

INSPECTION REPORT

ST BRIDGET'S R.C. PRIMARY SCHOOL

Warrington.

Unique reference number: 111377

Inspection number: 182540

Headteacher: Mrs K. Laskowski

Reporting inspector : Mr A.V. Calderbank

7979

Date of inspection: November 22nd – 25th, 1999

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Information about the school

Type of school : Junior and Infant

Type of control : Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils : 4 - 11

Gender of pupils : Mixed

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Appropriate authority : Governing Body

Name of chair of governors : Mrs G. Prendergast

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J.M. Watkins	Under-fives; Mathematics; History; Geography.	The curriculum and assessment.
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WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The school has a very positive ethos. It provides a supportive working atmosphere in which pupils' self-esteem is developed. Provision for pupils' welfare is very good.
- The quality of teaching in sixty per cent of lessons is good or better.
- Curriculum planning provides a very clear structure for pupils' learning.
- Assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science are very thorough.
- The school gives pupils a good grounding in basic reading skills.
- The headteacher sets high standards. Financial management is very good.
- Parents are made to feel very welcome by the school.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development and gives them good opportunities to be involved in aspects of the school's life.

• WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS WEAKNESSES

- I. Pupils' spelling skills and standards of presentation are not developed consistently throughout the school and they are sometimes unsatisfactory.
- II. By the time pupils leave standards of attainment in information technology are unsatisfactory.
- III. Teachers' written comments on pupils' work are not always sufficiently informative.
- IV. Annual reports to parents on their children's attainment do not include comments on the progress made in all subjects.

The school's considerable strengths far outweigh the few weaknesses. Measures to address the few shortcomings will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

Progress since the last inspection has been good. Overall standards have risen in most subjects. Significant improvements have been made in science and pupils are now making satisfactory progress in both key stages. Curriculum planning and the use made of assessment in English, mathematics and science has improved greatly and, as a result, the under-achievement reported in most subjects has been addressed successfully in Key Stage 2. However, standards in information technology and in spelling and presentation of work are unsatisfactory. The headteacher and governors have made great efforts to upgrade the learning environment. Provision made for pupils' cultural development is now satisfactory. The close working relationships established with local primary and high schools has enabled pupils to engage in a broader range of cultural activities. Staff have worked hard in reviewing and developing schemes of work for all subjects. This has ensured that all required aspects of the National Curriculum are taught. Since the time of the last inspection the quality of teaching has improved and no longer has major shortcomings.

The school is well placed to make further improvements. The headteacher provides good

leadership. She consults with governors, staff and parents in drawing up the School Development Plan. This well written plan is a valuable working document.

STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS

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

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

The information above shows that standards in English and science are above average when compared with those found in similar schools and well above average in mathematics. Last year's class of eleven-year-olds had an above average percentage of pupils with special educational needs including two who had statements. As a consequence, when the school's results in the 1999 National Curriculum tests are compared with all schools, they are well below average in English and below average in science. Pupils achieve average standards in mathematics. The current work of the majority of eleven-year-olds shows standards in English, mathematics and science to be close to the national average. However, there is an even larger percentage of pupils on the special needs register, some of whom have only recently been admitted to the school and this will adversely effect the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard.

Many children have below average skills when they enter school. They make good progress in most aspects of their work in the Reception class and standards by the age of five are broadly in line with the expectations for the age group. However, pupils' development in creative skills is unsatisfactory, while progress in writing is satisfactory overall from a below average start. A significant number of children do not achieve the expected standard in these aspects.

In Key Stage 1 satisfactory progress is made in English, mathematics and science. Standards in these subjects are close to the national average.

Standards of achievement in information technology at the end of both key stages are unsatisfactory. Pupils' spelling skills, standards of presentation are inconsistently developed throughout the school and are sometimes unsatisfactory.

Progress in both key stages is satisfactory in design and technology, geography, history, swimming and all other aspects of physical education inspected. Standards in all these subjects are similar to those found in most schools. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about attainment in art at the end of both key stages and music at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils make satisfactory progress in music during Key Stage 2 and achieve standards similar to those found in most schools. Religious education was the subject of a separate diocesan inspection.

QUALITY OF TEACHING

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

In almost six out of ten lessons seen during the week of the inspection teaching was good or better. 98% of lessons were satisfactory or better. Strengths of the teaching include very good planning and the good use made of assessment to inform curriculum planning. Teachers have worked hard in introducing both the literacy and numeracy hours and this was reflected in the overall good quality of teaching seen in these subjects.

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	• Good. Most pupils are obedient and co-operate well with each other both in and out of lessons.
Attendance	Satisfactory. In line with the national average. Most pupils are punctual. This has a positive effect upon pupils' learning.
Ethos	Very good. The school consistently strives to improve standards. Relationships throughout the school are very positive.
Leadership and management	The school is well led by the headteacher. She provides strong leadership and sets clear expectations.
Curriculum	Good; work is very well planned. Assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science are very good and the information gathered is used to inform planning and to set targets for individual pupils. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good.
Pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with educational needs is good. Most pupils receive appropriate support for their individual difficulties to enable them to take a full part in the life of the school.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good. Improvements have been made in the provision for pupils' cultural development. Spiritual, social and moral development is promoted very successfully.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	The pupil-teacher ratio is broadly average. Resources for learning are good overall. The accommodation is bright and cheerful.
Value for money	Good

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

• **THE PARENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<p>V. The way the school encourages them to play an active part in their children's' education.</p> <p>VI. The positive effect the school's values and attitudes have on their children.</p> <p>VII. The way the school brings out the best in their children.</p> <p>VIII. They find it easy to approach the school with question or problems to do with their child(ren).</p>	<p>There were no aspects of the school about which a significant number of parents were unhappy.</p>

The warm and positive atmosphere which is appreciated by parents was very apparent during the period of the inspection.

Parents are consulted regularly and have the opportunity to contribute suggestion for inclusion in the School Development Plan. As a result there were no aspects of the school about which a significant number of parents were unhappy.

Key issues for action

In order to improve the standards of attainment and quality of education, the school should:

a. raise standards in information technology by:

- providing appropriate in-service training to develop staff confidence and competence in teaching information technology and using it across the curriculum;
- providing appropriate opportunities for all pupils to develop and apply their information technology capability in their study of National Curriculum subjects;
- ensuring that all subject co-ordinators monitor the inclusion of information technology in the teaching of their subject;
- ensuring that all classes have ready access to computers;

[see paragraphs 11, 35, 37, 71, 109, 162, 163 and 166 in the main report]

a. improve the standard of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of work throughout the school;

[see paragraphs 11, 35, 36, 42, 71, 109, 112, 116, 124, 134, 149 and 156 in the main report]

c. improve standards in spelling throughout the school;

[see paragraphs 11, 35, 36, 42, 71, 109, 112 and 116 in the main report]

d. ensure that end of year reports on pupils' progress record the progress made in all subjects.

[see paragraphs 48, 65 and 75 in the main report]

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. After each issue a reference is given to the main paragraph in the report where it is indicated.

- Make sure that in Key Stage 1 all writing tasks and the activities planned in science sufficiently challenge higher attaining pupils.

[see paragraphs 14, 35 and 42 in the main report.]

- Ensure that pupils' skills in art are consistently developed in Key Stage 2.

[see paragraphs 17 and 139 in the main report.]

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum.

[see paragraphs 13, 126 and 150 in the main report.]

- Improve the quality of creative skills for the under-fives.

[see paragraphs 6, 95, 97 and 101 in the main report.]

Introduction

• Characteristics of the school

1.St. Bridget's is a one-form entry Roman Catholic (Voluntary Aided) Primary School catering for boys and girls in the four to eleven age group. The school is situated in Fearnhead near Warrington. The catchment area has changed significantly since the last inspection when it was very local and the school drew from a reasonable mix of private and council homes. In the last few years there has been a big swing to serving the areas of Orford and Padgate rather than Fearnhead. In these areas there is a high level of unemployment and also a high number of households where there is only one parent. The percentage of adults in the area around the school with higher educational qualifications and of children from high social class households is in line with the national average. The proportion of children in overcrowded homes is slightly below national average. However, these statistics do not reflect the true nature of the intake. For example, a well above average 46% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Many children have below average skills when they enter school and this is confirmed by baseline assessments.

2.The school is smaller than average. Since the previous inspection in 1994, the number of pupils on roll has remained about the same. At the time of the current inspection there were 184 pupils on the register (102 boys and 82 girls). Pupils are placed in seven single-age classes. There are more boys than girls in most year groups. Most of the pupils entering the Reception class have had some form of pre-school education. There are currently 15 children under the age of five attending the school. There are 68 pupils on the register of special educational needs, which is well above average. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs (1.6 per cent) is broadly in line with the national average. There are no pupils from the ethnic minorities.

3.The school serves the Catholic community in the parish of St. Bridget's. The admissions policy indicates that priority is given to families of the Roman Catholic faith who live in this parish.

4.In the Prospectus the first stated aim of the school is to *"pass on to the children our Roman Catholic Faith so that we teach and lead all members of the school community to a knowledge and practice of the love of God and our neighbour."* Other stated aims are to teach *"relevant skills, concepts and attitudes which will equip them for adult life in a rapidly changing technological society"* and to *"promote aesthetic development"*.

5.The school's key priorities for this year include:

- ◆. raising the achievements of pupils with behavioural difficulties;
- ◆. implementing the National Numeracy Strategy;
- ◆. raising standards in literacy;
- ◆. raising standards of achievement in information technology;
- ◆. improving pastoral and community relationships;
- ◆. developing pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural experiences.

Key indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998/9	21 (10)	11 (19)	32 (29)

National Curriculum Test Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	16 (8)	11 (9)	14 (9)
	Girls	9 (16)	9 (17)	8 (19)
	Total	25 (24)	20 (26)	22 (28)
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	78% (83%)	63% (90%)	69% (97%)
	National	82% (80%)	83% (81%)	85% (84%)
Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	15 (9)	13 (9)	16 (10)
	Girls	9 (16)	8 (15)	9 (16)
	Total	24 (25)	21 (24)	25 (26)
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	75% (86%)	66% (83%)	78% (90%)
	National	82% (81%)	86% (85%)	87% (86%)

Attainment at Key Stage 2¹

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998/9	9 (12)	14 (15)	27 (32)

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	5 (10)	6 (8)	6 (8)
	Girls	10 (11)	12 (6)	11 (7)
	Total	15 (21)	18 (14)	17 (15)
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	65% (78%)	78% (52%)	74% (56%)
	National	70% (65%)	69% (59%)	78% (69%)
Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	5 (9)	6 (8)	4 (9)
	Girls	11 (7)	10 (6)	10 (7)
	Total	16 (16)	16 (14)	14 (16)
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	70% (59%)	70% (52%)	61% (59%)
	National	68% (65%)	69% (65%)	75% (71%)

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School 1998/9	2.6%
	National comparative data	6.2%
Unauthorised Absence	School 1998/9	0.4%
	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	12%
Satisfactory or better	98%
Less than satisfactory	2%

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

.. Attainment and progress

1.Many children have below average skills when they enter school. This judgement is supported by baseline assessments and inspection evidence. In the Reception class the majority of children, including those with special needs, make good progress in most aspects of their work and achieve the expected outcomes for the age group. However, pupils' development in creative skills is unsatisfactory, while progress in writing is satisfactory overall from a below average start. A significant number of children do not achieve the expected standard in these areas. However, overall these findings represent an improvement since the previous inspection.

