

INSPECTION REPORT

Woolston Community Primary School,
Warrington.

Unique Reference Number : 111182

Inspection Number: 186785

Headteacher : Mr D.R. Hudson

Reporting inspector : G.J. Yates

2465

Dates of inspection : December 6th-10th, 1999

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Information about the school

Type of school : Junior and Infant

Type of control : Community

Age range of pupils : 4 - 11

Gender of pupils : Mixed

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Appropriate authority : Governing Body

Name of chair of governors : Mrs Karen Lea

Previous inspection: February 1996

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G.J. Yates Registered inspector	Music; Physical education.	Characteristics of the school; Attainment and progress; The efficiency of the school.
L. Brock Lay inspector		Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community
M. Bowers	Science; Information technology; Design and technology.	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development.
A.V. Calderbank	English; Art; Provision for pupils with special educational needs; English as a second language.	Teaching; Leadership and management.
L. Spooner	Mathematics; Religious education.	Equal opportunities; Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
J.M. Watkins	Under-fives; History; Geography.	The curriculum and assessment; Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.

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WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- ◆. The quality of teaching is good or better in almost seven out of every ten lessons seen.
- ◆. Standards in English, mathematics and art in the current Year 2 and Year 6 are above average.
- ◆. Leadership and management are very good.
- ◆. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- ◆. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work.
- ◆. Partnerships with parents and links with the wider community are very good.
- ◆. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is of a high standard.
- ◆. Good systems are in place for curriculum planning and assessing pupils' work.

WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS WEAKNESSES

- I. In Key Stage 2 pupils' skills in scientific investigations are not systematically developed.
- II. Not all strands of information technology are satisfactorily developed.
- III. Pupils' handwriting and the quality of presentation of work vary from good to unsatisfactory in lower Key Stage 2.
- IV. Pupils' ability to find out information quickly from books is weaker than other aspects of reading.

This is a school whose considerable strengths far outweigh its weaknesses. Measures to address the weaknesses 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

Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in addressing the key issues in the 1996 inspection report. Test results in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved. The range and quality of pupils' writing is of a good standard but in some classes in lower Key Stage 2 it is not always well presented. Reading is taught well. However, pupils' inability to find out information quickly from books is still a weakness. There are now in place effective procedures for monitoring pupil's progress in most subjects. Schemes of work have been produced for all subjects and these are of good quality. Teachers plan their work well and include opportunities for independent learning and problem-solving activities. Whole-school planning strategies continue to be of a very good quality. Governors have a very good level of involvement in all aspects of school life.

The commitment of staff to raising standards places the school in a good position to continue to develop.

..

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

The school's results in the 1999 national tests in mathematics were average both in relation to all schools and to schools with similar characteristics. In English the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level was in line with the national average but below that found in similar schools. Standards in science were well below average. These results show a fall on the previous year when standards in English and mathematics were above the national average and the average for similar schools. Standards in science in 1998 were broadly in line with the national average. Last year's Year 6 contained a higher percentage of special needs children and this had an adverse effect on the school's results.

Inspection evidence shows that in the current Year 6 standards in English and mathematics are above average. Pupils benefit greatly from the setting arrangements. Standards in science are similar to those found in most schools but pupils' investigative skills are less well developed than other aspects of the subject. Standards in most aspects of information technology are higher than those found in most schools but they are unsatisfactory in the controlling and modelling strands. Standards in art are above average. It is not possible to make a judgement about standards in physical education because during the week of the inspection no Year 6 lessons were timetabled. In all other subjects pupils achieve standards in line with those found in most schools.

Children start school with a wide range of previous experiences, but many have below average skills for their age. They make good progress in the Reception classes and the majority are on target to achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes in all areas of their learning.

At the end of Key Stage 1 standards in English, mathematics and science are above average. Standards are good in art and satisfactory in other subjects by the age of seven.

QUALITY OF TEACHING

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

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

weaknesses.

During the week of the inspection 96% of teaching was at least satisfactory. Almost seven out of every ten lessons were good or better and three out of every ten were very good or excellent. Teachers have worked hard and conscientiously to prepare for the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies and this was reflected in the high quality of teaching observed in most classes. A particular strength of teaching is the way the teachers share the objectives of lessons with their pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	The behaviour of most children is good. However, the behaviour of a minority of pupils in some classes is unsatisfactory.
Attendance	Good. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very thorough.
Ethos	Very good. There is a caring and supportive atmosphere and a commitment to improve the quality of education.
Leadership and management	The school benefits from the highly effective leadership of the headteacher. He is well supported by his senior management team and the Governing Body. The school is very well managed.
Curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides children with a good preparation for the next stage of their education. A good range of activities is provided after school and sporting activities are very good.
Pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The co-ordinator carefully monitors provision throughout the school to ensure that teachers plan appropriate work for special needs pupils.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Very good. Good improvements have been made in the provision for pupils' cultural development. Acts of worship are of high quality.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Staffing levels are good. Resources are of a good quality. The accommodation is well organised and the learning environment is very attractive.
Value for money	Very good.

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

THE PARENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<p>V. The school encourages them to play an active part.</p> <p>VI. They find it easy to approach the school with concerns.</p> <p>VII. The school enables children to achieve a good standards of work.</p> <p>VIII. Children are taught in a secure and happy atmosphere.</p> <p>IX. The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on their children.</p> <p>X. Children enjoy school.</p> <p>XI. Pupils cope well on transfer to high school.</p>	<p>XII. A minority feel that the amount of homework is inappropriate.</p> <p>XIII. A few consider that higher achievers are not offered sufficient challenge.</p> <p>XIV. Some would like more up-to-date information on pupils' progress.</p> <p>XV. A few feel that complaints are not handled well.</p>

Inspection evidence demonstrates that homework is sufficient and of good quality. Higher achieving pupils are offered sufficient challenge in most subjects. Complaints from parents are listened to and a response is given. The introduction of streaming by ability in Year 6 for the teaching of literacy and numeracy has a beneficial effect on the progress all pupils make. An additional parents' evening has been organised for the Spring term.

.. **Key issues for action**

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

a] provide more opportunities in Key Stage 2 for pupils to use and extend their investigative skills in science;

[see paragraphs 28 and 129 in the report]

b] improve standards of attainment in the control and modelling aspects of information technology;

[see paragraphs 14 and 158 in the report]

c] ensure a more consistent approach to the presentation of pupils' work and handwriting skills in lower Key Stage 2;

[see paragraphs 12, 106 and 147 in the report]

d] provide more opportunities for pupils to use and develop their skimming and scanning skills in finding out information.

[see paragraphs 12 and 102 in the 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 paragraphs in the report.

- Provide opportunities for pupils to make evaluative comments in art and music lessons.

[Paragraphs 136 and 166]

- Increase the number of books in the school's Key Stage 2 library.

[Paragraph 79]

• **Introduction**

• **Characteristics of the school**

1. Woolston Community Primary School is a two-form entry school. It caters for the needs of pupils aged 4 to 11 years. It has grown in size over the last six years and 432 pupils now attend the school. Thirty-six pupils are on the special educational needs register and three have statements of special educational needs. Three pupils come from homes where English is not the first language. The admissions criteria are in accordance with local authority guidelines. Children start school at the beginning of the school year in which they have their fifth birthday. Currently there are 42 pupils on role who are not yet five years of age.

2. The school is situated in Woolston to the east of Warrington. The catchment area contains a mixture of public and private housing. The school also draws pupils from a large estate of rented property across a nearby very busy road. Baseline assessment on entry to the reception class shows that the full ability range is represented but many pupils have below average levels of attainment. The percentage of pupils who receive free school meals [8.8%] is broadly in line with the national average.

3. The school's main aims are to:

- ensure that all children receive a broad, balanced curriculum that is well matched to their abilities and needs;
- strive for personal excellence both in academic standards and in how pupils relate to each other;
- develop in children a sense of right and wrong, justness, fairness and a respect for others and self;
- maximise the effectiveness of the partnership between home and school.

1. The school's priorities for development include:

- consolidating the implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy strategies whilst adjusting planning to meet the needs of the revised National Curriculum;
- continuing to enhance opportunities for all pupils and staff within a school leadership and management culture of continual improvement;
- serving the local community as a provider of high quality educational provision in partnership with parents and carers.

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	27 (32)	32 (21)	59 (53)

National Curriculum Test Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	25 (30)	25 (29)	27 (31)
	Girls	32 (21)	31 (21)	32 (21)
	Total	57 (51)	56 (50)	59 (52)
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	97% (96%)	94% (94%)	100% (98%)
	National	82% (80%)	83% (81%)	85% (84%)
Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	25 (30)	26 (31)	27 (32)
	Girls	32 (22)	32 (21)	32 (21)
	Total	57 (51)	58 (52)	59 (53)
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	97% (96%)	99% (98%)	100% (100%)
	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	33 (26)	31 (30)	64 (56)

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	22 (13)	24 (14)	22 (16)
	Girls	23 (26)	22 (22)	20 (20)
	Total	45 (39)	46 (36)	42 (36)
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	70% (70%)	72% (64%)	66% (64%)
	National	70% (65%)	69% (59%)	78% (69%)
Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	21 (15)	27 (15)	23 (16)
	Girls	23 (24)	24 (19)	21 (22)
	Total	44 (39)	51 (34)	44 (38)
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	69% (70%)	80% (61%)	69% (68%)
	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	5%
	National comparative data	6.2%
Unauthorised Absence	School 1998/9	0%
	National comparative data	0.5%

Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	29.5%
Satisfactory or better	95.5%
Less than satisfactory	4.5%

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

Attainment and progress

1. The previous inspection found that there was some under-achievement in writing in both key stages. Standards in writing have improved immensely since the last inspection. They are now above average at the end of both key stages and pupils make good progress. Over the last three years test results in English and mathematics have improved significantly.

2. When children enter school many have below average skills in most curriculum areas. Progress for the under-fives in the reception classes is good in all areas of learning. Most by the age of five achieve all the Desirable Learning Outcomes.

3. In the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 and above was very high in comparison with the national average in English, mathematics and science. The percentage at Level 3 and above was higher than the national average.

4. Inspection evidence shows that by the age of seven many pupils are working at higher than the expected level in English, mathematics and science and they make good progress. Pupils speak, read and write well. Pupils enjoy writing and most write in a neat, printed hand and have a good command for their age of punctuation and spelling. They listen well. The literacy hour has provided more opportunities for pupils to express their views. In science good progress is made in understanding how to carry out investigations. Many pupils in mathematics are working successfully at tasks that are at a higher level than expected for pupils at that age. Pupils make good progress in developing number recall skills.

