are a little reticent about expressing their feelings and ideas. Not all teachers give such pupils the opportunity to develop their answers beyond one or two words. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with skilled support.
139. The quality of teaching in the small number of lessons observed ranged from satisfactory to very good. A particular strength is the range and quality of experiences provided for children. Good opportunities are given for role play and this deepens the children's understanding for example, of how people celebrate important events. Work is recorded in a wide variety of ways, which engage the pupils' interest and develop their enthusiasm for the subject. Good use is made of the pupils' literacy skills as they make booklets and posters and retell the stories they have heard, in both words and pictures. Some teachers use questioning skills well to draw out the pupils' ideas and feelings. On occasions however, teachers are less clear about the religious dimension of what they are expecting their pupils to learn and this affects progress.
140. Resource provision for the subject is good. A wide range of books and artefacts are available to support topics. These are well organised and accessible. Pupils' work is thoughtfully and imaginatively displayed throughout the school and this confirms the importance that is placed on the subject. Visits are made to local churches and visitors from other religions come into school to talk about their faith. Opportunities are provided, through class assemblies, for children to share their work with other pupils and their parents.
141. The school currently follows locally agreed guidelines for the subject, which provides sound guidance for teachers and progression for pupils. These are due to be revised in the near future.
142. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

## **Art**

143. Standards in art are well above those found in most schools for the age of the pupils and all groups make very good progress. This represents an improvement since the time of the last inspection when despite some examples of good work, overall standards were described as broadly in line with expectations.
144. Pupils have produced high quality work in a wide range of media, including pencil, chalks, pastels and paint. Year 2 pupils for example have made well-observed pencil drawings of feathers showing a good awareness of line, and have mixed papers and fabrics together with a good sense of colour to produce collage pictures on the theme of fire. Pupils have mixed felt pen and colour wash to make effective pictures on the same theme after a visit from the fire brigade.
145. The curriculum for art is very well organised with guidance from the subject co-ordinator, in order to provide a good variety of experiences, both in two-dimensional and three-dimensional

work. As well as directing staff towards a balanced programme of activity, the scheme, with its planning checklist, is effective in ensuring that pupils work in different scales. This has led to some impressive work in the styles of other artists such as Andy Warhol and Mondrian. In the case of the latter, information technology has also been used very skilfully as pupils have used their knowledge of the artist's style to create their own versions of his work with blocks of colour. The visit of an artist to work with the pupils on sculpture and the school's art week are examples of the way in which the curriculum has been enriched.

146. Little direct teaching of art was observed, and where it was taking place, a parent helper was taking the role of principle supervisor of the activity. However, the teacher had briefed the parent well and retained an overview of pupils' progress as they worked co-operatively in pairs on their collages. Attitudes to work were very good as pupils listened carefully to instructions and showed a good level of motivation and enjoyment in their work.

### **Design and technology**

147. Standards by the end of the key stage are better than those found in most schools for pupils of this age and progress for all groups is good. This represents an improvement since the time of the last inspection.
148. Achievement is strongest in the area of making skills. Pupils show confidence in the way in which they approach tasks, and this largely stems from having been given plenty of opportunities to experiment with a range of materials and techniques. For example, the curriculum regularly builds in experiences of joining different materials together using such varied methods as gluing, pinning, taping, sewing or tying. Pupils then use their awareness of these options when they construct models such as vehicles that have to carry a chocolate bar as part of their work on the topic of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. Design and evaluation skills are developing well. The curriculum provides plenty of chances for pupils to make their own decisions over what materials or methods to use, and they regularly record whether or not their finished product meets the requirements of the task. Pupils across the key stage build up valuable practical experience through extensive work with a good range of construction kits. Study of objects such as bicycles and tricycles, in Year 2 helps them to understand why things are designed as they are, and in this particular case, how cogs and wheels play an important part in the workings of such products.
149. In the lessons observed, the teaching was satisfactory, although within the variety of activities underway, the design and technology element was not the main focus of the teaching. However, teachers set up interesting challenges for pupils and oversee their progress effectively, as they intervene to prompt further ideas or to question pupils' choice of materials or design.
150. The subject co-ordinator manages development well, monitoring the standard of work, adapting the nationally recommended scheme of work to the school's needs, and providing colleagues with ideas to support their lessons. For example, prompts for teachers on what questions to ask pupils at both the design and evaluation stages of their work include 'What will you use to make it?', 'What will it look like when it's finished?' and 'Will it do what we intend it to?'. These help pupils to focus on important decisions in the design process. Assessment of pupils' work is done through scrutiny of their finished products and inclusion of some planning activities in their 'special work' books. Whilst this does not result in adjustments to the challenge offered to individuals, it helps teachers to consider how well pupils completed activities and to further improve their future presentation of lessons.