2.Pupils make satisfactory progress in English during Key Stage 1 and by the age of seven the proportion attaining the expected standard is broadly in line with the national average. In the 1999 National Curriculum teacher assessments in English the overall results achieved by pupils showed a decline from the previous year and were below the national average. However, one-third of that particular class were registered as having special educational needs.

3.Satisfactory progress is made throughout Key Stage 2 in English and standards are close to those found in most schools by the end of the key stage. In the 1999 National Curriculum English tests for eleven -year-olds the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard was well below the national average. However, this result was well above the average for similar schools. Though they show a decline over the previous year they reflect the high number of pupils on the special needs register in the class, including two who had statements. There is an even larger percentage of pupils on the special needs register in the current Year 6 and this will adversely effect the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard. Taking the three years 1996 to 1998 together, the performance of pupils in English has been close to the national average. During the same period boys performed better than the national average but girls' results were below average.

4.Speaking and listening skills are average by the end of Key Stage 1 and pupils make satisfactory progress. By the age of seven they listen attentively to stories and to adult instructions. Pupils share their ideas with the rest of the class. In Key stage 2 pupils make good progress and by the age of eleven they speak well. Some develop confidence in public speaking.

5.Standards in reading are satisfactory by the end of Key Stage 1. In the 1999 reading test for seven-year-olds the proportion of pupils attaining Level 2 and above was broadly in line with the national average. The proportion achieving the higher Level 3 was well below the national average. These results were above those found in similar schools at Level 2 but below average at Level 3. Taking the three years 1996 to 1998 together the performance of the pupils in reading was close to the national average. Pupils make sound progress and by the age of seven most have become reasonably fluent readers. They are given a good foundation in phonic skills which enables them to make sense of unfamiliar words. Good progress is made during Key Stage 2 and by the age of eleven the majority of pupils are fluent readers and can locate information using reference books. In the last inspection, reading was seen as a strength and remains so.

6. Standards in writing are broadly average by the end of Key Stage 1 and overall progress is satisfactory. The large number of pupils with special educational needs in last year's class of seven-year-olds adversely affected the percentage of pupils who reached the national expectations in writing. As a result in the 1999 national writing tests for seven-year-olds the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 was well below the national average and the average for similar schools. The previous year the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 and above was above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. Taking the three years 1996 to 1998 together, the results show that pupils' performance in writing was above the national average. During the same period, the performance of boys was close to the national average whilst that of girls was well above. In 1999 no pupil attained Level 3, which would indicate that higher attaining pupils were not sufficiently challenged to achieve a higher level in writing. By the age of seven most can write independently and show awareness of punctuation. During Key Stage 2 pupils make sound progress overall and by the age of eleven they achieve a satisfactory standard and write for a range of purposes. However, information technology is under-used as a resource to develop writing skills in Year 6. Throughout both key stages standards in spelling and the quality of pupils' presentation are sometimes unsatisfactory.

7. The school has made significant progress in raising standards in mathematics since the previous inspection. Satisfactory progress is made in mathematics during Key Stage 1 and standards of attainment are broadly in line with those found in most schools. The results of the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 tests showed a decline from the previous year. On that occasion almost all pupils gained the expected Level 2, a figure well above the national average and just over a fifth achieved Level 3 which was close to the national average. These results were very good when compared with similar schools. The latest test results are well below the national average but reflect the high proportion of pupils with special needs in that class of seven-year-olds. However, taking the three years 1996 to 1998 together the performance of pupils in mathematics was above the national average. During the same period, the performance of boys was close to the national average and that of girls above average. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have developed good oral and mental skills and have a rapid recall of appropriate number facts.

8. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in mathematics during Key Stage 2. As a result, by the age of eleven pupils' attainment is in line with that found in most schools. The proportion achieving the expected Level 4 and above in the National Curriculum tests in mathematics for eleven-year-olds in 1999 was in line with the national average and well above the average for similar schools. These results showed a significant improvement over the previous three years when they were well below the national average. During this period the performance of boys was below the national average and that of girls well below average. By the age of eleven pupils can carry out a variety of mental and written computations to solve problems involving complex numbers by using the four operations. Mathematics is sometimes linked effectively to other subjects, for example the presentation of data using graphs in science. However, not enough opportunities are taken to apply mathematics across the curriculum and to real situations.

9. Standards in science have improved throughout the school since the previous inspection as a result of better planning. Attainment is broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1 and pupils make satisfactory progress. The proportion of pupils attaining Level 2 in the 1998 national assessments in science were above the national average and well above average when compared with similar schools. Though the results of the 1999 teacher assessments showed a decline they reflected the prior attainment of that particular class of seven-year-olds and, while well below the national average, were in line with those found in similar schools. However, no pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in either year. By the end of the

key stage pupils have a sound understanding of the topics covered but higher attainers do not progress as well as might be expected.

10. Progress in science is satisfactory overall during Key Stage 2 but varies between unsatisfactory and good. Inspection evidence shows that by the age of eleven pupils' attainment is close to the national average. The 1999 test results showed a marked improvement over the previous two years in which the performance of both boys and girls was well below the national average. In the latest tests nearly three-quarters of all pupils achieved Level 4 and just over a quarter Level 5. These results were below the national average but above the average for similar schools. By the end of the key stage pupils have a satisfactory understanding of scientific methods and can plan a logical approach to an investigation. Progress is occasionally unsatisfactory when pupils with behavioural problems interrupt the flow of a lesson.

11. Information technology was judged to be an area of weakness in the school at the time of the last inspection. Though standards have improved since the 1994 inspection, pupils' levels of attainment remain below national expectations and progress is unsatisfactory in both key stages. The highest achievements are in word processing applications where some pupils are approaching average standards. Key Stage 1 pupils use keyboard skills to choose the correct words for insertion into sentences. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils use word processors with developing confidence to organise and present their work. They activate CD ROMs to retrieve information. However, pupils are slow at entering text with confidence and have little experience of using spreadsheets.

12. There was insufficient evidence available from pupils' work in Year 2 and in Year 6 to make a judgement about overall standards in art at the end of either key stage. There has been some improvements made since the last inspection especially with regard to pupils' understanding of the work of different artists. Pupils make satisfactory progress during Key Stage 1 in working with a suitable range of media. Progress in art is unsatisfactory overall during Key Stage 2 and pupils' skills are not being developed consistently. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution towards pupils' cultural development.

13. Standards in design and technology have improved since the previous inspection especially at Key Stage 1. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school and by the ages of seven and eleven achieve standards similar to those found in most schools. They are competent in design work and appropriately evaluate their finished products.

14. Attainments in geography and history are better than they were at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils now make satisfactory progress in both key stages and achieve standards similar to those found nationally. In Key Stage 1 in geography they classify pictures to develop an understanding of similarity and differences in urban and rural locations. In Key Stage 2 older pupils are able to use fieldwork and secondary sources to extend their understanding. In history seven-year-olds learn about change over time through topics such as "Homes". By the age of eleven pupils understand the reasons behind differences in the life-styles of sections of a population at given times.

15. The school offers a broad and balanced physical educational programme. In all aspects inspected progress was satisfactory and standards of achievement at the end of each key stage similar to those found in most schools. Records show that standards in swimming are sound.

16. It was not possible to make any judgement about the progress pupils make or overall standards achieved in music at Key Stage 1. Satisfactory progress is made in the development of musical skills during Key Stage 2 and standards are in line with the national expectations for the age group. Good use is made of a visiting specialist teacher to improve pupils' performance.

17. Religious education is to be the subject of a separate diocesan inspection.

18. Pupils with special educational needs are identified at an early stage and their Individual Educational Plans identify appropriate learning targets. They are fully included in all classroom activities and throughout the school they generally make satisfactory progress. However, progress is unsatisfactory when pupils with behavioural problems do not receive enough support during practical activities.

23. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

19. The previous inspection found pupils' attitudes and behaviour to be good and this continues to be the case. Pupils enjoy coming to school. These features help to promote satisfactory progress and sound standards of attainment.

20. Children who are under five settle into school quickly and are learning to behave well and follow school routines. After only a short time in school they are developing positive relationships with each other and their teachers and show an eagerness to learn. They listen well to adults and to each other. They are willing to take turns, for example when using the physical education apparatus.

21. In both key stages most pupils behave well. Occasionally when lessons are long pupils become restless and inattentive. However, they are soon back on task when the pace of the lesson changes and they are involved in different activities. A number of pupils have behaviour difficulties, but the teachers and classroom support assistants handle these well in most classes. Only occasionally, when there is insufficient support, do problems persist. Pupils continue to behave well in the dining room, the playground and when moving around the school. Most are polite and courteous to adults. The behaviour policy is successfully implemented and pupils are eager to earn rewards for good behaviour and good work.

22. Pupils respond positively to the rules and sanctions imposed and are happy to accept the discipline of the school community. No pupils were excluded in the last year. They are confident and enthusiastic. Most are keen to improve their work and respond well to challenging tasks. They concentrate and persevere but sometimes the work they produce is untidy.

23. Relationships are very good and make a significant contribution to pupils' attitudes to learning. Teachers and pupils enjoy each other's company and there is an atmosphere of mutual respect and care. Pupils respond well to the praise and support provided by their teachers. When working together they take turns, share equipment and ideas. Circle time is used effectively to encourage pupils to listen to each other's points of view.

24. Personal development is very good. Older pupils take care of younger ones. This is very effective at lunch times when Year 6 pupils help children in the dining room. This develops confidence and a sense of responsibility in the older pupils whilst helping the younger children to get used to school routines and to feel more secure.

25. The school is very successful in promoting pupils' self esteem. Pupils are developing confidence in their abilities and a shared sense of pride in their school and community. Discussions held with pupils show that they value greatly the opportunity provided for them to take part in a residential visit. Pupils of all ages respond well to the opportunities provided for them to think of others less fortunate than themselves. For example, the 'Love in a Box' appeal to help under-privileged children in other countries is very well supported.