5. Pupils make satisfactory progress in information technology and religious education during Key Stage 1 and achieve average standards. They are confident in using computers and know that these can be used for a variety of purposes. They have a satisfactory understanding of the key features of Christianity. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have made good progress in art and achieve standards that are higher than those normally found. In all other subjects progress is satisfactory and pupils' achieve standards that are similar to those found in most schools.

6. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds results in mathematics were average both in relation to all schools and to schools with similar characteristics. In English the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level was in line with the national average but below that found in similar schools. Standards in science were well below average. These results demonstrate a fall on the previous year when standards in English and mathematics were above the national average and the average for similar schools. Standards in science were average. Last year's Year 6 contained a higher than usual percentage of pupils with special educational needs and this had an adverse effect on the school's results.

7. Inspection evidence shows that most pupils are on course to achieve standards that are above the national average in English and mathematics. Year 6 pupils are taught both subjects in one of three ability groups and this is having a beneficial effect on the standards they achieve. Progress is good. In science standards are close to the national average and pupils make satisfactory progress in most aspects of the subject. However, scientific investigation skills are not systematically taught and this affects the progress pupils make. More able pupils are not always challenged to work at the levels of which they are capable.

8. In English good progress is made in developing writing skills in most classes but there is some variation in the rate of progress made in different classes. Where teaching is very good pupils make very good progress. For example, the encouragement pupils receive to use descriptive language results in some writing of exceptional quality. Where teaching is not of a high standard, the presentation of pupils' work and the quality of pupils' handwriting is at times unsatisfactory. Satisfactory progress is made in the development of reading skills. By the age of eleven pupils read fluently and accurately. Referencing skills have improved since the time of the last inspection. However, pupils' ability to find information quickly from books remains a weakness. Pupils throughout Key Stage 2 make good progress in developing speaking and listening skills. By the age of eleven standards are above average. Good use is made of the 'story chair' to help pupils to develop their speaking skills. English skills are developed well in most other subjects.

9. In mathematics pupils can confidently apply their number knowledge to solve problems. Most pupils have a wide variety of mathematical vocabulary that is used appropriately. They apply their mathematics well in subjects such as science, design and technology and geography.

10. By the age of eleven standards in most aspects of information technology are higher than those normally found as a result of the good progress made. Pupils use word processors skilfully to present their work. However, the control and modelling aspects of the subject are currently under-developed and standards in this strand are unsatisfactory. Inspection evidence shows that standards in religious education meet the expectations set out in the locally Agreed Syllabus. Satisfactory progress is made overall. Many are developing a deeper understanding of the meaning of a range of religious symbols.

11. In art standards by the time pupils leave are higher than those found in most schools and pupils make good progress. In all other subjects inspected progress is satisfactory and pupils achieve average standards. It is not possible to make any judgement about overall standards in physical education but inspection shows that pupils benefit greatly from a wide range of physical education activities involving outside agencies. In music pupils make satisfactory progress overall but in one class in lower Key Stage 2 pupils make very good progress, because of the high quality of teaching.

12. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Good use is made of assessment information to plan work. Those with English as a second language are able to participate effectively in all activities. There is no significant difference in either key stage between the attainment and progress made by boys and girls.

16.

16. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

13. The school has maintained high standards in these aspects since the last inspection and parents are rightly confident that most children behave, work and develop well in the school.

14. Children under five have very positive attitudes to their learning and their behaviour is good. They confidently choose their own activities, but they obey the rule that limits the number of children participating in an activity at any one time. They learn to take turns, work together harmoniously and share equipment.

15. Almost all pupils in both key stages have very good attitudes to their work. They apply themselves well to their tasks, concentrating, persevering and remaining on task. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and are not afraid to ask questions to check their understanding. For example, when the local general practitioner gave a talk to Year 6 pupils about micro-organisms pupils asked sensible questions. In information technology pupils organise their own work and produced useful data about the provision of books in the library to help to improve the range of available books. The Pupils' Council is successful in developing positive attitudes and decision-making skills, for example, in improving the school environment.

16. Behaviour is generally good both in lessons and around the school. This contributes to pupils' attainment and progress. However, in a small number of classes pupils shout out their answers and this interrupts the flow of the lesson. Playground behaviour is good. Pupils are polite and helpful to each other. They respond well to the school rules and show respect for conventions as seen in the behaviour during assemblies and in the dining hall. There have been no recent exclusions.

17. Relationships around the school are very good and this contributes to the caring ethos. It enables pupils to work together productively and to seek help or advice when it is needed. Relationships between pupils and adults are developed effectively through the organisation of interest clubs and residential visits. Relationships are developed purposefully through the Pupils' Council where older and younger pupils meet in groups to discuss issues relating to the school. These meetings are business-like with chosen pupils minuting discussions. Each representative is enabled to make contributions which are valued and recorded.

18. Pupils' spiritual development is very well enhanced through assemblies. They respond well to the opportunities provided for them to take part in quiet reflection. All pupils have very good opportunities to take on responsibilities for daily tasks in classrooms and around the school. These responsibilities are taken seriously and are carried out conscientiously. An excellent example of their commitment was observed in the school's responses to the Romania Christmas Appeal. Key Stage 1 pupils develop their independent learning skills in scientific investigations. Key Stage 2 pupils use their information technology skills well to access information. The pupils' participation in the 'River of Life' initiatives promotes their awareness of community, citizenship and civic responsibility.

22. Attendance

19. There has been an improvement in attendance since the previous inspection. Pupils' attendance is good and is now above the national average for primary schools. Unauthorised absence is below the national average. Attendance during the Autumn term to date is 96 per cent which shows that the school is on target to maintain its good record. The under-fives also have a good record of attendance. The school actively encourages consistent and punctual attendance and good attendance is both expected and rewarded. During the academic year 1998/9, 35 pupils achieved 100 per cent attendance.

24. The school has implemented a "Keep Children Safe" initiative in the school. Parents are asked to contact school on the first day of any absence. Most parents are aware of their responsibilities for good attendance and the adverse effect that poor attendance has on attainment and progress. Any instances of non-attendance or persistent lateness are followed up promptly. Registration periods are efficient and provide a calm, orderly start to the day. Children enjoy school, are punctual and attend willingly as confirmed by parents at the meeting and through the parental questionnaires.

24.

24. Quality of education provided

24. Teaching

20. The quality of teaching is good overall and contributes highly to pupils' positive learning attitudes and their progress especially in upper Key Stage 2. It is good or better in almost seven out of every ten lessons and three out of ten are very good or excellent. Less than 5% of the teaching seen was unsatisfactory. This represents a significant improvement on the findings of the previous 1996 inspection when teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory in a substantial minority of lessons in Key Stage 1 and in some lessons in Key Stage 2. Most of the shortcomings identified in the previous inspection are not in evidence. Across the school there are significant strengths in the teaching of English and mathematics. In these subjects most teachers have high expectations of pupils and work hard to set up tasks which the pupils find challenging. In most subjects lessons often appropriately include the use of information technology as part of the planned learning experience.

21. In both Reception classes the teaching of children aged under five is good and occasionally very good. The results of baseline assessments are used well to set targets for individual children's learning. Work is carefully planned across the year group and evaluated regularly. The curriculum is well balanced and forms a good foundation for progress towards the National Curriculum. Classroom assistants provide effective additional support which has a positive impact on children's learning. Their observations of children at work in groups make a valuable contribution towards the assessment and recording of the children's progress towards achieving the Desirable Learning Objectives.

22. At Key Stage 1 the quality of teaching is good in English, mathematics and science. There are some examples of very good teaching in English and mathematics. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented well and planning in both is very effective. Work in literacy and numeracy is usually matched appropriately to pupils' needs and in most lessons pupils make good progress as a result of the direct teaching of key skills. Good use is made of high quality texts in literacy. A good feature of the numeracy lessons is the regular use of mental work and the opportunities provided for pupils to explain their answers. Science is well taught and includes a suitable balance of teaching of scientific knowledge and investigative work. Some very good teaching was observed in history and physical education. In the very effective teaching in history a visitor fascinated the pupils with some interesting insights into what Christmas was like when he was a child. In physical education very good use was made of specialist tuition to coach specific games skills. Planning is good in all subjects.

23. In Key Stage 2 teaching is good overall in literacy and mathematics and satisfactory in science. There are several examples of very effective teaching. The teaching in Years 5 and 6 is consistently at least good and contributes especially well to pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics. Good account is taken of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in all year groups. The current practice of setting pupils according to their prior attainment in English and mathematics is having a beneficial effect upon the progress pupils are making. In most of the literacy lessons a brisk pace is enabling pupils to make good progress. In the numeracy lessons the regular use of mental work is helping to improve pupils' knowledge of number facts. However, in science pupils' investigative skills are not systematically developed. Lessons were also observed in Key Stage 2 in art, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education. The overall teaching in these subjects is good. No teaching was observed in information technology and design and technology. An excellent music lesson was observed being taken by the co-ordinator, who is a music specialist. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was characterised by a lack of pace in pupils' learning because of the poor behaviour of a minority of pupils who kept interrupting the teacher.

24. In both key stages pupils are usually well managed and teachers use a good range of teaching methods including teaching to the whole class and to groups formed according to prior attainment. Good use is made of plenary sessions in several subjects and not just English and mathematics. On these occasions, new skills are taught directly and good questioning ensures that pupils understand what they are expected to do. A strong feature of the very effective teaching is the high expectation in the use of questions. For example, in a Year 5 lesson using "Voices" as a text, the teacher used open questions to encourage the pupils to express their ideas and then asked follow up questions to encourage them to elaborate further. High expectations are a key characteristic of other very effective teaching. In a Year 3 music lesson, pupils made very good progress in performing rhythmic patterns, because the teacher was able to give good examples of the difference between dynamics and duration. She picked up well on pupils' mistakes and gave them sufficient time to practise in order to refine their performance. Common strengths of the very good teaching include clear and appropriate objectives for learning shared with pupils, clear exposition and a brisk pace in pupils' learning. In these lessons pupils made good progress.

25. In general, lessons are well organised and time and resources are used appropriately. Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding are good. Overall use of day-to-day assessment is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Throughout the school there are good examples of teachers using their knowledge of pupils to ensure that work is well matched to their needs. In both key stages teachers mark work conscientiously and some set targets for pupils to improve their work. Homework is used well to support pupils' learning.

26. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and good account is taken of their individual education plans. The pupils are benefiting from the recent greater focus on literacy and numeracy. The good liaison between the class teachers, support staff and the special needs co-ordinator is a significant contributory factor in the pupils' progress. The support given to the very small number of pupils who speak English as a second language is also very effective.

31. The curriculum and assessment

27. Curriculum planning for the under-fives is very good. It covers the six areas of learning and provides very well for the Desirable Learning Outcomes recommended for the age group. Learning objectives are very clear and sufficient attention is paid to challenging the most able children.

28. The curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2 is broad and balanced. It complies with the National Curriculum requirements in all subjects and the scheme of work in religious education is compatible with the locally Agreed Syllabus. An appropriate programme is in place for sex education and drugs awareness in Key Stage 2. Personal and social education is of high quality and forms an integral part of the curriculum throughout the school. It includes aspects of health education. Swimming tuition is provided in Years 4, 5 and 6 as part of a phased programme over the year. Instrumental music tuition is available on a fee-paying basis for older pupils.

29. The school's literacy teaching accords very strongly with the principles of the National Literacy Strategy and planning throughout the school is very thorough. This has a positive impact on the quality of learning and the standards attained. Pupils' writing skills are well developed in both key stages and this enhances learning in other subjects. However, work is not always well presented. The improvement in writing standards shows good progress since the previous inspection when writing did not always reflect the pupils' capabilities. Initiatives such as the 'Storybag' project have raised parental awareness about literacy. Pupils' reading skills are well developed and opportunities are created for independent learning. However, their inability to find out information quickly from books is a relative weakness.

30. The National Numeracy Strategy has been adopted successfully and enhanced pupils' mathematical agility. There is satisfactory use of numeracy skills in other subjects, such as in problem-solving activities in science and geography, but there is scope to develop the application of mathematics to real-life situations even further. Setting arrangements in Year 6, and additional support in Year 5, in both literacy and numeracy are having a positive impact on standards.

31. All subjects have appropriate policies and good schemes of work in place. Detailed long-term planning together with medium-term planning provide well for continuity and progression of learning in most subjects. However, science in Key Stage 2 is not planned as well with regard to investigative and experimental science. The use of information technology is well planned in both key stages and in most subject areas, but modelling and control aspects are insufficiently developed in Key Stage 2. Teachers make effective use of weekly plans. Plans are particularly thorough in English and mathematics, where learning objectives are clearly set out and shared with pupils and tasks are well matched to pupils' attainment levels. Curriculum co-ordinators and members of the Senior Management Team are effective in monitoring the curriculum provided and the standards achieved.

32. The school has a very strong commitment to equal opportunities. The few pupils whose first language is not English participate fully in school life. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum provided. Intervention strategies have been applied when the progress of a particular year group gave cause for concern. Efforts have been made to provide literature which appeals to both genders.

33. Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and for those who speak English as a second language. Individual Education Plans contain appropriate targets for both literacy and numeracy. Parents are involved in the review process. In most lessons teachers' planning takes account of those with special needs. The special needs co-ordinator has an effective role in monitoring both the quality of provision and the progress made by individual pupils.

34. There is a good range of activities provided after school for pupils in Key Stage 2. The arrangements for tuition from the local Sports Development Unit are effective. Pupils' participation in these organised activities, including Key Stage 1 pupils, has a positive impact on the standards achieved. Educational visits to places of interest include a residential curriculum visit for Year 3 pupils. Optional residential visits are offered to older pupils for outdoor adventure activities and contribute to their social development. Visitors to the school provide enriching experiences. During the inspection week, these included professional musicians, a drama group from the local high school and representatives from the "Warrington Wolves" rugby team.

35. Throughout the school homework tasks are set which successfully support and complement the work which pupils do in school. There is a Pupils' Council that enables pupils to have a say in all aspects of school life.

36. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good overall. They are very thorough in English and mathematics. A formalised system is not yet in place to assess attainment and progress in science. The school uses a range of tests in English and mathematics that include commercial materials, statutory and non-statutory tests and on-going teacher assessment. Results of assessments are carefully analysed and discussed to provide data to improve provision and to set future targets. The information obtained is used very well to inform curriculum planning. Good use is made of Records of Achievement. Pupils' journals are an effective means of sharing progress with parents in a range of subject areas. End of year reports are of good quality. Subject co-ordinators are effective in compiling profiles of pupils' work to show progress through the school.

37. Assessment and recording procedures for the under-fives are very comprehensive. Parents are asked to complete a 'strengths and weaknesses' form on their children prior to entry. Baseline assessment is carried out as children enter school and this is used effectively to set targets. Progress is tracked and recorded appropriately. Children whose progress is causing concern are identified early. Their progress is carefully monitored and parents kept fully informed.

38. Pupils are actively involved in reviewing and assessing their own performance and setting their own targets. A pilot scheme for self-evaluation of writing is proving to be effective. Individual targets have been set for Key Stage 2 pupils and "Challenge" targets for pupils are set at the end of one school year to be achieved in the following year.

39. All pupils with special needs have very good assessment records of their progress and development. This ensures that the appropriate decisions can be made, at the correct time, about their future targets. These are effectively kept under review by the co-ordinator.

40. Overall the school has been very successful in ensuring that standards of achievement are effectively monitored across the school, and that standards achieved in most subjects, including writing, reflect pupils' attainments. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

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

41. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This reflects the views of most parents who feel that the school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on their children. The high level of commitment to the promotion of spiritual, moral and social education has been maintained since the previous inspection. The school has worked hard to enhance the provision made for cultural development and this aspect has improved significantly since the last inspection when it was judged as sound.

42. The school's aims permeate much of what happens during the day. The daily act of worship makes a very positive contribution to this through providing very good opportunities for pupils to reflect on the deeper meaning of life. Separate assemblies for older and younger pupils are held and this enables the planned themes to be discussed at a level meaningful to the pupils concerned. At other times of the week the whole school meets together and these assemblies give a sense of community. Parents are invited on a regular basis to class-led assemblies.

43. Religious education makes a very good contribution to this aspect of the pupils' development. Other areas of the curriculum make a positive contribution to spiritual development through literature, poetry, art and music. In addition, pupils are encouraged to reflect on their personal worth. The school fully meets the statutory requirements for collective worship.

44. The school's aim to teach the principles that distinguish right from wrong is evident in all aspects of school life and in the pupils' responses to moral issues. All members of staff are good role models. The school's rules are based upon a positive moral code and are displayed in every classroom. A comprehensive Equal Opportunities policy is in place that actively promotes the rights of everyone in the school. Assemblies, which are carefully planned for each term, strongly promote moral values. Moral issues are taught through a range of subjects, for example in a role-playing activity in religious education to debate moral conflict, and in the study of the life of Anne Frank in history lessons. Good provision is made for pupils to discuss a range of moral issues and behaviours within the personal and social education programme.

45. A Pupils' Council has been established in partnership with members of staff. Within this forum pupils from both key stages debate current issues and consider those which might benefit the school. This provides a very good opportunity for pupils to develop initiative skills and responsibility whilst making a very positive contribution to the life of the school. Opportunities to learn about moral responsibility in the wider world are encouraged by fund-raising and recently through the Shoe Box Appeal for children in Romania. The school has established links with the Warrington Peace Foundation and through this has formed a connection with a school in Ireland.

46. The school's Code of Conduct provides good guidelines for pupils to develop positive and responsible attitudes and behaviour. It has a range of policies that encompass behaviour, drugs and sex education, and personal and social education. Assemblies and displays around the school celebrate good work and this raises the pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Good opportunities are provided for the development of responsibility. From the early years in the Reception classes and throughout the school pupils are given responsibilities in and around the classroom. For example, older pupils regularly set up the resources needed for assemblies and often take a part in leading them. Pupils are involved in setting their own learning targets that also include opportunities for them to think about attitudes and behaviour. Members of the lunchtime staff award certificates of good behaviour. Extra-curricular activities provide good opportunities for social development. A visit to the Wye Valley earlier this year provided good opportunities for pupils to participate in adventurous and character-building exercises.

47. The school makes very good provision for pupils to develop an understanding of their own culture and that of others. They explore different cultures through the curriculum. They study the work of a wide range of famous artists and learn about their own heritage through literacy, music, history and geography, for example, in the study of different localities and a recent performance of Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" by pupils from the local secondary school. Religious education and assemblies provide very good opportunities for pupils to learn about the Christian faith and the beliefs and practices of those who belong to other faiths. The link with the school in Ireland has promoted the introduction of Irish children's literature within the school's literacy programme. The school celebrates its own past through displayed photographs and commentary on significant events in its history.

52. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

48. Arrangements for the support, guidance and welfare of pupils are very good. The school is a happy and caring place in which to work. This supportive ethos is underpinned by the promotion of good behaviour and self-discipline in pupils. Most parents feel very secure in leaving children in the care of the school. The standards found in the previous inspection have been maintained.

49. The comprehensive information passed on at points of transition demonstrates that teachers have a good knowledge of the academic progress of pupils in their classes. There is a developing pupil profile which shows that pro-active measures are taken to target individuals who may need extra support. The specific targets in the individual education plans of those pupils who have a special educational need are regularly reviewed. There is sound monitoring of pupils' personal development. The co-ordinator for personal and social education has conducted an audit of provision across the school and now intends to draw together all the strands of personal and social education into a discrete programme. The sex education policy is comprehensive and takes into account pupils' levels of maturity. Teachers treat pupils' concerns sensitively within the context of family relationships. With its health education programme, visits from the health adviser, police and fire officers, the school caters well for the personal development of its pupils.

50. The school provides a safe environment. There are policies in place to ensure the safety of pupils whilst in school and on school visits. There are guidelines to staff on safe working practices. The Governing Body delegates responsibility for health and safety through the headteacher to the health and safety co-ordinator. The co-ordinator conducts an annual risk assessment and draws up an action plan of good quality. The site supervisor is responsible for reporting concerns on a daily basis.

51. Child protection procedures are properly established and the designated teacher has attended training courses. Staff receive training each September and understand their role in the early identification of concerns. Two members of staff are fully qualified to administer first aid and a number of the mid-day supervisors have received emergency first aid training.

52. Most pupils respond to the expectations of good behaviour and to the school rules. There are good procedures in place for promoting and monitoring behaviour but these are not implemented consistently by all staff. In responding to any instances of bullying, the school emphasises reconciliation not retaliation.