150. **Geography**

151. No geography lessons were observed during the course of the inspection. Scrutiny of children's work from the previous year and conversations with children indicate that standards of attainment are above national expectations and that children make good progress as they move through the school.
152. By the end of the key stage all children know about the differences between towns, cities and villages and can explain their features. They talk about the number of people, the amount of activities in shops and facilities such as car parks and swimming pools. They can describe features that they like and dislike and higher attaining pupils identify problems that litter and graffiti bring comparing it with trees and open spaces in parks. They can talk about why some towns are situated beside the sea and others are surrounded by roads and houses. They understand that some houses are detached whereas others are together in rows. Some pupils can talk about North and South America and can identify Canada on a world map, also explaining about different breads from a variety of countries. They create posters which show their understanding of the need to care about their environment and this is reflected in the manner in which they value it, talking in great detail about looking after spaces, trees and flowers.
153. Across the school, pupils record the weather daily, taking note of changes. They use appropriate vocabulary such as temperature, rainfall and climate and can talk about changes in these. Five year olds were observing the fading light at the end of the day and relating this to weather and their investigations about natural and artificial light.
154. Pupils make good progress in map work by making very good use of the environment to draw maps of the school grounds including simple keys and symbols. In Year 2, pupils create maps of Charlie's town as part of their topic, using their knowledge of map work. Older pupils use a variety of scales from that of the school garden to that of an island from the story of the Isle of Struay and they use basic two figure co-ordinates to locate feature on maps. They collect natural local objects and enhance other subjects by using a digital camera to photograph features of the area.
155. Geography has improved since the last inspection and subject management is very good. There is now an environment policy and a scheme of work in place and this helps to ensure that skills are developed more effectively and progressively, especially in mapping. As a result of this, pupils also have a growing awareness of different places. Some can identify the locations of Glasgow and London, for example, on a map of the United Kingdom. Resources are good and the school makes very good use of them by making them part of pupils' everyday learning.

155.  
**History**

156. A small number of history lessons were seen during the course of the inspection but in addition, scrutiny of children's work and conversations with children indicate that standards of attainment are in line with national expectations. Children make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. They have an increasing awareness and knowledge about the past including great events and people, such as the great fire of London and Guy Fawkes. They can talk about the differences between now and then by referring to very effective timelines that label the dates such as 1700 and have time-related vocabulary alongside.
157. By the end of the key stage, they are able to explain that knowledge about the past is taken from first-hand evidence such as the writings in Samuel Pepys's diary entries. They understand secondary sources such as books and details in paintings from the time. They can ask



questions to pursue differences and comparisons but also frame ideas about the link between cause and effect. For example when discussing the great fire, they suggested that it might have started in the baker's shop, that the ovens did not have gas or electricity and that the people could have jumped in the river to escape the fire. They are well able to draw out implications from evidence. For example, pupils could explain the effect of the great fire on the wooden house materials at the time by using their knowledge about materials. Pupils have also produced some clay relief sculptures of Grandparents' faces in connection with discussions of the past. These show how pupils have worked from personal observation to interpret features of ageing into their clay images very well.

158. Throughout the key stage, there are strong links with literacy and numeracy, making progress satisfactory because pupils are using these skills to help understand the past. For example, pupils write historical accounts of events and they calculate time spans between now and then using their timelines. In Year 1 pupils are developing their understanding of chronology by ordering old toys by age. They discuss what makes some teddy bears look older than others, drawing out ideas about age, past and background.
159. The good teaching ensures that pupils make good use of the school's own resources of historical evidence such as newspapers, photos, and even charred books from the past school fire. Teachers make good use of the locality to explore incidental features about the past and this is planned into environmental work. Teacher knowledge is good and planning ensures that pupils build on their understanding and knowledge.
160. Subject management is good. A strong feature of the way the curriculum is organised is the way in which the school takes account of national guidelines to enhance the subject, particularly through literacy and numeracy. Resources are good and are well focused on what pupils need to support their understanding. These include the use of experts and local visitors to talk about the school as it used to be. Parents provide some very effective homemade resources. These include taped recordings from grandparents and questionnaire responses with illustrations of their toys when they were children.
160. **Music**
161. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection and are similar to those found in most schools. Pupils' progress is good and all parts of the curriculum are given appropriate time and attention.
162. The children are confident singers, able to sing in tune and produce a sound that has good quality and tone. They can follow a melody closely and show a good sense of pitch when singing hymns and songs unaccompanied. The youngest children are able to select and handle percussion instruments correctly. They are already aware of terms like the 'pulse' of the music and know what this means. By Year 1, pupils can clap rhythms accurately, count beats and they make good progress as they build these into sequences. By Year 2, pupils can clap more complex rhythms and choose instruments that are suitable for particular effects they want to create. They are beginning to understand how pieces of music are written; for example that A-B-A describes a piece that has the same beginning and end with a different middle.
163. There is good teaching of music with all classes taught by the co-ordinator. The best lessons were seen in reception and Year 1 where the pace was sharp, lesson objectives clearly set out, activities challenging and clear explanations were given to the pupils. In one Year 2 lesson, although teaching was satisfactory, it was not as good because the way the activities were organised was not best suited to the aims. This was changed for another Year 2 class, with better outcomes. In lessons where instruments were used, pupils responded well to interesting

ways of giving them out. For example in one lesson, pupils had to sing a response to the teachers sung question 'whose birthday is it in...' to indicate their turn.