26. Elected representatives from both key stages to School's Council meet each week. They take their responsibilities very seriously in helping to ensure that pupils of all ages have their views taken into account about all aspects of school life.

31. Attendance

27. Attendance rates are satisfactory and in line with the national average. Pupils enjoy coming to school and there is a low rate of unauthorised absence. These levels and patterns of attendance are similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection. Most pupils are punctual arriving at school and a prompt start is made to sessions. This regular and punctual attendance has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Registration is carried out quickly and efficiently in accordance with legal requirements.

32. Quality of education provided

32. Teaching

28. The quality of teaching is good overall. Almost all the teaching seen was at least satisfactory except for one unsatisfactory lesson. In almost six out of every ten lessons, it was good or better. The school has successfully addressed the weakness in teaching identified in the previous inspection report. In most of the lessons the pace and challenge was very appropriate and had a beneficial effect upon the progress pupils were making.

29. In the Reception class the quality of teaching for the under-fives was good or better in two out of every three lessons seen and never less than satisfactory. The teacher's planning contains clear learning objectives linked to the desirable learning outcomes for the age group. When teaching is very good, for example during the literacy sessions, it is characterized by questioning which encourages the pupils to express their views and by the very good use of children's work in the plenary session to reinforce the learning that has taken place during the lesson. Good use is made of the assessment of children's attainment to plan subsequent activities. Follow up work is well matched to pupils' prior attainment and provides appropriate challenge. Good teamwork ensures that effective use is made of the nursery nurse and all volunteer helpers. A suitable range of resources is used well to promote children's learning. There are very good relationships between adults and pupils.

30. In Key Stage 1 the quality of teaching is good in just over half the lessons seen and never less than satisfactory. The teaching of English was consistently good with both teachers incorporating the structure of the literacy hour well into their lessons. A strength of the teaching is the appropriate emphasis given to the teaching of reading. However, not enough emphasis is placed on pupils presenting their work well or on ensuring that pupils develop their spelling skills. Higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged to develop their writing skills. The numeracy sessions have been satisfactorily introduced but groups are not always set clear targets. Weekly numeracy planning is of good quality. In science, teachers use appropriate questioning to ensure that pupils understand, for example, what a circuit is. Throughout the key stage not enough emphasis is placed on pupils using the information technology skills they have learned in the lessons taught weekly by a visiting teacher.

31. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is good overall. In one in every six lessons it is very good. During the week of the inspection out of 29 lessons seen in the key stage only one was unsatisfactory. The pace of the majority of lessons is good and interesting follow up activities maintain the pupils' attention. Teachers have a good subject knowledge of most subjects. The teaching of English, mathematics and science is good overall. However, not enough attention is given to the teaching of spelling or to ensuring that pupils' work is neatly presented. During the week of the inspection very good use was made of a specialist music teacher from the local high school. The work she did had a good impact on the standards pupils achieved. Where the teaching was unsatisfactory the class was distracted by pupils with behavioural problems.

32. Throughout the school, lessons are planned well. Most teachers display a good knowledge and understanding, though some lack confidence in teaching information technology. Here specialist support is provided. Work is usually closely matched to pupils' prior attainment and there is usually a good balance of activities. Teachers use whole-class, group and individual teaching to fit the targets of the lesson. For example, whole-class teaching is a good feature of most lessons and is used to introduce new information or to make the purpose of learning very clear right from the start of each lesson.

33. Teachers have prepared thoroughly for the introduction of the literacy and numeracy hours and this is reflected in the overall good quality of the teaching seen. Classroom management is good in most classes and results in a positive working atmosphere. Time is used effectively and well established routines enable pupils to move from one task to another with the minimum of disruption. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into most classes and teachers' planning takes full account of their needs. Teachers have generally high expectations of the standards they want the pupils to achieve.

34. Assessment procedures are very good and well used by teachers to inform future practice. Books are marked on a regular basis but when written comments are made they do not always inform pupils about how they might improve their work. Good use is made of all available resources to make learning more relevant. Homework is set on a regular basis throughout the school and is making a valuable contribution to pupils' progress.

39. The curriculum and assessment

35. Curriculum planning for the under-fives is good. Long-term planning makes clear the content to be covered. Medium-term planning makes reference to the Desirable Learning Outcomes for the pupils of this age and links well to the National Curriculum programmes of study. Weekly plans are thorough and evaluated carefully. This results in good provision for the under-fives in most aspects of the curriculum but the development of creative skills is unsatisfactory.

36. The curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2 is broad and balanced and complies with National Curriculum requirements in all subjects. The school follows a scheme for religious education, which is approved by the Archdiocese. There is a comprehensive three-strand programme divided into four age-related stages which addresses education in personal relationships. It encompasses sex education and the misuse of drugs. The programme is successfully delivered through religious education, health education and science. It is also included in other subjects and topics where appropriate.

37.Literacy teaching takes good account of the National Literacy Strategy. Its guided reading strategies are well supplemented by the school's established and successful arrangements for group reading. Targets are now set in literacy both on a whole-school and an individual basis and the school is involved in an Early Intervention Project operated by the Local Education Authority. A school portfolio of pupils' written work is in place. These factors are contributing to improved standards of attainment since the previous inspection. However, more could still be done to improve spelling and the presentation of pupils' written work. Higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 are provided with insufficient opportunities to develop their writing and scientific investigative skills. The school has adopted the recommendations of the National Numeracy Strategy in respect of planning and lesson content. This is combining well with the school's established success in promoting mathematical agility and the recall of number facts.

38.All subjects have an appropriate policy statement including one for physical education which was not in place at the previous inspection. Long-term planning gives an overview of the whole curriculum. Medium-term planning provides a clear structure for continuity of experience in pupils' learning. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection which found that overall topic planning for science, history and geography was difficult to follow.

39.The school successfully fulfils its mission statement in valuing each pupil as a unique individual in line with Roman Catholic teaching. Pupils' achievements are celebrated by individual teachers and there is public recognition of success in assemblies designated for this purpose. Pupils have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum. When they are withdrawn from classes, for example, for tuition in information technology by a specialist teacher, this is carried out on a rotational basis.

40.There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs, and they are identified at an early stage. Appropriate Individual Education Plans are in place which are reviewed regularly. In most lessons teachers' planning takes due account of the requirements of those with special needs. However, the needs of pupils with behavioural problems are not always met.

41.A good range of extra-curricular activities is provided, which includes competitive sport. The school participates annually in a local Music Festival. Educational visits and visitors linked to curriculum topics are enriching experiences. Regular talks on safety are given by a fire prevention group. Pupils have benefited from residential visits, for example, by undertaking geographical activities. A School Council has recently been introduced to the school, following consultation with staff, governors and parents. Elected pupil councillors take their role seriously. The scheme is already successfully promoting shared values.

42.The school's procedures for tracking progress and assessing attainment are very thorough in English, mathematics and science. A baseline assessment is in place, and revisited to confirm the progress made in Reception. The school uses a wide range of in-house assessments which contribute to target setting for the school and individuals. In addition, appropriate use is made of standardised commercial tests and statutory and optional national tests for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Results are analysed carefully, strengths are identified and built on and remedies sought for weaknesses. Records are well maintained.

43. The previous inspection report recorded that the school had a detailed policy for assessment which was being successfully applied. Since then the procedures have been effectively refined to reflect the changes in curriculum requirements. They continue to provide an accurate picture of pupils' achievement and progress in the core subjects. However, there are no formal assessment arrangements in some other subjects and annual reports to parents on their children's attainment do not all include comments on the progress made in all subjects. Although there are examples of good practice, teachers' written comments on pupils' work are not always sufficiently informative to help them improve.

44. Pupils are involved in reviewing and assessing their own achievements, and where possible, set their own targets. This is done through children and teachers looking at work together and using personal assessment sheets. Records of Achievement contain pupils' own choice of work which is recognised and valued. Pupils of all ages respond well to "Maths Challenge" by setting themselves, and achieving, targets associated with quick mental recall and calculation.

45. Good assessment records for pupils with special needs ensure that appropriate provision is made for them based on decisions which draw on accurate information about their progress. Parents' are fully involved in the decisions made.

50. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

46. Very good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. The school has a strong Roman Catholic mission statement. This forms the basis of the work undertaken by staff in developing pupils' spirituality, understanding of moral issues and ability to work and play together in harmony. The school is a very caring community which promotes pupils' self-esteem. This confirms the view of parents who think that the values and attitudes the school encourages have a positive effect upon their children.

47. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. The school's Agreed Syllabus for religious education, which was part of a separate diocesan inspection, is used to plan some of the themes for assemblies. Pupils are given very good opportunities to understand the nature of prayer and to reflect upon the way they lead their lives. The school's liturgical life emphasises its Roman Catholic nature and makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Preparation programmes for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion involve close ties between the children, parents and the parish. Pupils' writing sometimes shows that they are beginning to empathise with other people's feelings. For example, Year 4 pupils wrote a letter describing what it was like to be an inmate in the workhouse.

48. Provision for moral development is very good and firmly based upon a clear framework of Christian values within the school. The code of conduct is successfully supported by the rules displayed in classrooms. These rules have been drawn up by individual classes and are relevant to the pupils' ages and maturity. There is public recognition of pupils' achievements at the weekly "Reward Assembly" when pupils are presented with awards for academic and personal improvement. Pupils are encouraged to bring and share with others their successes outside school. Parents and governors also receive recognition for their work in school. The assembly is used to good effect to reinforce the values and attitudes the school seeks to promote. Pupils are taught right from wrong and are encouraged to reflect upon and take responsibility for their actions. This is helping to develop in pupils a degree of self-discipline. All members of staff are very good role models, treating the pupils

with fairness and consideration, consistently reinforcing their understanding of right from wrong. In addition charity initiatives such as “Love in a Box” for children in Bosnia make pupils aware of wider issues in society.

49. Pupils' social development also benefits from very good provision. A good range of extra-curricular activities and clubs is provided, including art and craft, computer and homework club. These activities provide opportunities for pupils of differing abilities to be appropriately challenged. They also have a social dimension at the school in that staff and pupils can come together and enjoy the activities. Pupils are able to take part in a good range of team sports and to compete against each other and with local schools. All pupils go on educational visits and Years 5 and 6 take part in a residential stay at Albrighton called "The Kingswood Adventure". Pupils are provided with suitable opportunities to assist in the smooth running of the school and they carry out their responsibilities conscientiously. Good opportunities have also been provided for them to improve the appearance of the school grounds by decorating pebbles which have been varnished and set in concrete. Representatives from each class are elected as members of the School Council involving them in communication with their peers to formulate ideas and debate school policies and provision. This is very effective in developing in pupils a sense of ownership and helping them to become responsible members of the community.