53. The school has worked hard to achieve a marked improvement in attendance since the previous inspection. It follows up reasons for non-attendance and keeps records of all absences. Parents are regularly reminded of the importance of good attendance and punctuality. There is a system of rewards for good attendance to reinforce this message.

54. Arrangements for the induction of new pupils are good. This begins with the home visits that Reception teachers make before children start school. There are good arrangements for the transfer of pupils to high school. High school teachers visit the school and in addition to invitations to events there, pupils spend a taster day in the school of their choice. Additional liaison work is undertaken to ensure the smooth transfer of pupils with special educational needs. Liaison with other agencies connected with pupils' health, safety and welfare are good. The school is a caring community in which pupils feel safe and secure.

59. Partnership with parents and the community

55. The partnership with parents is very good. The school works hard to keep parents informed and written documentation is clear and easy to read. There are regular weekly newsletters. A parents' noticeboard near the main entrance and an easel near another entrance list information about the particular day's events. An annual parents' evening is held during the summer term. In response to a request, a second one has been arranged for the spring term. Parents confirm that they are welcome to discuss concerns at any time. Workshops have been held in many areas of the curriculum including drugs education. Annual reports to parents are good and contain concise, evaluative judgements on attainment in subjects and on pupils' personal and social development. Most set targets for future development. The praise card system works well.

56. Parental involvement in the school is very good. Parents, grandparents and friends are encouraged to help in the school and a large number do so, some on a regular basis and others in response to a request for help at social and fund-raising events. Some of the people who help regularly have had a long association with the school and they confirm that their services are valued and that the school makes them very welcome. The Friends Association is active in raising funds for the school. In addition to the purchase of computers, video and sporting equipment, these funds are used to subsidise the cost of visits out of school, visiting artists and sporting activities. A separate Grounds Committee has been very active in enhancing the school grounds and making them a pleasant environment where pupils can play and socialise.

57. The school recently sent out a questionnaire to parents about various features of school life and the returns have been analysed and some school procedures modified. Parents welcome this involvement, for example the returns show that they enjoyed the recent numeracy meeting. Their enjoyment of the family assembly during the inspection was clear to see. With support from Warrington Collegiate, the school runs courses for parents in helping their children to learn. The school's Lifelong Learning co-ordinator now has plans to extend the range of courses and offer an information technology course along with careers guidance and links with the Collegiate and British Telecom.

58. Contact with the community is very good. Pupils enjoy educational visits to places of interest connected with their studies and these good links enhance their attainment, progress and personal development. Pupils take care of their environment and were observed collecting litter from the school grounds. A range of organisations donated funding for enhancing the school grounds by the inclusion of a pond, for example, the Mersey Forest Community Trust. The school works in partnership with the two private organisations using the school site. The Playgroup and the WASPS Link Club enjoy good relations with the school and work closely with it for the benefit of the children. Gifts from the Harvest Festival are donated to a range of organisations in the local community. Pupils are aware of the needs of others less fortunate and have sent gift boxes to children in Romania.

59. The very good links with Woolston High School ease the transfer of pupils. High school teachers maintain close links with Year 6 before transfer and they spend an induction day in the school of their choice. High school students gave a presentation in the school of "A Christmas Carol" during the week of the inspection.

64. The management and efficiency of the school

64. Leadership and management

60. As identified in the previous inspection report the quality of leadership and management is very good.

61. Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in addressing the key issues and this has been carefully planned and well managed. Pupils' achievements by the age of eleven have improved in English and mathematics. The range and quality of writing is now much better but in some classes it is not always well presented. Reading is taught well and standards of achievement are above average overall. However, pupils' inability to find out information quickly from non-fiction books remains a weakness. The range of books in the Key Stage 2 library is not yet wide enough.

62. The school has put in place very effective procedures for monitoring progress in most subjects. Schemes of work have been produced for all subjects and are of good quality. Where appropriate they take account of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines. Teachers plan their work conscientiously and include opportunities for independent learning and problem-solving activities. The quality of teaching has improved significantly and most of the shortcomings identified in the previous inspection report are no longer in evidence. Governors have maintained their very good level of involvement in all aspects of school life.

63. The headteacher provides very effective leadership. He gives a very good sense of direction and has a strong commitment to the raising of standards. He is deeply committed to the school, the pupils and the staff and plays a very visible role in the daily life of the school. His supportive approach and the involvement of all staff in decisions have contributed to the good team spirit. His willingness to delegate and the encouragement he gives to staff to undertake initiatives such as "Storybags" have been important factors in helping the school to improve.

64. The two deputy headteachers and the co-ordinators carry out their duties very effectively and provide good support to their colleagues. Most staff have responsibility for a subject or an aspect of the school and have been successful in setting priorities for these areas. For example, the curriculum and assessment co-ordinator has ensured that a good system of planning exists and assessment information is generally well used. These targets have been identified after careful monitoring. The Senior Management Team and subject co-ordinators scrutinise pupils' work and teachers' planning documents. There has also been some monitoring of provision in classrooms. This has been effective in improving levels of attainment. For example, in English an evaluation of writing samples has resulted in some very useful suggestions to improve the quality of pupils' work. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced very efficiently and are an established part of the school day and are having a positive impact on attainment.

65. Strategic planning is very good. The Governing Body, through its committee structure, meets all its statutory responsibilities. Governors are fully involved in policy making and give careful consideration to the implications of their decisions. The literacy, numeracy and special needs governors all have a good understanding of their roles. The curriculum "shadow" roles the governors have undertaken give them a clearer picture of standards within subjects. The chairperson meets regularly with the headteacher and receives a copy of all correspondence related to school business.

66. Development planning procedures are very good. The School Development Plan is based on a thorough review of the school's strengths and weaknesses. All staff, including classroom assistants, have the opportunity to contribute suggestions at the annual "conference" and the Pupils' Council provides a useful forum through which pupils can represent their views. The School Development Plan has clear programmes of action which have deadlines for completion and criteria by which to measure success. The responsibilities for taking the necessary action are allocated and targets are clearly linked to appropriate budgets.

67. The management team analyses in detail the performance data from baseline assessments, National Curriculum tests and its internal tests. It uses the information to set targets which pupils can be expected to attain by the time they leave and also to indicate what they might achieve if they are fully challenged.

68. The management of the provision for pupils under five years of age is good. A baseline test is in place to establish children's attainment when they begin school. The information gathered is used well to provide for future learning, and appropriate records are kept of children's subsequent progress. There are good links with parents.

69. The management procedures for meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs are very good and have improved since the previous inspection. The Governing Body, headteacher, special needs co-ordinator and staff have a clear understanding in relation to their responsibilities to pupils with special needs and comply fully with statutory requirements. The curriculum follows the directives of the Code of Practice. Classroom provision is carefully monitored by the co-ordinator to ensure that pupils' work relates appropriately to the targets identified on their Individual Education Plans. The school endeavours to ensure that all pupils have full access to the curriculum. The few pupils from ethnic minorities are very well integrated.

70. The school is successful in achieving its stated aims. All involved with the school have a shared sense of purpose and work solidly together to achieve a very good ethos which promotes learning in a stimulating environment. This is reflected by parents who indicate their children are happy in the school. The capacity for further improvement is judged to be good. The school is well placed to continue the improvement in the quality of its activities.

75. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

71. The school has a good number of appropriately qualified teachers to meet the demands of the National Curriculum, and provide for the under-fives. An additional teacher has been employed to reduce class sizes in Key Stage 1 and two additional part-time teachers are employed temporarily to raise standards in Key Stage 2. There is a good balance of age and experience among the staff and an appropriate range of qualifications. Nursery nurses and classroom assistants make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. An additional part-time assistant has been appointed to help raise standards in Key Stage 2. Learning support assistants for pupils with special needs are deployed effectively and well briefed.

72. Outside agencies make an effective regular contribution to the work of the school. These include the education psychological service, the education welfare officer and representatives from the sporting partnership.

73. Arrangements for the professional development of all staff are very effective and take account of the objectives identified in the School Development Plan. Much of the recent training for teachers has been in literacy, numeracy and information technology. The Staff Development Policy emphasises a commitment to personal excellence and this is evident in practice. There are appropriate links with appraisal. Teachers' job descriptions are clearly supported by action plans. The comprehensive arrangements for the induction of new staff, including newly qualified teachers, include familiarisation days prior to taking up the post.

74. The school accommodation provides very effectively for the delivery of the curriculum. It is kept very clean. Display is of a very high quality, often involving pupils in a learning process by including appropriate questions. The value placed on pupils' work is demonstrated by the care with which it is exhibited. Reception classrooms and their additional areas provide spacious teaching accommodation for the under-fives, which is further enhanced by a newly created outdoor play area. In both key stages classrooms are a good size and books and other materials are plentiful and of good quality. The reference libraries are attractively furnished and well signposted. However, the Key Stage 2 library is not well stocked. A useful food technology area has recently been refurbished. Storage facilities are good and used appropriately. Wheelchair access into and within the building has been installed since the previous inspection.

75. The external environment continues to be an outstanding feature of the school with consequent impact on standards in a range of subjects. Its on-going development draws on community expertise, funding and sponsorship from a variety of sources. Car parking facilities are unsatisfactory.

76. The overall quantity and quality of resources for teaching and learning, for children under five and pupils in both key stages are good. They are adequate in mathematics, science, religious education and information technology, and good in all other curriculum areas. Available resources are usually of high quality, including those for pupils with special needs. Recent purchases for physical education have successfully enhanced the provision for younger children. The school is linked to the National Grid for Learning. Good use is made of visits and visitors to enhance a range of subjects.

81. The efficiency of the school

77. The previous inspection found that, whilst the school had in place cost-effectiveness strategies, there was a need to ensure that the outcomes of School Development Plan were reviewed in the light of pupils' achievements. Inspection evidence shows that this issue has been very successfully addressed. The high standards found in all other aspects of school efficiency have been maintained.

78.The school's aim 'to spend today's funding on today's pupils' is fully met. For the size of school there is a low carry forward amount from the previous year. This year's budget spending includes extra teaching support in a class where in the previous year educational standards had declined. As a result, standards are rising. The employment of an additional part-time teacher to work with Year 6 pupils has meant that the age group can be taught literacy and numeracy skills in three ability groups. Inspection evidence shows that the implementation of this arrangement has already resulted in standards rising considerably and is money well spent. Also, the decision to fund additional secretarial support for special educational needs pupils has ensured that efficient procedures are in place in this aspect of school life. The most recent audit of the school's finances reports that financial control is of good quality.