164. A strength of the provision is the development of musical skills at times other than actual music lessons. For example, younger pupils sing number songs in class to help develop counting skills. Dance lessons provide opportunities for pupils to listen to music and interpret it. Teachers often use musical terms during these lessons such 'feel the pulse'. A lunchtime music club involves pupils both in singing and in playing African drums. A group of these children singing in assembly produced a good performance. On another day, a smaller group performed confidently on the drums, with different children taking it in turns to lead.
165. Management of the subject is good. The updated scheme and skills checklist now coming into use provide a strong means of ensuring pupils' progression from year to year.

165. **Physical education**

166. Standards in physical education are better than in most schools. During the inspection, activities were observed in dance and gymnastics, with games activities planned for other times in the year. Standards have improved since the previous inspection.
167. Most children show good co-ordination in both gymnastics and dance, and they use space very well. The youngest move around the hall with great control and they are already aware that they warm up at the beginning of lessons 'to get their hearts beating fast'. In dance they reflect the mood and beat of the music well as they demonstrate 'shaking' or 'spiky' movements. Progress is good in Year 1, where pupils plan and perform more sophisticated movements; for example a group of six stretching and curling together or pairs mirroring each other's movements. Good progress continues in Year 2 where pupils' apparatus work, for example in balancing, is thoughtful and well controlled. Pupils watch each other at work and give sensible reasons why they like a particular movement or how it might be improved. Their dance movements show imagination and poise. When necessary, pupils with special educational needs are closely supported by classroom assistants to ensure they work in line with the rest of the class but at their own level.
168. Teaching in all the lessons observed was good except in one where it was very good. Lessons are planned in detail, with a warm up activity at the beginning. Teaching focuses on developing skills and correct techniques; for example ensuring pupils bend their knees on landing, stretch feet and toes in stretches or feel the pulse of the music in dance. Teachers use demonstration effectively by choosing pupils to show good technique and asking others to evaluate what they see. The teaching generates a great deal of enthusiasm and pupils are very keen to take part. Pupils carry the gymnastics apparatus well but sometimes it is already out and this reduces the space for, and quality of, floorwork. High levels of attention are given to safe practice.
169. Management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has only been in post for a short time but is already beginning to influence the way the subject is taught. For example during one lesson, she worked alongside the class teacher with different groups of pupils, boosting the quality of their movements and sharing the outcomes. The curriculum offers pupils a balanced programme over each year, and staff are provided with lists of skills to ensure they build appropriately on what has gone before.

## PART C: INSPECTION DATA

### SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

170. A team of five inspectors spent a total of 19 days in the school. The evidence base for the inspection report was drawn from the following:

- 66 lesson observations which amounted to 42 hours in total;
- ten hours were spent sampling pupils' work and testing their knowledge;
- a sample of pupils from every year group was heard reading;
- assemblies break times and lunchtimes were observed;
- all teachers with subject responsibilities were involved in discussions with inspectors;
- discussions were held with the headteacher and Chair of Governors;
- the registered inspector met with members of the governing body and noted their views;
- an extensive range of documentation was analysed, including teachers' plans, administrative and financial records, and development plans;
- 19 parents attended a meeting and gave their views on the school;
- 55 parents returned questionnaires and these were analysed.

### DATA AND INDICATORS

#### Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y2	260	1	34	28

#### Teachers and classes

##### Qualified teachers (Y1 - Y2)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	23.6

##### Education support staff (Y1 - Y2)

Total number of education support staff:	6
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	111.5

## Average class size

Average class size:

29
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## Financial data

Financial year:

1998 / 1999
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	£
Total income	466,813
Total expenditure	449,904
Expenditure per pupil	1,573
Balance brought forward from previous year	38,734
Balance carried forward to next year	55,643

**PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out:

260
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Number of questionnaires returned:

55
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**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	48	43	5	4	-
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	50	44	2	4	-
The school handles complaints from parents well	20	51	24	5	-
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	25	63	5	7	-
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	25	55	13	5	2
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	37	58	5	-	-
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	29	47	17	7	-
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	27	66	2	5	-
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	41	47	12	-	-
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	45	44	11	-	-
My child(ren) like(s) school	45	55	-	-	-