50. Cultural awareness is being effectively promoted. The development within the locality of a "family of schools" has enabled expertise and resources to be shared. This has broadened the cultural opportunities the school is able to offer its pupils. For example, last year it was able to play host to a Japanese woman. During her visit she was able to raise pupils awareness of the customs and traditions of a different culture from their own. The development of a shared week of activities will culminate this year in a week of Careers Enlightenment. Various professions will be represented and pupils will participate in work experience projects. Last year this involved learning from and working with artists, illustrators, puppeteers, dancers and an African arts tutor as part of a Book Week. Good provision is made for pupils to find out about their culture through outings to museums and visits to the school by poets and musicians.

55. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

51. Provision for pupils' welfare is very good and a strength of the school. There is a caring and supportive ethos throughout the school and pupils' welfare remains a high priority, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. Staff know the children well and are responsible for the day-to-day guidance of pupils with support from the headteacher and her deputy. Relationships are very positive and pupils are confident to approach adults with their concerns. There is a Home/School Contract which includes the shared responsibilities of pupils, staff and parents. Parents report that their children are happy and enjoy coming to school.

52. Pupils receive good guidance from staff and teachers monitor academic progress very well. Detailed records of pupils' attainment and progress are kept by each class teacher and members of staff regularly discuss any pupils who may be experiencing difficulties. The Education in Personal Relationships programme is equipping pupils with the appropriate skills and knowledge to make informed decisions. Teachers are very sensitive to the personal dignity of pupils. Circle time is used well to enhance social development. Teachers know pupils very well and give personal guidance as appropriate. The Individual Education Plans for pupils with special educational needs contain suitable targets for improvement. However, teachers' written comments on pupils' work does not always indicate clearly to pupils what they need to do to improve their work. The School Council is raising pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem.

53. Arrangements for children entering the Reception class are good. Parents and children are invited to visit the school on several occasions before formal entry. Children are gradually and sensitively integrated into school life and quickly feel secure in their new surroundings. There are very close links with Newman High, the designated receiving high school, and also Padgate High School. Pupils spend a day in the school of their choice and there is a good exchange of relevant information between the schools. This ensures a smooth transition for pupils to the next stage of their education. For pupils with special educational needs, additional liaison work is undertaken and the school has access to a range of agencies who support them in their work.

54. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and procedures to promote discipline are very good. The school has a detailed behaviour policy which emphasises the importance of self-discipline. The policy is very positive and is being implemented very successfully by all staff. There is a very appropriate system of sanctions and rewards and pupils are proud when they receive house points and certificates to celebrate their achievements. Staff are always alert to pupils' concerns and the school has effective procedures to handle any cases of bullying which might arise.

55. Arrangements for monitoring pupils' attendance are satisfactory. Registers are examined on a regular basis and the education welfare officer provides support when needed.

56. The school has good child protection procedures which follow Local Education Authority guidelines. There is a designated teacher and a deputy with responsibility for this aspect. All members of staff understand their role in the early identification of concerns. Sex education is appropriately related to the development of children as they move through school and is based on Christian principles. The police liaison officer and the fire service talk to pupils about personal safety. Appropriate procedures in place for dealing with accidents and illness. Two members of staff are fully qualified to administer first aid and some mid-day assistants have also received emergency first aid training. There is a health and safety policy and a co-ordinator who deals with risk assessments on a daily basis with support from the caretaker. The Governing Body also conduct inspections of the school premises and any issues raised are prioritised according to urgency or as finance permits. The school provides an environment where pupils can be happy, secure and confident.

61. Partnership with parents and the community

57. Links with parents and the community were reported to be a very positive feature at the time of the previous inspection. These aspects remain an important strength of the school and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and personal development.

58. Parents are very supportive and contribute significantly to the life of the school. In the response to the parental questionnaire, there was unanimous agreement that the school encourages parents to play an active part in its life and that they would find it easy to approach the school if they had a concern. At the parents' meeting held before the inspection, parents commented positively and warmly on the welcome they receive from staff and pupils.

59. The opportunities the school provides for parents to get involved in the life of the school are very good. Parents are consulted regularly about new developments, for example, the Home/School Contract and their suggestions for improving school provision are included in the School Development Plan. During the inspection a significant number of parents made a regular and positive contribution to the life and work of the school by helping in classrooms. With support from Warrington Collegiate, the school organised a course for parents in "Helping Your Child to Learn". This allowed parents to become more involved in their children's education. The Parent Teacher Association is very active in raising funds for the school and has purchased many valuable resources including computer equipment and classroom blinds. A group of parent volunteers painted the interior of the mobile classroom and have been involved in a project to improve the school grounds.

60. The quality of information sent home to parents is good overall. Parents appreciate the two parents' evenings held each year and the willingness of staff to discuss any concerns at other times. There was good support for curriculum meetings about numeracy and literacy. Regular reviews of progress are held for parents of pupils with statements of special educational needs and several meetings are arranged for new parents. However, while the annual report to parents gives an indication of what pupils have done in each subject, it does not always indicate the progress made or what pupils need to do to improve. Parents are given their child's Record of Achievement at the end of each year and informed of the results of tests. They are supportive of the schools' efforts to involve them in their children's education.

61. Community links are good and used well to enhance the curriculum and pupils' personal development. Involvement in sporting events brings pupils into contact with other schools in particular the Rugby League in Primary Schools initiative. Neighbours are invited into school for Christmas concerts and Harvest Festivals and the choir sings to elderly citizens. The nearby Hawthorn Centre works closely with the school on behalf of the community. St. Bridget's and the Church of Resurrection serve the Roman Catholic and Church of England communities. This has enabled the school to develop a shared vision, because of the close co-operation between the two church schools.

62. Schools in the area have clustered together to form a "family". This has extended the range of experiences for children and ensured that all schools have a common purpose. For example, a "Project Week" is held annually. This year the theme is Careers Awareness. Various professions are to be represented and pupils given the opportunity to participate in work experience projects. The school has engaged in some links with industry. Pupils have been involved in projects with Liverpool Airport and North West Water Authority. British Aerospace has sponsored sports shirts. All these good links raise pupils' awareness of the importance of the school to the local community.

63. Pupils visit museums and places of interest connected with their work. Years 5 and 6 enjoy a residential visit to Kingswood. These enrich pupils' lives and enhance their academic development. Visitors to the school include the school nurse, fire brigade, police liaison officer, park rangers and a drama group who all contribute to pupils' understanding of health, welfare and safety issues. There is close liaison with the main receiving secondary schools and these good links ensure the smooth transition of Year 6 pupils.

64. The school holds a presentation assembly at the end of each academic year. This is an opportunity for parents, staff, special guests and children to publicly celebrate and reward the efforts, achievements and talents of the pupils.

69.

69. The management and efficiency of the school

69. Leadership and management

65.The quality of leadership and management is very good.

66.Good progress has been made in improving provision in the school through the successful implementation of the action plan from the last inspection. Overall standards have risen. Significant improvements have been made in science and mathematics and pupils are now making satisfactory progress in both these subjects throughout the school. Curriculum planning and the use made of assessments is much better than it was and, as a result, the underachievement reported in most subjects in Key Stage 2 has been successfully addressed. However, standards in information technology and in spelling and presentation of work are unsatisfactory. The close working relationships established with local primary and high schools has enabled pupils to engage in a much broader range of cultural activities than those they were experiencing at the time of the previous inspection. Staff have worked hard in reviewing and developing schemes of work for all subjects. This has helped to ensure that all required aspects of the National Curriculum are taught. The quality of teaching has improved and no longer has major shortcomings.

67.The headteacher has a clear educational direction for the school and her vision is shared by the staff and supported by the Governing Body. Parents are very appreciative of her friendly approach and comment that relationships between the school and parents have strengthened over the years. Staff morale is good and there is a strong sense of the school moving forward and trying to improve. The headteacher receives good support from her deputy.

68.Steps taken by the headteacher to introduce a more shared approach to decision-making have been very effective in setting up new initiatives and the agreement of the school's aims. All staff, parents and governors are involved in deciding the school's priorities and ways to achieve them. This aspect, especially the consultation with parents is one of the school's strengths. The School Council also provides a useful forum through which pupils can represent their views. Co-ordinators' action plans and written evaluations are an integral part of the School Development Plan which provides a very good framework for action. The plan runs for a period of twelve months and appropriately focuses on raising standards in attainment. The clear and appropriate priorities in the plan are linked to specific targets which have deadlines and criteria by which to measure success. Responsibilities for taking the necessary action are allocated and costs identified.

69.Co-ordinators ensure that agreed teaching and learning policies are being implemented. Monitoring of classroom practice has been established and is effective. It includes lesson observations, screening of teachers' planning and some scrutiny of pupils' work. The information gathered from these observations is used appropriately to improve standards further.

70.The Governing Body has suitable procedures to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. Through the committee structure the governors meet most of their statutory responsibilities and keep an informed eye on school development. However, teachers' annual reports to parents on pupils' progress do not report progress in all subjects. The literacy governor, special needs governor and numeracy governor have good understanding of their roles. The chairperson is a regular visitor to school and works with groups of pupils from every class. As a result, she has a good knowledge and understanding of standards and quality of teaching throughout the school.

71.The school analyses the performance data from the National Curriculum tests and its own internal assessments. It uses the outcomes appropriately to set targets for individuals and groups of pupils in English, mathematics and science.

72.The management of the provision for pupils under five years of age is good. A base line assessment is used to establish children's' attainment when they begin the Reception class. The information gathered is used well to provide for future learning, and appropriate records are made of subsequent progress. There are good links with parents who are welcomed into the classroom. The induction arrangements for children starting school are good and the meetings held with parents were judged to be very useful and informative.

73.The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The procedures follow the directives of the Code of Practice. Carefully constructed Individual Educational Plans are in place which identify appropriate learning targets and these are reviewed at regular intervals. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all classroom activities and usually supported by experienced classroom assistants who work to the direction of the class teachers. However, there was one occasion during the week of the inspection when a pupil with behavioural problems was unsupported during a scientific investigation and caused the lesson to be abandoned. All records are up to date and the register of special educational needs is an effective working document.

74.The school is very successful in meeting its stated aim "to develop a partnership between home, school and parish" through its recently introduced Home/School Contract. School policies, such as the behaviour policy, are highly effective in maintaining the positive atmosphere within the school. The very good quality of the management ensures that the school is well placed to make further improvements.

79. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

75.There is a sufficient number of teaching and support staff who are appropriately qualified and experienced to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. The previous inspection identified that subject co-ordinator roles needed to be developed and this has now been achieved. The school has supported co-ordinators well by ensuring that they receive training and by providing time for them to prepare schemes of work, support colleagues and monitor classroom practice. Job descriptions are updated regularly as priorities change. The school's system for appraisal meets statutory requirements. Co-ordinators are given clear targets and deadlines to enable them to fulfil their roles. There is a wide range of experiences amongst the staff including provision for children who are under five and pupils with special educational needs.