79.The budget is managed very well. The school receives a basic income per child that is broadly in line with the national average. Effective budget procedures take due account of the priorities outlined in the School Development Plan. The school secretary is very efficient and keeps a watchful eye on all aspects of budget management.

80.The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The three members of the school's administrative staff are very efficient in supporting the general running of the school.

81.Good use is made of the accommodation. Members of staff are deployed effectively. Resources for learning are managed well and used efficiently. Additional funding for special needs support and staff training is used soundly. During the week of the inspection time was used well. For example, no time was lost when Year 6 pupils moved to one of three groups for the teaching of literacy and numeracy.

82.Governors carry out their duties efficiently and effectively. They are well led and the chairman meets the headteacher every week to discuss school issues. All legal requirements are met. Committees meet on a regular basis and some governors are to be seen in school on a regular basis. An excellent feature of their work is the curriculum 'shadow' roles governors have taken on. The Governing Body is fully involved in strategic management. Priorities clearly outlined in the School Development Plan have been agreed. An annual conference is held involving all members of the school community. This ensures that everyone has a sense of ownership of the decisions made.

83.Unit costs are broadly average. The quality of teaching is rarely less than satisfactory and good in almost seven out of every ten lessons seen during the week of the inspection. The ethos of the school is very good. A significant number of pupils start school with skills below those found normally. By the time pupils leave the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level is in line with that found in most schools. The school provides very good value for money.

88. PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

88. Areas of learning for children under five

84.Children enter school with a wide range of experiences and attainment levels. Many come with below average competencies in the language, literacy and mathematical areas of learning. This judgement is confirmed by the school's baseline assessment. Good progress is made in the Reception classes and most children are on target to achieve the Desired Learning Outcomes in all the areas of learning by the age of five.

85.Personal and social education is well promoted. Most children have a good attitude towards their learning and come to school confidently with an eagerness to learn. Arrangements for children prior to starting school are well organised. They include home visits by school staff, a pre-school book loan scheme and story sessions. This effective induction programme contributes positively to the ease with which most children settle into school routines and their ability to make progress. It is backed up by the high expectations of the teachers who are skilful in developing a sense of independence. Children regularly undertake important tasks to help the smooth running of the classroom. During the week of the inspection both Reception classes were responsible for leading several assemblies, sometimes with large numbers present. Relationships are very good. Children behave very well and their achievements are recognised and valued. Most demonstrate that they understand the importance of listening to the teacher by carrying out instructions sensibly. They are beginning to show an appreciation of the contribution made by others in oral work and co-operate well in group activities, such as the making of lists for Christmas shopping.

86.There is a strong emphasis on the development of language and literacy and the principles of the National Literacy Strategy have been adopted successfully. Progress for most children is good and standards by the age of five are in line with those expected for the age group. Effective use of role-play encourages the development of imaginative language and there are many opportunities created for children to respond orally in a range of situations. They enjoy the rhythm of familiar rhymes and recognise rhyming sounds and those associated with initial letters. Higher attaining children quickly develop a sight vocabulary and by five are beginning to read. Most children can write their names. They frequently use writing in play situations as well as under guidance from the teacher, such as "Thank you" letters to a visiting fire fighter. By the end of the Reception year many are writing complete sentences.

87.Mathematics is well promoted and the principles of the National Numeracy Strategy are an integral part of the teaching. Lesson objectives are shared with the children. Effective use is made of number games, counting rhymes and practical activities of matching and ordering numbers and objects. This ensures that good progress is made in the use of numbers in familiar contexts, in learning to count reliably and in developing the vocabulary associated with number operations of addition and subtraction. Children's annotated workbooks show good progress is made in shape recognition and the development of the mathematical language of capacity, measures and position. By the age of five standards achieved by most children are those expected for the age group.

88.Very good opportunities are created to promote knowledge and understanding of the world. Progress in this area of learning is good and standards by the end of the Reception class are similar to those found in most schools. Children talk about changes in their own lives and create pictorial time lines to illustrate their own development. They plot routes to show both imaginary and real journeys and use magnifying glasses for close observation of living things within the classroom. Their work on designing and making activities is of a very high quality. Information technology is used appropriately to support other areas of learning such as developing basic number skills.

89. Good progress is made in physical development. Since the previous inspection a well equipped outdoor play area has been created. Photographic evidence shows that this provides an enjoyable and stimulating environment for children to develop a range of physical skills. Additionally, an appropriate range of large apparatus is available for regular physical education lessons in the hall. Children learn to balance, jump, climb and land confidently and safely with a control that is appropriate for their age. In the classroom they use a wide range of tools, implements, construction kits and toys which successfully develop manipulative skills.

90. Good provision is made for creative development. Imaginative role play, in the "Chinese Takeaway and Restaurant" and the "Card Shop", successfully promotes creative expression. Opportunities to sing and play music and create pictures using crayons, paint and collage materials, successfully encourage the exploration of sound, colour and texture.

91. The quality of teaching in both Reception classes is good. Information from baseline assessment is used effectively to set individual targets. Work is carefully planned across the year group and evaluated regularly. The curriculum is well balanced and forms a good foundation for progress to the National Curriculum. Classroom assistants provide effective additional support, which has a positive impact on children's learning. Their observations of children at work within groups contribute to the systematic recording of children's progress towards the Desirable Learning Outcomes. Individual Records of Achievement and pupils' journals are well maintained.

92. Parents feel well informed. Prior to their children's admission a comprehensive information pack is made available and there is additional curriculum advice, for example on reading, to enable them to assist with homework. Workshops are held regularly and a group of parents is currently meeting to produce mathematical games. There is an informative twice-yearly parents' evening to discuss progress and the end of year reports are of good quality.

93. The Reception classrooms are spacious and well equipped with good quality resources. They are enhanced by good quality displays of children's work, and interesting artefacts to look at, handle and talk about. The resources are used effectively to provide a learning environment of high quality.

98. **English, mathematics and science**

98. **English**

94. In the 1999 national tests in English at the end of Key Stage 2 the percentage reaching Level 4 and above was in line with the national figure but below the average for similar schools. The results showed a fall compared with the previous year when standards in English were above both the national average and the average for similar schools. However, last year's Year 6 class contained a higher than usual percentage of pupils with special educational needs and this had an adverse effect on the school's test results. Standards have improved considerably since the previous inspection. Taking the three years 1996 to 1998 together, the performance of the pupils in English was higher than the national average. During the same period the performance of boys was above the national average and girls well above average. The current pupils in Year 6 have made good progress over time and their overall attainment is above average. The improvement this year in pupils' performance is due in part also to the setting arrangements that the school has introduced in English.

95. Teacher assessments in English at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 show pupils' overall performance to be well above the national average. In the tests for seven-year-olds the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 and above was well above the national average in reading and writing. Taking the three years 1996 to 1998 together, the performance of boys has been well above average in reading and writing and girls very high in comparison with the national average. Standards have been sustained since the last inspection. The current pupils in Year 2 are achieving above average standards in English and have made good progress. The inspection found no major differences between girls' and boys' achievements in either key stage. The school carefully monitors provision according to gender. For example, it has recently taken action to raise boys' achievement and allocated extra funds to purchase more non-fiction books for boys who are reluctant readers.

96. The school's very effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has promoted consistently good progress in speaking and listening throughout the school. Lessons include planned discussions and provide good opportunities for pupils to answer questions, present their work and express their responses to the many quality texts that are presented by teachers. Attainment at the end of both key stages is above average. In Key Stage 1, pupils gain confidence in speaking to the class, and begin to learn to take turns and to listen carefully to each other. Pupils in one Year 2 class were able to predict events and discuss the characters in the story of "Katie Morag and the two grandmothers". Imaginative role-play situations, for example in the "Optician's", extend the opportunities for pupils to develop their language skills. Pupils in Year 6 vary their expression and vocabulary well and often show reflective responses to literature. For example, in a very good lesson lower attainers gave some very thoughtful responses as they discussed the fight scene from "Hamlet". Pupils' opportunities to sit in the "story chair" during assembly and relate items of news have helped to improve their presentational skills, which were found to be a weakness at the time of the previous inspection.

97. Standards in reading by the end of Key Stage 1 are above average and pupils make good progress. Most pupils are developing an appropriate range of strategies to read unfamiliar words including competent use of phonics. They talk confidently about the books they are reading. By the age of seven pupils' reading is usually accurate and fluent. The high attaining pupils often use self-correction and can use the contents and index pages of non-fiction books to find information. They are beginning to explore books with confidence, developing an understanding of authors and illustrators. Pupils make satisfactory progress during Key Stage 2 and standards in Year 6 are above those found in most schools. Throughout the key stage they read from a suitable range of fiction and non-fiction books, usually fluently and accurately. By the age of eleven pupils discuss the differences between characters in the stories they have read and explain the key features of the story line. Pupils' skills in using the Dewey system to find books in the library have improved significantly since the last inspection. Non-fiction books are often used well, for example to gather information about the Vikings and how they travelled to the British Isles. However, pupils' ability to find the information quickly using the higher order skills of skimming and scanning remains a weakness. The pupils who have difficulty with reading are supported well and make good progress.

98. Writing has improved immensely since the previous inspection when there was marked evidence of under-achievement throughout the school. Standards are above average at the end of both key stages and pupils now make good progress. There are several strengths in the schools' provision for writing. The programme for developing story-writing skills is a strong feature and good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop competence in a broad range of texts. The literacy hour has reinforced these strengths. It has also introduced more systematic programmes for the development of pupils' grammar and spelling skills which are beginning to have an impact on attainment. A pilot scheme for pupils to be involved in the self-evaluation of their writing is proving to be effective. However, sometimes written work is not well presented in lower Key Stage 2.

99. In Key Stage 1 pupils learn to understand the functions and basic conventions of writing. Most make good progress in the correct formation of letters, and in recognising the role of capital letters and full stops. The majority of pupils can independently write appropriate endings to stories such as "Not Now Bernard". Older pupils compose 'Thank You' letters to Florence Nightingale. Some higher attainers include correctly punctuated dialogue and imaginative descriptions in their work. Pupils continue to make good progress through Key Stage 2. By the time they leave school most pupils understand how to lay out and punctuate texts of different kinds, including poetry. They organise their thoughts clearly and logically when writing a story or an account. Teachers encourage good descriptive writing by reading examples from well known authors, such as "Great Expectations" by Charles Dickens. By the age of eleven pupils' handwriting and spelling are satisfactory overall. Good use is made of information technology to improve the final presentation of their work. Drafting skills are appropriately developed.