76.A good training programme, successful mentoring and help from colleagues, ensure that the induction of newly qualified teachers is smooth and effective. Arrangements for staff development are well organised with priority given to courses which enhance the individual's expertise and match the priority areas identified in the School Development Plan. Teachers work well together as a team, sharing experience and expertise as appropriate.

77.The provision of classroom support is broadly in line with the national average for the size of the school. These members of staff are usually appropriately deployed and well briefed and make a valuable contribution to progress pupils make. Additional support is provided by parents and trainee nursery nurses. The administration of the school is efficient and the secretary ensures that the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The caretaker keeps the school very clean and keeps a watchful eye on the security of the

building.

78.The accommodation has improved since the previous inspection. Although still not ideal, the internal modifications made since the time of the previous inspection have improved significantly teaching areas. Staff and pupils use the accommodation sensibly and respect the need for quiet movement between classrooms. Despite the problems of lack of space, staff cope well and there are no detrimental effects on the curriculum. The school is currently seeking ways to create extra space for the teaching of information technology skills. The Parent Teacher Association has purchased computer equipment and the Parish Ladies Guild has provided blinds for the hall. Minor repairs and modifications have been dealt with and the school now has wheelchair access. The exterior of the school is attractive and pupils have been involved in making improvements to the school grounds.

79.Learning resources are at least satisfactory in most subjects and are good in English, mathematics, science, design and technology and music. They are used well to support pupils' learning. For example, pupils were observed using a range of good resources to make musical instruments in design technology. There are now sufficient computers in the school. However, there is still a shortage of the school's own artefacts to support the teaching of history. This was identified in the previous report. The library is well equipped and pupils were seen making good use of it for research purposes.

80.There has been an improvement in the storage of resources, materials for communal use are kept in various stock rooms and there is separate storage for audio-visual equipment.

81.The school benefits from being part of the cluster of schools where resources are shared. Pupils learning experiences are enhanced by visits to museums and places of interest such as Dunham Massey and Chester Zoo.

86. The efficiency of the school

82.The efficiency of the school is good. Established routines and procedures help to maintain a very orderly atmosphere throughout the school. The previous inspection report found that financial procedures were managed effectively and this continues to be the case.

83.Financial planning is good. The school had a very large budget surplus and this is being used effectively to ensure pupils continue to be taught in single-age classes, to provide additional funding for special educational needs pupils and to allow the school to finance its own initiatives. By the end of the current financial year the carry forward figure will be around 5% of the school's budget. All the recommendations in the last auditor's report have been carried out.

84.The Governing Body has approved the budget and has had good involvement in the drawing up of the School Development Plan, which is of very good quality. Parents, staff and governors have all been appropriately consulted by the headteacher in the planning stages.

85.Day-to-day control of finances and school administration are both very good. The headteacher is well supported by a very efficient school secretary. The Local Education Authority's budget officer ensures that the school is supplied with up-to-date figures.

86.The deployment of teachers and support staff is good. Very good use is made of a visiting information technology specialist and a technician from the local high school. A music specialist from the high school provides very good support to the development of pupils' musical skills in Year 6. Additional funding provided to support teachers' professional development has been used to allow teachers to attend, for example, management courses. Funding for special needs pupils is used well and is supplemented from the school's own budget.

87.Governors carry out their duties effectively. The Governing Body is well led by its chairperson who has a very good understanding of primary education and can often be found in the school supporting pupils' learning.

88.The building has been improved since the time of the last inspection and good use is made of the space provided. Resources are used well but the pupils taught in the school's mobile classroom do not have regular access to information technology equipment. Time is used effectively with lessons starting promptly.

89.In all subjects except information technology pupils make satisfactory progress. By the time pupils leave National Curriculum test results are higher than those found in similar schools. During the week of the inspection almost six out of ten lessons were good or better. The school provides good value for money.

94. **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

Areas of learning for children under five

94.

90.Many children have below average skills when they enter school which is confirmed by the baseline assessment. They make good progress in most aspects of their work in the Reception class, and standards by the age of five are broadly in line with the expectations of the age group. However, pupils' development in creative skills is unsatisfactory, while they make satisfactory progress in writing from a below average start. A significant number of children do not achieve the expected standards in these areas. These overall findings represent an improvement since the previous inspection.

Personal and social development

91.Good progress is made in personal and social development. Children settle quickly into the Reception Class which provides a good start to school life and gives a firm foundation for future learning. Arrangements prior to admission are very comprehensive and include several visits and other familiarisation activities such as a party, a play performed by children and an invitation to the Infant Sports Day. Relationships are good, children enjoy coming to school and are eager to learn. They listen well to adults and to each other. They are willing to take turns, for example when using physical education apparatus. Most show good levels of concentration for their age and persevere with tasks until they are completed to their satisfaction. Behaviour is very good and this contributes positively to the progress made. Personal achievements are recognised, both within class and as part of the school's celebration of success at assemblies designated for this purpose.

96. **Language and literacy**

92.Language and literacy are promoted well. Overall standards by the age of five are broadly in line with those expected for the age group. Progress for most children is good overall but speaking, listening and reading are better developed than writing where progress is satisfactory but from a below average starting point. Children are given many opportunities to talk, encouraged to use correct terminology and to extend their answers. They join in songs and rhymes with enthusiasm. They develop a knowledge of letter sounds and can identify words. By the age of five most are beginning to read. They undertake activities to develop writing skills in play situations and also in guided writing sessions. By the age of five, although a few high attaining children are writing sentences independently, many are not achieving the expected standard.

97. **Mathematics**

93.Mathematics receives a high priority and the good use of practical activities to develop mathematical concepts and language results in good progress being made. By five most children are achieving the expectation for the age group. Most can count, recognise and write numbers to 10, know terms such as bigger, smaller, longer, shorter and use them with understanding, can name common plane shapes and some solid shapes, and use terms to show an understanding of capacity such as holds more, holds less.

98. Knowledge and understanding of the world

94. Knowledge and understanding of the world are promoted well and identification of the separate strands makes for a good transition to the National Curriculum subjects. Children are encouraged to observe why things work, sometimes recording their answers. For example, they experience sorting objects into sets which will or will not be attracted by magnets. They talk about their families and construct a time line to show how they have changed since birth. They experience a visit to a nearby forest and enjoy the excitement of choosing the school's Christmas Tree. Many are developing good 'mouse' skills when using the computer to 'paint' pictures. By the age of five overall attainment in this area of learning is, for most children, that expected for the age group.

99. Physical development

95. Good progress is made in physical development. By the age of five, almost all children achieve the expected standard. Daily sessions in the hall are used effectively for children to take part in a variety of physical activities. Their ability to get out and put away large apparatus is good for their age. They have appropriate opportunities to use large outdoor play equipment. In the classroom, experiences such as building with wooden blocks, making of shapes using construction toys and cutting, folding and sticking of paper, successfully develop children's manipulative skills and dexterity.

100. Creative development

96. The provision for creative development is unsatisfactory and children do not make enough progress in this area. Although children experience music, art and role play, too few opportunities are provided to allow them to explore sound, colour, texture and form, and to use these media as a means of developing imagination and communicating their feelings. Consequently, the standards achieved are generally below the expectations for the age group.

97. The quality of teaching is good overall and there are some very good features. Careful planning results in a clear focus to all lessons linked to the Desirable Learning Outcomes for the age group. Explanations to children, good demonstrations and the provision of imaginative activities which engage their interest, help them to make progress.

Expectations are high. Relationships are good. Effective use is made of adult helpers who are well briefed. All these factors contribute to the caring and purposeful atmosphere within the classroom. When teaching is very good, for example during the literacy sessions it is characterised by questioning which encourages the pupils to express their views. Good use of pupils' work in the plenary session is used well to reinforce their learning.

98. The school has refined its planning and assessment procedures since the previous inspection. Progress in achieving the Desired Learning Outcomes in each area of children's learning is recorded regularly. Baseline Assessment is used as a starting point and re-visited later in the year to confirm progress. Individual Records of Achievement are maintained. The planned curriculum makes good provision for transfer to the National Curriculum programmes of study. Children with special needs are identified, supported appropriately and make satisfactory progress.

99. Parents confirm that they are very well informed about the school prior to their child's admission, and that they are encouraged to be involved in the life of the school from the start. Helpful information makes clear to parents the content of the curriculum to be covered. Resources are plentiful and usually of good quality. The Reception classroom is

spacious and the adjacent additional teaching area is used effectively.

104. **English, mathematics and science**

104. **English**

100.The previous inspection reported on the adverse effect Key Stage 2 accommodation was having on the standards pupils achieved. Since the time of the last inspection the accommodation has been improved. It is now of a satisfactory standard and no longer hinders pupils' progress. Reading continues to be well taught and this ensures that pupils make good progress in developing their skills by the age of eleven.

101.Results from the 1999 national tests in English at the end of Key Stage 2 were well below the national average but well above those found in similar schools. Last year's Year 6 class included a significant percentage of pupils with high levels of special educational need and this adversely effected the school's overall results. Since the previous inspection there has been a steady improvement in the percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 or above each year. Taking the three years 1996 to 1998 together, the performance of pupils in English was close to the national average. During the same period boys performed better than the national average but girls' results were below average.

102.Inspection evidence shows that this year the majority of Year 6 pupils are on course to attain the expected Level 4 and a small percentage to achieve Level 5. However, this year's Year 6 class contains around a third of pupils who are on the special needs register and the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level will again be affected by this factor. Special needs pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the key stage and most are well supported. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Overall progress in English in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory.

103.By the time pupils leave most read well and standards are in line with those found in most schools. Progress in the development of reading skills is good throughout Key Stage 2. Pupils benefit from the additional silent reading sessions and for the opportunities provided during the literacy hour lessons. By the end of Year 6 most pupils have become fluent readers. Library skills are taught well and pupils are able to locate and extract information from books. The Year 6 class is located a long way from the library but pupils still have regular access. During the week of the inspection pupils developed their research skills well in Year 4 by using the Internet to seek out information. They made their own notes rather than just copy down information from the screen.