100. Pupils are provided with suitable opportunities to practise and develop their literacy skills in other subjects of the curriculum. For example, in history Year 1 pupils became "time detectives" and wrote about objects from the past, such as irons and mangles, whilst Year 6 have written "a water journey" in science. The school's involvement with the Warrington "Ireland in Schools" project has brought an added dimension to the work done in literacy. The "Storybags" initiative, recently introduced in Key Stage 1, has been particularly successful in promoting literacy and at the same time involving parents in their children's education.

101. There are some variations in the rate of progress made by pupils in different classes in Key Stage 2. When very good or excellent teaching occurs, the progress of pupils is very good. There are some inconsistencies in the development of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of work in lower Key Stage 2.

102. The school makes very good provision for supporting pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress in literacy and in speaking and listening. Class teachers and learning support staff work well together to ensure that the targets identified on pupils' individual educational plans are being met.

103. Pupils' attitudes to their work are very good overall in both key stages. Pupils concentrate well and adapt their behaviour appropriately to the different stages of the literacy hour. They participate well in whole-class discussions, settle quickly to group tasks and persevere to complete work before sharing it with others. Many are confident about their work and enjoy discussing what they are doing. They follow class rules well when working independently or in groups and they are responsive to challenging work. Behaviour is usually good.

104. At both key stages, the overall quality of teaching is good with some very good practice. A significant minority of lessons observed in upper Key Stage 2 were excellent. Throughout the school lessons are very well planned and based on the learning objectives of the National Literacy Strategy. Resources are used well and enable teachers to emphasise teaching points. For example, flip charts are used well in all classes to emphasise the aims of the lesson. The teacher's presentation is often clear and pitched appropriately at the pupils' level of understanding. In a very good lesson in Year 1 the teacher's clear explanation helped pupils to understand when to use speech marks. Good management of pupil behaviour is especially evident in all lessons in Key Stage 1. In lower Key Stage 2 the behaviour of a minority of pupils occasionally slows the pace of lessons as pupils have to be reminded not to shout out answers. The highest proportion of effective teaching was observed in upper Key Stage 2. Here excellent and very good teaching was characterised by high expectations and challenging questions.

105. Teachers' subject knowledge is good throughout the school and it is sometimes very good. For example, in one lesson based on the text "Grendel's Mother's Lair", the teacher's very good knowledge promoted pupils' understanding of old and modern English. Pupils were challenged to compare verbs, adverbs and nouns and to use a dictionary to check the meaning of the words. Resources are used well and enable pupils to benefit from having access to a good range of appropriate text for the literacy hour. The setting arrangement, introduced this year for pupils in the Year 6 classes, is a valuable addition to the teaching programme and is having a beneficial effect upon the good progress these pupils are now making. Teachers mark work conscientiously and there are some good examples of comments which indicate to pupils what they need to do next to improve their work, but this is not consistent throughout the school.

106. The co-ordinator has managed the development of the National Literacy Strategy very effectively. Assessment procedures are very good and the information gathered is carefully recorded and used in further planning and also to set targets for individuals and groups of pupils. The subject is very well co-ordinated especially in terms of the monitoring and evaluating of teaching and pupils' work. Resources are good overall. The school has worked hard to develop the library since the previous inspection but there are too few fiction and non-fiction books for the number of pupils on role.

111. **Mathematics**

107. The results of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 show that the proportion of pupils attaining at an expected level was broadly in line with the national average. This was not a typical year. The combined results for the previous three years from 1996 to 1998 indicate that pupils' performance overall exceeded the national average.

108. The 1999 Key Stage 1 results show that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level was very high in comparison both with all schools and with similar schools. These results indicate that, taking the previous three years into account, high standards have been maintained.

109. Evidence from lesson observations, the scrutiny of previous work and talking with pupils demonstrates that a higher than average proportion of pupils at the end of both key stages are attaining standards which are above the national average. Significant contributing factors towards these high standards are the successful introduction and implementation this year of the National Numeracy Strategy, and the organisation of pupils in Year 6 into three ability groups for mathematics, combined with the provision of an extra teacher. Standards have improved since the last inspection when they were judged as being broadly in line with national expectations.

110. On entry to Key Stage 1 from the Reception classes, the large majority of pupils are attaining at a level that is broadly in line with national expectations. By the end of the key stage attainment levels indicate that pupils have made good progress. The overall progress made by Year 6 pupils during their time in school has been good in all aspects of the subject including mental and oral mathematics. Planning in both key stages ensures that work is well matched to the needs of pupils in all ability groups including higher attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs. Additional classroom support throughout the school provides focus groups of pupils with the help they need.

111. By the end of Key Stage 1, many pupils are working successfully at tasks that are at a higher level than that expected for pupils of this age. They can count in fives and tens both forwards and backwards to one hundred. They have a good grasp of odd and even numbers, higher attainers are able to add together two-digit numbers mentally. Pupils are developing good problem-solving skills. This was apparent when they were working out methods of measuring curved lines accurately. A scrutiny of previous work indicates that a large majority of pupils recognise a number of two-dimensional shapes, understand simple fractions and can double and halve numbers accurately. Higher attaining pupils understand simple analogue and digital time and can apply such knowledge to solve problems. They can work with money to the value of 50 pence and are able to make reasonable estimates of number on a number continuum.

112. Pupils currently in Year 6 are confident in applying their number skills. Most can recall multiplication facts up to ten times. They use effectively their knowledge of number and mathematical formulae to work out mentally the areas of squares and rectangles. They know how to find the perimeter of a regular shape and can work out the area of compound shapes. Lower attaining pupils are developing strategies for halving and doubling two-digit numbers and, with the support of visual resources, are developing a secure understanding of square numbers. Most pupils have a wide repertoire of mathematical vocabulary that is used appropriately. The scrutiny of work completed since the beginning of the school year indicates that most pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of rounding numbers up and down, equivalent fractions bridging larger numbers in addition, and the use of the four number operations in a range of mathematical contexts. A significant number of pupils have a secure understanding of the relationship between decimals and fractions. Their work indicates a good understanding of square number differences, ratios and probability. They can accurately convert mixed numbers to improper fractions and reverse these operations.

113. Pupils' response to the subject is good overall. In Key Stage 1 it is consistently good. In Key Stage 2 it is more variable and ranges from unsatisfactory to very good. Where the response is good or very good, pupils work hard, are confident and willing to explain their reasoning, persevere with challenging tasks and demonstrate pride in their work. Where behaviour is less than satisfactory this is demonstrated by restlessness and some inappropriate behaviour by a small minority of boys, mainly as a result of tasks being set which are not well matched to pupils' levels of attainment. Work is well presented in most classes.

114. The quality of teaching is good overall in both key stages and there are examples of very good and excellent teaching. Teaching is variable in Key Stage 2 with some unsatisfactory teaching being seen during the week of the inspection in one class in lower Key Stage 2. Most teachers have a secure understanding of the subject. Expectations are high in most lessons and teachers plan very effectively within the framework of the National Numeracy Strategy. Where teaching is at its best it is very well planned, teaching is crisp and well paced, clear objectives are set and shared with the class, tasks are closely matched to pupils' prior attainment, lessons are efficiently organised and relationships are of a high quality. In a small number of lessons the pace is leisurely, pupils are not sufficiently challenged by the tasks set for them and the resulting inappropriate behaviour is not well managed. Appropriate homework is set on a regular basis.

115. A good policy is in place. The school has successfully addressed the weakness identified in the previous inspection when there was no scheme of work. Long- and medium-term planning provide an effective framework for teaching and learning. The school is implementing the National Numeracy Strategy successfully. The co-ordinator has incorporated this into the scheme of work in preparation for a full review later in the school year. Assessment procedures are good and provide a consistent record of individual pupils' progress. Assessment information is used well to allocate pupils to ability groups, to track the progress of groups and individual pupils and to inform future planning.

116. The subject has priority status in the School Development Plan demonstrating a clear commitment to raising standards. The co-ordinator monitors and evaluates all aspects of the subject on a regular basis. Very effective staff training has been implemented to take account of the National Numeracy Strategy. Pupils are provided with satisfactory opportunities to use their data handling and other mathematical skills in a range of subjects. The provision of more real life problem-solving experiences is needed to further enhance learning across the curriculum. The school has ensured that good resources are in place. Equipment is of good quality, well organised and efficiently used. National Curriculum requirements are fully met.

121. **Science**

117. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests for Key Stage 2 show that attainment was well below the national average. This represents a decline in standards from the previous year where standards were similar to the national average. This is because a significant number of Year 6 pupils joined the school during their junior career and did not benefit from the planned science curriculum throughout Key Stage 2. There were 50% more pupils on the special needs register than the usually expected numbers. The 1999 Key Stage 2 results do not reflect the standards observed during the inspection, which indicate that the school is re-establishing the trend of previous years with attainment close to the national average.

118. The 1999 teacher assessments for Key Stage 1 indicate that pupils' attainment was above the national average and about three out of ten achieved the higher level. Inspection evidence indicates that good standards are being maintained. There is no significant variation in attainment between pupils of different gender, ethnicity or background. This evidence reflects the findings of the previous report.

119. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and achieve an above average standard. Many pupils gain a good understanding of investigations that are used effectively to present scientific knowledge in a practical and meaningful manner. Higher attaining pupils beginning to work at an advanced level. Pupils on the special educational needs registers achieve standards that represent good progress from their prior attainment.

120. In Key Stage 2 progress is satisfactory in most aspects. However, scientific investigations are not systematically taught and more able pupils are not always challenged to work at the levels of which they are capable.

121. In Key Stage 1 the older pupils systematically investigate how they can change materials by squeezing, stretching and tearing them. They accurately record their findings. Younger pupils correctly sort materials according to their magnetic and non-magnetic properties. Good progress is made as pupils begin to understand the idea of forces, for example, that squashing is a 'push' and that magnetism is a force.

122. In Key Stage 2 the oldest pupils have appropriate knowledge of micro-organisms in line with the requirements of the relevant programme of study, but their ability to participate actively in an investigation is under-developed. They do not, for example, have the opportunity to measure accurately the effect of high and low temperature on milk as it changes from fresh to sour. Pupils know that the process of filtration can remove debris from water. Some younger pupils, with teacher support, organise fair tests to observe which material is the best insulator to slow down heat loss from containers of water. Pupils record their work well and identify cooling curves and produce accurate bar graphs. However, insufficient opportunities are provided for them to develop their investigative skills.