104.By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils can write for a range of purposes and standards are satisfactory overall. However, work is not always well presented with some pupils' work being unsatisfactory. A display of written work related to a residential visit made by older pupils was of a variable standard. Progress is satisfactory overall throughout Key Stage 2 but spelling skills are unsatisfactory. Most pupils enter the key stage with difficulties in writing but, because of good teaching, gain in confidence and go on to produce writing of sound quality. Higher attaining Year 6 pupils produced good summary writing based on the book 'I am David'. Playscripts are also produced related to the story of the Pied Piper of Hamelin. A good example of writing being used in other curriculum areas can be found in Year 5 where pupils write as part of their history topic write about what artefacts tell us about life in ancient Egypt. Poetry writing is a feature of the work in most classes and during the week of the inspection Haiku poems of a very good quality were written in one class. Some classes make insufficient use of information technology to support learning. For example, Year 6 pupils do not have regular classroom access to a computer, although they do use computers in the main building at times.

105. Pupils are given good opportunities to use and develop their speaking and listening skills throughout Key Stage 2 and make good progress. By the time pupils leave they speak well. However, a minority of Year 6 pupils, with special educational needs, do not listen to others and sometimes interrupt lessons by calling out. A very good example of pupils being allowed to develop and use their speaking skills can be found in Year 4 where pupils prepare speeches at home and deliver them to their classmates. This helps pupils develop confidence in public speaking. The Drama Train workshop has worked well with all Key Stage 2 pupils to help develop their acting and miming skills.

106. In the 1999 tests for seven-year-olds the proportion attaining the expected Level 2 was close to the national average in reading but well below average in writing. Compared with similar schools these results were above average in reading but well below average in writing. The percentage attaining the higher Level 3 in reading was below the national average and no pupils achieved Level 3 in writing. Taking the previous three years 1996 to 1998 together the performance of pupils in writing was above the national average and in reading close to the national average. In writing the performance of boys was close to the national average whilst that of girls was well above average.

107. Inspection evidence shows that most pupils are on course to attain the expected level 2 in reading and writing but few will attain higher levels. All pupils including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall but more could be done to raise standards in spelling and the presentation of work. Higher attaining pupils need to be challenged more to further develop their writing skills.

108. The substantial majority of pupils make satisfactory progress and attain the national expectation in speaking and listening by the end of Key Stage 1. Most pupils listen to stories and to adults' instructions attentively. They are willing to share their ideas with the rest of the class. During the week of the inspection Year 2 pupils used their speaking skills well to lead a school assembly. They read clearly and could be easily heard at the back of the hall.

109. Standards in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 are satisfactory and pupils make sound progress. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 and above was broadly in line with the national average but the proportion attaining Level 3 was below average. These results were above those found in similar schools at Level 2 but below at the higher level. Inspection evidence shows that this year's results will broadly reflect this pattern. Pupils receive a good foundation in phonic skills and are heard to read regularly. They know that non-fiction books help the reader to find information.

110. The large number of pupils with special educational needs in last year's class of seven-year-olds adversely effected the percentage of pupils who reaching the expected Level 2 in writing. No pupils achieved Level 3. The previous year the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 was above the national average but still below average at Level 3.

111. Pupils in Key Stage 1 enjoy writing and show some awareness of punctuation but many do not apply the spelling skills they are taught during literacy hour lessons. Most write in a printed style but some work is not well presented. Overall progress is satisfactory. A significant number of pupils enter the key stage unable to write words independently but make good progress and after two months are beginning to write their own sentences. A good feature of the progress pupils make is that targets to improve their work are set and shared with them. This encourages them to improve their work. Year 2 pupils have written poems of good quality about bonfire night and have researched and then written about the life of Florence Nightingale. Pupils understand the importance of rhyming text in poetry and

produce a good whole class poem based on 'Hard to Please'. Higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged in some lessons to develop their writing skills and to acquire the necessary accuracy to progress to a higher level.

112. Attitudes to English are good in both key stages. In most classes pupils are attentive but a minority in Year 6 soon lose concentration and need adult support. A good feature of almost all lessons is the way that pupils co-operate with each other when asked to undertake collaborative work.

113. The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and good overall in Key Stage 2. Classroom assistants and students provide good support. Teachers have responded well to the introduction of the literacy hour. In general they have good subject knowledge. Work is marked on a regular basis but written comments do not always help pupils to improve. Where teaching is sometimes very good in Key Stage 2 teachers are adept at prompting pupils to produce their best possible work. In the plenary sessions of lessons, for example, they encourage pupils to say how work could be improved. Sometimes the way that lessons are organised with the oldest Key Stage 2 pupils means that pupils have to queue to see the teacher and this affects the progress they make in that lesson.

114. The subject is co-ordinated soundly. All teachers have been observed teaching the literacy hour and given feedback and advice. Assessment procedures are very good and the information gathered is used well to set medium- and long-term targets. The school is well resourced with books both in classes and in the library. The library loan service provides additional books. Parents provide good support. Homework is used well and has a beneficial effect on the standards pupils achieve.

119. Mathematics

115. Attainment in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with the national average. The percentage of children achieving the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5 in the most recent national tests for eleven-year-olds in mathematics showed a significant improvement on the previous year. The results were similar to the national average and well above average when compared with similar schools. The school has made good progress in raising standards in the subject since the last inspection. This judgement is based on the combined test results of the last four years. Current findings are that standards are in line with national expectations overall. The majority of pupils are on target to achieve Level 4 with a small minority working towards the higher level. However, there is a significant number of pupils in the present Year 6 with special educational needs whose attainment is below the expectation for the age group.

116. The results of the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests in mathematics were well below average. In the previous year almost all pupils gained the expected Level 2, a figure well above the national average, and just over a fifth gained Level 3 which was close to the national average. These results were very good when compared to similar schools. The latest lower results reflect the high proportion of pupils in the year group with special needs. Current findings are that the majority of pupils are on target to achieve the expected standards in mathematics, with no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

117. Pupils in Key Stage 1 including those with special needs make satisfactory progress. By the end of the key stage the majority have developed good oral and mental skills and have a rapid recall of appropriate number facts. Pupils can recognise, count and order numbers to 100, are beginning to understand place value in two-digit numbers, can solve simple money problems using addition and subtraction and record their answers appropriately. They can name and describe the main properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. Pupils are able to make reasonable estimates and use rulers to

measure accurately to the nearest centimetre. They collect and classify data which they present as a table or graph.

118. During Key Stage 2 pupils including those with special needs continue to make satisfactory progress overall. A significant proportion of pupils make good and sometimes very good progress, responding positively to the high expectations of many teachers and the very good opportunities provided by the school for each pupil to reach their potential. By the age of eleven most pupils can carry out a variety of mental and written computations to solve problems involving complex numbers by using the four operations. They can describe relationships such as multiple, factor and square and can recognise proportions using fractions, decimals and percentages to describe them. Most pupils have a good recall of multiplication facts and know their tables well. Almost all can find the perimeter of simple shapes. Higher attaining pupils can use the formula to calculate the area of a complex shape which can be divided into rectangles. They can measure accurately with a range of appropriate instruments and units of measurement. The highest attaining pupils are able to interpret graphs and diagrams, and construct conversion graphs, for example using centigrade and Fahrenheit scales of temperature.

119. Pupils' response in lessons is good overall. Many pupils enjoy mathematics and their enthusiasm is particularly apparent in some Key Stage 2 classes. Throughout the school, most respond well to the emphasis placed on the development of numeracy. For example, the "Maths Challenge" awards provide an important incentive for pupils of all ages to improve their mental strategies and to reach specific targets. These awards, much prized by pupils, are confirmation of their ability to recall number facts accurately and speedily. Their increased motivation has resulted in a significant improvement since the previous inspection. The standard of presentation of recorded work is not developed consistently and is sometimes unsatisfactory.

120. The quality of teaching is good overall, with some very good features in Key Stage 2. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced in both key stages and the planning of lessons is very thoroughly carried out with this in mind. Relationships are good and effective use is made of adult helpers in the classroom. Factors contributing to some very good teaching in Key Stage 2 include good subject knowledge, confident delivery and the brisk pace at which some lessons are conducted. Good use is made of visual material to make for clearer understanding. Teachers in Key Stage 2 generally have high expectations of what pupils will achieve within a specified time. Several show skilful use of assessment to build on pupils' knowledge and check on pupils' progress by asking them to explain how they have worked out their answers. Marking of pupils' work is carried out conscientiously, and there are some examples of informative comments which help pupils to improve, but this practice is not consistent throughout the school. Homework makes a positive contribution to progress. Effective communication with parents ensures they are informed of the content of the mathematics curriculum for each year group and the days on which homework in the subject is set.

121. The school has made good progress in implementing initiatives in mathematics since the previous inspection which found work in the subject to be satisfactory. Membership of the county's School Improvement Project resulted in the initiative being used to exemplify good practice. This in turn led to improved confidence, raised expectations and a more rigorous approach to class teaching. Planning and lesson content reflects the recommendations of the National Numeracy Strategy. The School Development Plan contains a priority focus on the raising of achievement in mathematics. Year 6 is involved in a problem-solving challenge with other local schools and good links with the local high school provide some teaching by specialists in the subject. Mathematics is sometimes linked effectively with other subjects, for example the use and construction of pie-charts in geography and the presentation of data using graphs in science. However, although there are such examples of good practice, the application of mathematics to real situations is

insufficiently developed and opportunities are missed in other subjects to strengthen aspects such as shape, space, measures and data handling.

122. Assessment procedures are very thorough. Baseline assessments on entry are appropriately analysed and used as a starting point to guide teaching. They are revisited later in the Reception year to track progress. Records of pupils' attainment in shape and number recognition are kept for evidence. Regular tests are effectively carried out in mental arithmetic and the scores recorded. Teacher assessments are conducted, and pupils' progress discussed. Optional commercial and statutory tests are carried out and the results analysed. There is a comprehensive portfolio of standardised work. Pupils' workbooks are scrutinised regularly.

123. Procedures for monitoring the curriculum are very effective. The co-ordinator scrutinises medium-term planning, observes lessons throughout the school, examines pupils' work and helps to analyse the assessment statistics which are available to the school. There are very good arrangements for staff development. The subject is well resourced and efficiently managed.

128. **Science**

124. Standards of attainment in science are close to the national average at the end of Key Stage 2 and have improved considerably since the last inspection in 1994 when many pupils were judged to be achieving below the national expectations. The school has introduced a new scheme of work which includes recommendations from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and improved planning and assessment procedures. These changes have brought about the improvement in standards. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected level in the National Curriculum tests in science at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1998 was well below the national average but above average when compared with similar schools. The results of the 1999 tests show a marked improvement with nearly three-quarters of all pupils achieving Level 4 and just over a quarter Level 5. These results were below the national average but above the average for similar schools. Inspection evidence shows that though teacher expectations remain high, the proportion of pupils on track to reach the expected standard is not as great this year because there is a higher percentage of pupils with behaviour and learning difficulties in the current Year 6.

125. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils show that they have a satisfactory understanding of the scientific method and can plan, with the support of the teacher, a logical approach to an investigation. For example, Year 6 made reasonable predictions before working out that there is a limit to the mass of solid that can be dissolved in a given amount of water. Progress throughout the key stage is sound overall. Pupils in Year 3 investigate which materials form the best shadows and are taught to use correctly scientific terminology such as opaque, translucent and transparent. Good progress is made by pupils in Year 4 as they study temperature and how to keep things hot and cold. They make good use of information technology to record their results in graph form. Year 5 pupils make satisfactory progress in discovering that sounds can be made by air vibrating. Progress is occasionally unsatisfactory when the behaviour of a minority disrupts the activities of the rest of the class.

126. Overall standards of attainment in science are average at the end of Key Stage 1. In 1998 the percentage of seven-year-olds attaining the level appropriate for their age was above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. Though the results of the 1999 teacher assessments showed a decline they reflected the prior attainment of that particular class of seven-year-olds and, while well below the national average, were in line with those found in similar schools. No pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in either year. Inspection evidence indicates that the majority of pupils at the end of

Key Stage 1 are on line to attain the expected level in science with a significant minority working towards the higher level.

127. Pupils make sound progress during Key Stage 1 and by the age of seven they have a satisfactory knowledge of the topics covered. Year 1 pupils learn that it is essential to eat the right kind of food in order to grow, take in energy and remain healthy. Pupils are aware of the need to be careful when dealing with electrical appliances and can construct a simple circuit to make a bulb light up. They know that pushes and pulls are examples of forces and that forces can speed a vehicle up or slow it down. However, the standard of attainment in experimental and investigative work is weaker than other aspects of science and higher attainers do not progress as well as might be expected.

128. Pupils with special educational needs are usually well supported by non-teaching assistants and make satisfactory progress. The progress of pupils with behavioural problems is unsatisfactory when they are not provided with appropriate support during practical activities. On these occasions they become restless and distract others.

129. Pupils' attitudes to science are usually good. Most are enthusiastic about investigations and enjoy discussing their findings with others. The majority behave well and are keen to answer questions or put forward suggestions. Practical aspects of the subject make a valuable contribution to pupils' social development as they share and use equipment carefully. Some of the topics they study, for example healthy living, play an important part in their moral development. However, pupils do not always take sufficient care with the presentation of their work which sometimes is unsatisfactory.

130. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1. It has improved considerably at Key Stage 2 when it was judged to have some shortcomings in major areas and is now good overall. Most teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject which they use well to present topics in an interesting and challenging way. Lessons are conscientiously planned and classroom management is usually good. The pace of lessons is usually appropriate. Interesting introductory explanations are usually followed by relevant group activities including practical investigations. However, in Key Stage 1 insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to investigate and experiment for themselves. Teaching is very effective when purposeful questioning guides and probes pupils' thinking and encourages them to predict outcomes. In the best lessons pupils are taught to use mathematical processes to collect and analyse the data obtained during their scientific investigations, making good use of information technology. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, some pupils with special needs did not have the necessary support to carry out the investigations effectively. Teachers mark work conscientiously but comments do not always indicate to pupils what they should do next to improve.

131. The co-ordination of the subject has improved since the last inspection. There is a well planned scheme of work that gives a suitable structure to the science curriculum and is being updated in the light of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines. It meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and ensures progression of knowledge and skills as the pupils move through the school. Assessment procedures are very good and the information gathered is used well to inform future planning in the subject and to set targets for individuals. The co-ordinator has been allocated time to monitor the subject throughout the school including the quality of teaching. This has been very effective and the information gained from the observations has been used well to raise standards in the subject. Resources are good. The accommodation has been improved since the last inspection and no longer makes it difficult for pupils to undertake scientific investigations.

Other subjects or courses

136. Art and design and technology

132. During the period of the inspection it was possible to observe only one art lesson. There was insufficient evidence available from pupils' work to make a judgement about standards by the end of both key stages. The previous inspection report recorded that pupils were underachieving throughout the school especially with regard to their knowledge and understanding of the work of different artists. There has been some improvements in this aspect. The works of a selection of famous artists are now being studied and pupils learn some of the techniques observed. As a result the subject is able to play a greater part in the cultural development of pupils. The standard of work done in the art club and with an artist in residence was of good quality. Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs usually receive appropriate support and make satisfactory progress.

133. By the age of seven pupils can work with a range of suitable media including pencils, paints, pastels and crayon. They make satisfactory progress. The work of Monet depicting his garden at Giverny provided the stimulus for Year 2 pupils to produce their own effective water colour pictures. Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing a range of appropriate techniques and skills. For example, in Year 1 they tear and glue tissue paper to make a stained glass window effect and produce their own individual collages out of pasta.

134. Current work in Key Stage 2 shows that progress in developing skills and understanding in art is unsatisfactory overall. Year 6 pupils are given some opportunities to examine the work of well known artists such as Clarice Cliff and George Seurat. An understanding of the techniques of these artists is evident in some of the work on display but the overall standard of these examples reflects unsatisfactory progress. However, there are examples of good progress being made in other classes. For example, Batik work produced by pupils in Year 5 and based upon Ancient Egyptian designs formed an effective display from which other pupils could learn.

135. Standards in design and technology have improved since the last inspection especially at Key Stage 1 where it was reported that many pupils were underachieving and did not work well together. During the inspection pupils were observed working very co-operatively together. Pupils including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they move through the school.

136. By the end of Key Stage 1 standards of attainment in design and technology are similar to those found in most schools. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the acquisition of a satisfactory range of joining and assembling skills. By the age of seven pupils know how to design, make and evaluate products. They competently make things out of different materials including card, fabric and waste materials. Pupils can use simple tools safely and cut and join as when, for example, making models of a wheeled vehicle. They use construction kits effectively to design different models.

137. Current work in Key Stage 2 shows that pupils are becoming more competent in design work. They plan their projects and models well and make sensible choices about how to proceed. Pupils have learned an appropriate range of construction skills and use tools competently. Their finished products are sometimes of a good quality. For example, Year 5 pupils have designed and made different musical instruments. They evaluate the finished product to see if, for example, their choice of joining techniques had been appropriate. Progress during the key stage is satisfactory and standards by the age of eleven are similar

to those in other schools.

138. Pupils enjoy their work in art and design and technology. In lessons there is a lively, purposeful working atmosphere and pupils need no encouragement to stay on task. Pupils willingly share ideas and help each other. They are eager to try out different techniques for themselves. Behaviour is good.

139. It was not possible to make a judgement about the overall quality of teaching in art. Teaching is satisfactory overall in design and technology with some good features. Teachers have a sound understanding and knowledge of the subject. Lessons are well planned and pupils given clear instructions so that they are fully aware of what they have to do. There is an appropriate focus made on the teaching of specific skills such as cutting and joining. Designing and evaluating are both systematically planned as part of the teaching. Teachers are not over-directive and know when to intervene in the making process with suitable advice to enable pupils to make progress.

140. The two subjects are usually taught in blocks and appropriate links are made with other subjects. There are effective schemes of work in place to support teachers' planning. The design and technology scheme has recently been reviewed in the light of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines. This is having a positive effect upon the progress pupils are now making. Both co-ordinators monitor teachers' planning. A portfolio of work is kept in art but there are no formal assessment procedures in place for design and technology. Resources are satisfactory in both subjects.

Geography

141. Pupils' standards of attainment in geography by the ages of seven and eleven are similar to those found in most schools. Progress, including that for pupils with special needs is satisfactory during both key stages.

142. The development of mapping skills and the deduction of information from secondary sources such as pictures is well developed in Key Stage 1. Photographs taken during a class visit to the local area are used successfully to encourage children to recall the sequence of landmarks observed on the route. A literacy text is used very appropriately as the basis for the construction of a map of an imaginary place using pictures. Children use the map confidently to describe their chosen route. Older children make a comparative study of Warrington and Struay, an imaginary Scottish Island. They classify pictures successfully to develop their understanding of similarity and differences in urban and rural locations.

143. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have a sound understanding of geographical themes including weather, settlements and rivers and successfully develop an awareness of environmental issues such as pollution. They consider the problem of litter in relation to the school environment and whether traffic is a problem on the local high street. Through a study of climate and their own holiday experiences they begin to understand how weather affects people's lives and how environmental factors influence decisions, for example, in choosing the clothes to wear. Older pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the geographical terminology associated with rivers and use fieldwork and secondary sources successfully to extend their knowledge.

144. Pupils' response is good overall. Most pupils listen carefully to teachers' explanations and are willing to offer answers when required. In both key stages they apply themselves well to tasks. The oldest pupils who are entrusted to work independently in the school library do so conscientiously. In both key stages pupils work amicably on group projects,

share materials and discuss the task sensibly. The care with which pupils present their work is variable and standards of presentation are sometimes unsatisfactory.

145. The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory with some good features in Key Stage 2. In both key stages lessons are well planned and tasks are set which take good account of pupils' differing attainment levels. In Key Stage 1 open questions encourage children to think carefully and expand their answers. Teachers have high expectations of what is to be achieved in the lesson. The good features of the teaching in Key Stage 2 include clear instructions, such as how to use a key when presenting statistical information and the good use which was made of video material to introduce a river study. There is scope to extend the good practice of some teachers by providing more opportunities to use geography to develop pupils' writing skills and as a means of using and applying mathematical knowledge.

146. Provision for the subject has improved since the previous inspection. A geography policy is in place and a published scheme of work is now being implemented. This provides a greater breadth to the topics studied and an appropriate progression for pupils' learning. There is a satisfactory balance between the required geographical knowledge and skills and understanding.

147. Resources are adequate and well managed. They are supplemented by additional materials, available from the local library. Effective use is made of the school grounds as a focus for improvement and of the local area for field work. Visitors, such as the Park Rangers, give talks and demonstrations on environmental matters. Residential visits to areas further afield have successfully included geographical aspects such as mapping skills, observation of the work of rivers and man's influence on the environment in the construction of canals. There are no procedures in place for assessing pupils' progress.

History

148. Most pupils, including those with special needs, make satisfactory progress in history in both key stages and achieve standards similar to those found in most schools. Evidence to support this judgement is taken from teachers' planning, conversations with pupils, examination of their workbooks from the current and previous year and classroom displays. No lessons were observed in Key Stage 1, so no judgement can be made about the quality of teaching provided for younger children.

149. In Key Stage 1 pupils develop a sound understanding of change over time through topics such as 'Homes', 'Transport' and 'Children in History', recording their observations of differences between 'then' and 'now'. A recent visit to Dunham Massey appropriately brought to life aspects of everyday life in Britain in a previous age.