123. Pupils have good attitudes to their work. They listen carefully to teachers and make sensible comments. Occasionally a small number of pupils in some classes do not follow the conventions for answering questions or sharing knowledge and ideas. Year 6 pupils show very good levels of interest in the talk given by the medical practitioner that added significantly to their knowledge.

124. In the small number of lessons seen in Key Stage 1 the quality of teaching was good. Teachers' planning is of good quality. In Key Stage 2 teaching is good overall but there is some variation ranging from good to unsatisfactory. In good lessons teachers plan effectively and have good knowledge of the subject. In other lessons the expectations for some higher attaining pupils are not high enough and this is reflected in the organisation and management of the learning. Where lessons have unsatisfactory aspects, the organisation of group work does not ensure that pupils are able to complete their work because they are not sure what they are expected to do. Lessons are suitably resourced but in some instances the choice of investigation does not challenge the more able pupils. Relationships with pupils are good and good questioning techniques are used to challenge and extend their knowledge and understanding. In some classes in Key Stage 2 good use is made of CD ROMs to develop scientific knowledge.

125. The leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator monitors planning. The school has recently adopted the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority scheme of work. The science scheme is due to be revised in the next academic year. The use made of assessment is still at an early stage of development. Resources are of good quality and easy accessible. National Curriculum requirements are met.

Other subjects or courses

130. Art

126. During the period of the inspection it was not possible to observe any art lessons in Key Stage 1. However, an examination of pupils' work, discussion with the co-ordinator and an examination of teachers' planning provided enough evidence to allow judgements to be made about attainment and progress.

127. Pupils in both key stages, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in the development of their artistic skills and knowledge. By the age of seven and eleven standards are above those normally found in the majority of schools. Some of the work, especially observational drawing, has very good features. These judgements broadly reflect the findings of the 1996 inspection. The subject makes a valuable contribution towards pupils' personal and cultural development. Pupils experience a broad range of interesting activities, learning about and practising the artistic styles of world famous artists. Displays of work provide a very good environment for learning.

128. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils record their ideas confidently and show a developing ability to represent what they see and feel. For example, Year 1 pupils looked closely at their reflections in a mirror and then produced self-portraits using pastel crayons. This work was of a good quality. They paint colourful pictures of things they like to look at, for example their pets, house or garden. Year 2 pupils make good progress in reviewing the work of famous artists such as Claude Monet and Joan Eardley.

129. Pupils continue to make good progress throughout Key Stage 2 as they are provided with a variety of opportunities to refine their skills. The wide range of work on view around the school provides clear evidence of a growing maturity in pupils' work. Particularly well developed are the skills of observational drawing and work with clay. Sketches of a Victorian hand drill, a sewing machine from the 1920s and a crankshaft from a car showed a very good eye for detail. Pupils use their close observation of the order and shape to be found in natural objects, such as leaves and fruits, as a basis for their work. Clay masks which adorn the walls reflect the good quality of work the pupils are able to produce using this media. They are able to produce commendable paintings using different techniques such as pointillism and deconstruction. The works of other carefully selected artists such as Cézanne, Suerat and Picasso are used successfully to develop techniques in the pupils' own work.

130. Pupils enjoy art lessons and are enthusiastic when faced with new challenges. They are eager to learn about the different techniques used by a range of artists and to apply them to their own work. Pupils show high levels of concentration as they produce detailed drawings. They take a pride in their work and accept the responsibility of looking after the equipment. They show appreciation of others' endeavours and share resources well.

131. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is good overall and never less than satisfactory. Most teachers have a good understanding and knowledge of the subject and set high expectations. They plan carefully and make good use of resources. Teaching is very effective when specific skills such as deconstruction are taught. However, teachers do not always provide pupils with opportunities to evaluate and discuss their own and others' work in order to improve it. Some activities, such as clay work and painting, are very well supported by two adult helpers. Teachers value pupils' work and this is demonstrated in the very good quality of display around the school and in "The Gallery".

132. The scheme of work provides a useful framework to guide teachers' planning. Art is successfully incorporated into topic work. For example, pupils have produced Tudor Portraits as part of a history project. Resources are good.

137. **Design and technology**

133. In both key stages pupils' progress is satisfactory and standards are similar to those found in most schools. Special educational needs pupils make satisfactory progress. No actual lessons were seen, but the activities observed, the examination of past and present work, discussion with pupils and scrutiny of teachers' planning enable these judgements to be made.

134. Pupils throughout Key Stage 1 involve themselves in focused tasks to assemble aeroplanes, locomotives and other vehicles using recyclable materials. Their models are confidently assembled, using a general range of adhesives and tapes, and are finished to a satisfactory standard. Pupils use construction kits well to design and make a range of houses and homes. They know the potential of the components and continually adjust their constructions to make them more practical. Older pupils construct hand puppets carefully following their detailed designs. They design and make musical instruments.

135. In Key Stage 2 older pupils draw intricate designs of waterproof jackets. They apply their knowledge to choose the most appropriate material from which they carefully cut the shape of the jackets. Other pupils work out a healthy menu prior to working in the food technology room to prepare the meal. They use their information technology skills to create menu and invitation cards. Younger pupils design and construct packages for Christmas presents, successfully applying their knowledge of mathematical nets of three-dimensional shapes to construct boxes and parcels.

136. Since the last inspection more emphasis is now placed on the aspect of designing with pupils usually expected to create and record their ideas using a design sheet. This is an improvement on the findings noted in the previous report.

137. No direct teaching was observed. Planning indicates that good links are identified with other subjects, for example information technology and science.

138. The pupils observed working independently on the computer or in the food technology room showed very good levels of collaboration and interest. When using cutting and spreading tools they understood the requirements to be safe and mindful of hygiene.

139. The school makes satisfactory use of a published scheme. The inclusion of the subject in the curriculum directory is good practice. Skill development can be identified clearly. Other recent effective initiatives have been the allocation of one full day to the subject each term. The co-ordinator has produced an action plan for the subject and resources are satisfactory.

144. **Geography**

140. No geography teaching was observed in Key Stage 1 during the inspection. Evidence from pupils' workbooks, teachers' planning and the school portfolio of work indicates satisfactory progress throughout the key stage and standards of work that are in line with the expectation for the age group by the age of seven. Pupils draw routes to show accurately journeys around the school and grounds, and are able to express views about features of the environment. In the present Year 2 planned work incorporates the study of a contrasting locality in "An Island Home". The visit by previous Year 2 pupils to a nearby linear park and country park enabled them to observe similarities and differences in the two places.

141. Satisfactory progress is maintained through Key Stage 2, including that for pupils with special needs. By the age of eleven standards are in line with those found in most schools. Pupils gain appropriate knowledge about their own locality, contrasting areas of Britain, such as Anglesey and other countries such as Kenya. They gather information relating to the effects of pollution on the quality of the environment. Pupils develop a sound understanding of how physical features such as rivers affect the landscape and how climate affects lifestyles.

142. In the lessons observed most pupils listened attentively, settled well to tasks set by the teacher and worked amicably in pairs or groups to share resources and ideas. They are generally confident and willing to talk about what they find out. Presentation of work is variable in lower Key Stage 2 and is sometimes unsatisfactory.

143. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 2. This shows an improvement since the last inspection where some teaching was found to be unsatisfactory. Examples of good practice include well planned lessons and helpful comments on pupils' work which assist them to make progress. Good use is made of the school grounds, visits to the locality and residential experiences in Key Stage 2. Information technology resources and other secondary resources are well used to research life in Kenya. The school has e-mail contact with a counterpart in Mombasa. This makes a useful contribution to pupils' cultural development.

144. The previous inspection found that there was no scheme of work. The scheme now in place provides satisfactory coverage of key themes and skills. The school's medium-term planning indicates links between geography and other curriculum areas. This is successfully carried out, for example, by the application of mathematics to the gathering of geographical data. Historical geography forms a useful component of a local study. A good set of resources has been built up and used well to provide information and visual aids to support teaching. The co-ordinator undertakes an effective role in the monitoring of teaching.

History

145. Only one lesson was observed in Key Stage 1 during the inspection. Evidence from workbooks for the current year, and the school's portfolio of recent work, indicates that pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve satisfactory standards by the age of seven. They are able to make comparisons between times past and the present, and to identify similarities and differences. They sometimes use a literacy text such as 'Granny's Quilt' for the purpose. Pupils develop a satisfactory sense of chronology by sequencing events in their daily lives and researching their own family history to compile family trees. In one lesson observed children were given a first-hand account by an invited visitor of what home life and preparation for Christmas used to be like in his childhood and the changes which had come about over time. They had prepared appropriate questions. Good use is made of role-play to promote written activities about Florence Nightingale in Year 2. These include letters, descriptions and the feelings of her family members.

146. Pupils, including those with special needs, continue to make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2, building on their earlier learning. By the age of eleven standards are in line with those found in most schools. Pupils develop their understanding of differences between ways of life at different times, for example those associated with Tudor cottages, manor houses and mansions, and they make comparisons between village and town life of the time with that found in a modern setting. Work on the Victorians has led to writing of high quality with some high attaining pupils reaching a very good standard. Pupils of all attainment levels consider the life of children in Victorian England, arguments for and against child labour, and the sequence of events that helped to improve the life of such children. Extensive use is made of artefacts and photographic evidence to draw conclusions about changes in Britain since 1930, which includes an appropriate study of local history.

147. Pupils' response to history is good and often very good. They make sensible observations from the source materials available and apply themselves well to written tasks. They co-operate effectively when working in groups and are generally confident when reporting back to the class. Presentation of written work is variable in lower Key Stage 2 ranging from good to unsatisfactory. The quality of learning has improved since the time of the last inspection.

148. No judgement can be made about the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 but in the one lesson observed very good use was made of the visiting speaker to raise children's awareness about differences in the past within living memory. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is good and sometimes very good. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection. Objectives are clear, teacher expectations high and lessons proceed at a brisk pace. Pupils understand exactly what is required of them and tasks take account of pupils' differing attainment levels.

149. There is a clear subject policy and a scheme of work has been drawn up since the previous inspection. The subject has been a focus within the School Development Plan, and issues, such as the development of independent learning, which were identified in the previous inspection report as a weakness have been addressed. The subject benefits from an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has undergone additional training, disseminated information and held discussions with staff. She monitors planning and retains samples of pupils' work to ensure that there is a satisfactory progression as pupils move through the school. Teacher assessment is carried out and is currently under review to take account of the changes in the new scheme of work. Resources have been increased. They include additional library materials and appropriate information technology software. Artefacts and photographs are used to good effect in displays around the school. Visits and visitors successfully provide additional enrichment.