150. In Key Stage 2 pupils' develop a knowledge of history through the use of secondary sources and begin to distinguish that archaeological evidence is more secure than that derived from myths and legends. They use time lines successfully to make comparisons between different historical periods and events, and begin to identify the reasons behind differences in the lifestyles of sections of a population at given times. Sometimes this successfully involves them in imagining themselves as a character in history, such as a child in a Victorian workhouse. Standards are similar to those in most schools by the age of eleven.

151. Pupils' response is satisfactory. In the few lessons observed, pupils' showed interest and enthusiasm for the topics being covered. They were willing to talk about what they had learned. However, the standard of presentation of their written work is variable and sometimes unsatisfactory.

152.The quality of teaching in the Key Stage 2 lessons observed was good. Literature such as 'Street Child' is used effectively to impart an understanding of the poverty which existed in parts of Victorian Britain. Open questioning encourages pupils to extend their answers. Key words and ideas are made available to help them in the recording of their findings. Some good opportunities are provided for pupils to write imaginatively but this good practice is not consistent throughout the school.

153.A separate policy for history has been drawn up. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when a single policy combined history and geography. A new policy is planned to take account of recent changes. A published scheme of work is being implemented. The co-ordinator scrutinises teachers' planning and has started to examine pupils' books. Staff training in the use of historical resources is scheduled. A start has been made in drawing up a system to record pupils' progress. A 'Millennium Display' successfully reflects some aspects of their work.

154.Resources are adequate, conveniently stored and easily accessible. Useful additional materials are available on loan from the local public library. Artefacts from a private source have been used successfully in relation to study of the Egyptians but the school's own collection is still limited as it was at the time of the previous inspection.

159. Information technology

155.Though standards have improved in information technology since the last inspection, pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making unsatisfactory progress. As a result levels of attainment by the end of both key stages are below the national expectations, especially in the applications of control technology and data handling. Information technology is now being used effectively by some classes to support learning in other National Curriculum subjects but this is not consistent throughout the school.

156.By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils understand that what they type on the keyboard appears on the screen, can be saved, modified and printed. For example, Year 1 pupils use their simple word processing skills to choose the correct words for insertion into sentences. Some can change the font, load, save and print. Their experience of other aspects of information technology, such as the use of tape recorders and programmable toys, is more limited.

157.By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils use word processing regularly to support their work in other subjects. They can type simple texts to create a fair copy. Pupils are gaining familiarity with a range of functions, tool bars and menus. However, they are slow at entering text with confidence and still have problems finding letters quickly on the keyboard. Most know how to print out. Some use appropriate strategies and functions such as spell checks and are confident in selecting and changing letter fonts and sizes. Pupils are able to activate CD ROMs to retrieve information and occasionally their skills and awareness of programs are effectively developed in the context of the other curriculum subjects. For example, in science Year 4 pupils were able to use appropriate software to access information on bones of the human body and other species. They also created bar graphs to illustrate classroom temperatures. However, pupils do not extend their skills to enable them to activate programmable toys to follow a complex pattern of instructions, to use spreadsheets or to interrogate databases.

158. The amount of time spent using computers and the amount of focussed application varies between classes. The discrete lessons which pupils in Years 1 to 4 have from a specialist teacher with technician support is having a positive effect on progress. Years 5 and 6 visit Padgate High School for information technology lessons and are gaining in confidence in the application of skills learned there. For example, in using a program to design and furnish a room for a disabled person, pupils successfully learn that a graphical model can be used to explore alternatives before finally deciding where the best position would be to place a window or a chair. However, pupils in the mobile classroom do not have ready access to a computer and this has a detrimental effect upon their progress and the standards they are able to achieve.

159. Pupils' attitudes to information technology are good and they welcome the opportunity to use the machines. They are receptive to learning new skills and usually pick up procedures quickly. Pupils work well in pairs. The more skilled act as willing support 'tutors' to their classmates. These positive attitudes make a valuable contribution to the progress pupils make.

160. Insufficient teaching was observed to make a secure judgement about its quality. However, teachers' current planning is very good. Since the last inspection the school has improved the quality of curriculum guidance in information technology and its use across the curriculum. Long-term planning, based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidance, identifies the skills to be developed as pupils move through the school. The school has successfully bid for National Grid for Learning funding which should increase the current satisfactory range of resources substantially.

161. There is effective management of developments in the subject. The co-ordinator has suitable plans to improve provision including staff development.

166. Music

162. The previous inspection found that teaching in the subject was never less than satisfactory. This continues to be the case and during the week of the inspection some very good teaching was observed in Key Stage 2 with the school making good use of the specialist skills of a teacher from a local high school.

163. It is not possible to make any judgement about the progress pupils make or overall standards in Key Stage 1 because only one lesson was seen during the week of the inspection. Evidence from teachers' planning shows that all aspects of music are covered. In one of the acts of worship observed pupils sang well and showed good control of pitch. Pupils in the one lesson observed displayed a good sense of rhythm and accompanied music well using a range of untuned instruments. Progress in this lesson was satisfactory and pupils attained a standard in line with that found in most schools.

164. Satisfactory progress is made in the development of musical skills in Key Stage 2 and overall standards by the age of eleven are those found in most schools. However, opportunities are not provided for pupils to learn to play orchestral instruments. Good progress and satisfactory standards in composing and performing skills were observed at the end of Key Stage 2. The good progress most pupils make is as a result of the impact of the visiting music specialist. She uses her musical knowledge well in encouraging pupils to improve their standards of performance. Pupils use electronic keyboards well to compose accompaniments to their Christmas Raps. Evidence from wall displays shows some good standards in graphic scoring. Year 5 pupils make good progress in developing performing skills and they organise themselves well into groups. Pupils in another class extend their

repertoire of songs and demonstrate increased control of phrasing. Singing is lively and tuneful in acts of worship. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

165. Pupils in both key stages enjoy their music lessons, are keen to play instruments and behave well. In Year 6 there are some very challenging pupils with behavioural problems but in the lesson observed standards of behaviour were good. A feature of most lessons is the way pupils co-operate well together in groups.

166. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is never less than satisfactory and very good in the one class taken by the visiting music specialist. Where teaching is very good the activities are well matched to the children and comments are made that help pupils improve their performance. Teachers make good critical use of a commercial scheme to support the subject. No overall judgement can be made about the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 but in the one lesson observed the teacher demonstrated good skills in ensuring that pupils were all given the chance to play instruments.

167. The school uses a commercial scheme and has a good range of musical instruments. It works closely with local schools in ensuring that pupils are given the opportunity to hear visiting musicians. The school choir performs both in school and at other venues. Pupils are given good opportunities to take part in school concerts.

172. Physical Education

168. The previous inspection report recorded that the use of crash mats in Key Stage 1 was a cause of concern. These have now been removed. Since the last inspection both pupils' standards of attainment and the quality of teaching have improved. The school now makes good critical use of a commercial scheme.

169. During the week of the inspection Key Stage 2 pupils were only observed taking part in games activities so it is not possible to make any judgement about standards in other aspects of the subject. However, school records show that by the time pupils leave they are attaining satisfactory standards in swimming.

170. By the age of seven, pupils' co-ordination, balance and control are satisfactory for the age group. They are able to plan a simple sequence of movements involving curved pathways. In one lesson pupils performed a dance in a set as a response to taped music. They demonstrated good skills in performing their own fairy dance. Progress in the development of physical education skills is satisfactory throughout the key stage and pupils attain standards in line with those found in most schools. Special educational needs pupils make satisfactory progress.

171. In the lessons observed in Key Stage 2 pupils attained satisfactory standards in games skills and made satisfactory progress. They are able to run and turn quickly and make good use of space. Pupils can pass a ball accurately and understand the need for rules when playing competitive sports.

172. The pupils' response to the subject is good overall. Key Stage 2 pupils enjoy working with the specialist coaches. In all lessons observed pupils behaved well. They worked co-operatively together in groups and were keen to produce their best efforts. All pupils are aware of the need to perform actions safely and there is a very good dress code for physical education lessons.

173.The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 was satisfactory overall. Teachers make good use of published materials. Whilst good use is made of pupils demonstrating their movements, opportunities for them to evaluate their own and others' performance are not always taken. In one lesson where teaching was good the teacher made some helpful interventions to improve pupils' performance. The lessons observed in Key Stage 2 were taken by visiting rugby coaches, teaching was of a good standard and characterised by a fast pace and challenging physical activities. It is not possible to make a judgement about the overall quality of teaching in Key Stage 2.

174.A good range of equipment is used well to support the subject. The hall and school grounds are of adequate size. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in after-school clubs including dance, netball and football. They take part in competitive sport with other schools.

Swimming

175.The inspection of this school included a focussed view of swimming that is reported below.

176.By the time pupils leave 91% of pupils in 1999 were able to swim 25 metres. At the end of the previous year 88% could swim this distance. During the year all pupils in Years 5 and 6 receive weekly swimming lessons and benefit from this regular provision.

177.It is not possible to make any judgement about the quality of the swimming instruction as no lessons were timetabled during the inspection. School records show that instructors are appropriately qualified. Pupils who cannot swim are taught pre-swimming skills in the small shallow pool. Planning is satisfactory and based on the Warrington scheme. Assessment procedures and the recording of information about pupils' skills are satisfactory.

178.Swimming is seen as an integral part of the school's physical education curriculum and of the school's aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. Both classes receive a half-hour lesson per week and travel to the baths by coach accompanied by two teachers.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence

The inspection was carried out by a team of four inspectors, who were in school for a total of 14 inspector days.

During the inspection week

50 lessons or parts of lessons, representing over 35 hours, were observed;

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

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

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

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

Prior to the inspection week

a meeting to ascertain parents' views was held;

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

meetings were held with the Governing Body and with staff.

Data and indicators

PUPIL DATA

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on schools' register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR - Y6	184	3	68	85

TEACHERS AND CLASSES

Qualified teachers (YR - Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23

Education support staff (YR - Y6)

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked each week	51.5

Average class size:	26
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FINANCIAL DATA

Financial year:	1998/9
	£
Total Income	305,018
Total Expenditure	293,183
Expenditure per pupil	1,695
Balance brought forward from previous year	31,136
Balance carried forward to next year	42,971

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

184

Number of questionnaires returned:

38

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	82%	18%	0%	0%	0%
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my	79%	21%	0%	0%	0%
The school handles complaints from parents well	45%	45%	11%*	0%	0%
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	58%	34%	8%	0%	0%
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	68%	24%	8%	0%	0%
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	71%	29%	0%	0%	0%
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	63%	34%	3%	0%	0%
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	61%	37%	3%	0%	0%
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	61%	37%	3%	0%	0%
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	50%	39%	11%	0%	0%
My child(ren) like(s) school	76%	18%	5%	0%	0%

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

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