154. Information technology

150. By the time they leave the school pupils' overall attainment in most strands of information technology is higher than that found in most schools. However, the control and modelling aspect of the subject is currently under-developed and standards in this strand at the end of Key Stage 2 are unsatisfactory. Some pupils demonstrate high levels of skill in the application of data handling.

151. In Key Stage 2 older pupils use word processors skilfully to organise and present their work. They draft and re-draft report writing and informative writing and present their imaginative stories written in the styles of classic authors such as Dickens. This is done in well formatted text that is accurately laid out in paragraphs and is edited. Pupils' keyboard and mouse skills are good. They use the mouse for a variety of tasks and select from screen menus. They access the Internet to locate specific information. Data handling procedures are skilfully used to enter information onto a database then to interrogate it and re-organise it in graphical presentations. Pupils use this technique to check the range of categories of books in the school library, reporting back their findings to the headteacher.

152. In Key Stage 1 pupils compose sentences making accurate use of both alphabet and command keys. By the end of the key stage standards in all aspects of the subject are in line with those found in most schools. Pupils use a programmable toy successfully to negotiate a journey around the classroom from the door to the library area. This includes making three right angle turns. Other pupils use a mouse well to import clip art images as they design vehicles and buildings prior to constructing them.

153. Pupils' progress in both key stages in information technology is good in all applications with the exception of control and modelling at Key Stage 2, where it is unsatisfactory. In word processing pupils gain good skills in typing, using both hands to operate the keyboard. Their regular use of mouse operations to activate software that supports other subjects gives them continuous practice. By Year 6, pupils skilfully use the mouse to organise text around a photograph of a house to promote a sale as they act out the role of estate agents. They have gained the ability to experiment with letter font style and size and they use the scanner technology to incorporate photographs. Other recent gains in expertise include the ability to log on to the Internet to search for and display specific information. Older pupils were observed making good progress in the use of spreadsheets during their mathematical investigations.

154. Attitudes to information technology are very good. Pupils are keen to demonstrate their skills and talk confidently about their work. They are keen and interested and are able to collaborate effectively together in pairs, sharing out tasks and supporting each other when they experience problems. They carefully follow the laid down procedures for operating the computers and take their work seriously.

155. It is not possible to make any judgement about the quality of teaching, because no lessons were timetabled during the inspection. Planning, the involvement of information technology in the curriculum and the quality of pupils' expertise are all of good quality. Teachers' plans identify opportunities for developing information technology skills within subjects and topics. For example, many pupils were working from CD ROMs to access information related to their studies. Throughout the school relevant software is identified to support work within the literacy and numeracy hours, including number work and spelling. The school has recently taken delivery of seven new machines. Provision is now satisfactory and is used effectively to ensure that all pupils receive their entitlement to the subject.

156.The subject is very well managed and provision in all classrooms is effective. This represents an improvement on the findings of the previous report. Successful school-based in- service training has raised the expertise and confidence of the staff. Effective monitoring systems are in place. Successful planning is implementing the delivery of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority scheme of work. The school is well placed to raise standards further.

161. **Music**

157.The previous inspection found standards in music to be variable, ranging from unsatisfactory to very good. Standards now are at least satisfactory and sometimes very good.

158.In Key Stage 1 pupils learn about pulse and beat and sing well. In the lessons seen standards were in line with those found in most schools. Pupils of all attainment levels make satisfactory progress. Older pupils concentrated well when asked to accompany a song by playing untuned instruments. Pupils know the names of some untuned instruments and can clap rhythm patterns accurately. They sing with enthusiasm during assemblies.

159.Pupils in Key Stage 2 make satisfactory progress in developing musical skills. By the age of eleven they achieve standards that are in line with those found in most schools. The school choir has a large number of pupils and all sing well together. Older pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their performing skills. They can accurately follow a simple musical score using untuned instruments. Younger pupils demonstrated very good skills as a result of the high quality of teaching they receive. They can clap accurately rhythm patterns from a graphic score. All pupils have the chance to learn to play instruments. School productions and concerts provide opportunities for pupils to perform together in public.

160.In both key stages pupils enjoy music lessons and sing and play well together. Behaviour in most lessons is good. When asked to do so pupils play instruments sensibly, despite some having a lack of confidence.

161.The quality of teaching is satisfactory in both key stages with some excellent teaching being observed in one class in lower Key Stage 2. Visiting instrumental teachers support the teaching of the subject well. Where teaching is excellent, the teacher's high expectations ensure that, for example, pupils read accurately from a graphic score and then move on naturally to follow music notation. In other lessons opportunities are not always taken for pupils to make evaluative comments, for example, about what an extract from Tchaikovsky's music means to them.

162.The co-ordinator is new in post but has already started to improve the quality of music education in the school and to raise standards. She is enthusiastic and has very good subject knowledge. Suitable guidelines are in place. Resources for the subject are of good quality. Visiting musicians help to enhance the provision for the subject and the school takes part in a wide variety of musical events.

167. **Physical education**

163.During the week of the inspection only a limited number of lessons were seen, so no overall judgement can be made about standards at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils participate regularly in out-of-school physical activities and this enhances the school's provision. Very good use is made of visiting rugby coaches who help pupils to develop good standards in games skills. The Sports Development Unit's resources are used effectively to enhance the school's curriculum. Swimming lessons are provided and most pupils can swim the required distance by the time they leave. Pupils are given opportunities to take part in competitive sport.

164. In Key Stage 1 pupils are confident in their movements and show appropriate control and co-ordination. In the dance lesson seen they made satisfactory progress and attained standards in line with those found in most schools. A visiting instructor's very good knowledge of games skills ensured that pupils developed good techniques in handling a ball. For example, they could all demonstrate successfully a 'submarine grip'.

165. In Key Stage 2 evidence from out-of-school activities, including judo and basketball, demonstrates that pupils are developing the requisite skills in a range of physical activities. Only two lessons were observed. In one lesson very good progress was made in improving techniques in curled and stretched rolls. Teacher demonstration of the techniques involved had a good impact on the standards pupils attained.

166. Most pupils respond well in physical education lessons. Pupils are keen to participate and most behave well.

167. It is not possible to make a judgement about the quality of teaching in either key stage. Two lessons of high quality were seen in Key Stage 1 but these were taken by visiting instructors. Teachers plan their lessons well and incorporate all aspects of the subject. The very good use the school makes of visits to sports centres and of visiting specialist coaches has a positive impact on the standards that pupils achieve. Due regard is paid to health and safety.

168. The school's policy and scheme of work provide clear guidance. The subject is co-ordinated well. Good use is made of the two halls and there are good outside facilities. Resources are of good quality and have been improved significantly since the last inspection to cater for the needs of younger pupils.

173. Religious education

169. Standards in religious education at the end of each key stage meet the expectations set out in the locally Agreed Syllabus. This is broadly in line with the judgement made of attainment in the previous inspection. Pupils in both key stages, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.

170. During the inspection it was only possible to observe one lesson in Key Stage 1. However evidence from the scrutiny of previous work and talking with pupils indicates that by the end of the key stage pupils have developed a satisfactory understanding about the importance of the Bible to Christians and many know that it is divided into the New and Old Testaments. They can talk about love through relating it to their own personal experiences and are developing a simple understanding of concepts such as "forgiveness". Pupils know that people pray to God and they are able to compose their own prayers. Work undertaken previously demonstrates a satisfactory knowledge of the Creation and an understanding of aspects of the Islamic faith.

171. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have considered a range of aspects of Christianity and other major world faiths. They know that religious objects and symbols found in places of worship, such as churches and mosques, reflect differences in beliefs and customs. Pupils understand the meaning of worship and in their work on Judaism can relate this to the symbolism of light. Many are developing a deeper understanding of the meaning of a range of religious symbols, for example, they can explain that the rainbow in the story of Noah's Ark represents God's promise to mankind. They are developing an understanding of conscience and express this well through dramatic interpretation.

172.The pupils' response in lessons in Key Stage 2 is good overall and sometimes very good. Pupils make thoughtful responses that often reflect what they have learned in previous lessons. They listen respectfully to others' points of view. It is not possible to make an overall judgement of response in lessons at Key Stage 1.

173.The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is good overall with examples of very good practice. A small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was observed in lower Key Stage 2. Teaching is most effective where teachers have a secure subject knowledge, plan clear objectives, and provide in-depth explanations and analyses of religious concepts which help pupils develop their understanding. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, this is due to insecure subject knowledge and low expectations of the pupils which result in lack of depth to the lesson. Owing to the small number of lessons observed in Key Stage 1 it is not possible to make an overall judgement of teaching.

174.The scheme of work is broad and balanced and complies fully with the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Planning makes good provision for continuity and progression in learning for all pupils. Effective provision is made for pupils who are withdrawn from religious education lessons. Teachers assess pupils' progress during the year but the school has yet to agree a consistent system of recording assessment information.

175.Very good support for the on-going development of the subject is provided by the co-ordinator through her planning, monitoring and evaluation role. Appropriate resources are in place to support teaching and learning. Good use is made of these, especially the books and artefacts relating to Christianity and other faiths. The subject makes a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence

The inspection was carried out by a team of six inspectors, who were in school for a total of 24 inspector days.

During the inspection week:

88 lessons or parts of lessons, representing over 61 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	432	3	36	38

TEACHERS AND CLASSES

Qualified teachers (YR - Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	16.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.2

Education support staff (YR - Y6)

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked each week	169.5

Average class size:	28.8
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FINANCIAL DATA

Financial year:	1998/9
	£
Total Income	671,084
Total Expenditure	647,559
Expenditure per pupil	1,482
Balance brought forward from previous year	1,499
Balance carried forward to next year	25,024

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

432

Number of questionnaires returned:

89

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	51%	46%	1%	1%	1%
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	42%	51%	1%	2%	4%
The school handles complaints from parents well	16%	45%	30%*	2%	7%
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	35%	58%	6%	0%	1%
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	25%	51%	18%	4%	2%
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	25%	70%	3%	1%	1%
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	27%	56%	15%	0%	2%
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	15%	67%	10%	7%	1%
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	35%	51%	11%	2%	1%
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	30%	54%	11%	2%	2%
My child(ren) like(s) school	44%	45%	7%	3%	1%

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

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