

INSPECTION REPORT

Manor House County Primary School
Frodsham

LEA area : Cheshire

Unique Reference Number : 111236

Headteacher : Mrs. P Hodder

Reporting inspector : Mrs J. Platt
11565

Dates of inspection : 15th – 19th November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707066

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school : Infant and Junior

Type of control : County

Age range of pupils : 4 – 11 years

Gender of pupils : Mixed

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Appropriate authority : Governing Body

Name of chair of governors : Mrs. E Barker

Date of previous inspection : 8th – 14th February 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Mrs. J Harrison, Lay Inspector		Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community
Mrs. C Waine, Team Inspector	Science Information technology Design and technology Under fives	Curriculum and assessment Efficiency
Mr. M Bowers, Team Inspector	Mathematics History Geography Religious education	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

It enables seven year olds to attain well above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science and as pupils leave school attainment is above average in English and science.

- The quality of teaching is good overall and there is a high proportion of very good teaching.
- The school makes very good provision for the moral, social and cultural development of its pupils and good provision for spiritual development in many aspects of the curriculum.
- The school's system to promote good behaviour is very good and results in very good levels of behaviour throughout the school.
- It establishes a happy, hard working atmosphere which encourages very good attitudes to work and pupils are eager to learn. Relationships in the school are very good.

Where the school has weaknesses

I.The school does not teach the full curriculum for information technology in Key Stage 2 and attainment in this subject is below average.

II.Staff with management responsibilities need further opportunities to fulfil their monitoring role to ensure the continuity of learning now established is maintained.

The school's few weaknesses are considerably outweighed by its many strengths. They will, however, form the basis of the governors' action plan, a copy of which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

High standards have been maintained and the quality of teaching has improved significantly. Good improvements have been made in procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Schemes of work are now in place for all subjects and this has improved the progress pupils make in Key Stage 2. The curriculum for children under five is based on the learning experiences identified nationally as appropriate for this age range. Standards in design and technology have improved. Improvements have been made to monitoring systems but further work is needed to ensure that staff with management responsibilities are able to carry out their monitoring role. Overall improvement since the previous inspection is good and the school has good capacity for further improvement.

Standards in subjects

This table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

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

This information shows, for example, that standards in English and science are average compared with both the national average and in comparison with the average for similar schools. Attainment in mathematics was well below average. The vast majority of pupils attain the level exceeded for their age but there has been a dip in the number of pupils exceeding this level. The school has acted promptly to resolve this problem. The curriculum has been improved and the quality of teaching strengthened. Inspection evidence identifies current standards as pupils leave school are generally above average in English and science and average in mathematics.

At the end of Key Stage 1, standards in English, mathematics and science are well above those normally encountered. Attainment in information technology is good at Key Stage 1 but falls below average in Key Stage 2 as the requirements of the National Curriculum are not fully met. Attainment in religious education is average at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. The standard of work seen in other subjects was wholly satisfactory and often good.

Quality of teaching

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

The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in all lessons observed. In 70% of lessons teaching was good or better, and in 17% very good or excellent. The overall quality of teaching was good. The very good teaching occurred mainly in Key Stage 1 and has a significant impact on the very good progress pupils make.

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Consistently very good throughout the school. This has a positive effect on the learning environment and the good progress pupils make.
Attendance	Good; above the national average. Unauthorised absence is above average as pupils take family holidays in term time.
Ethos*	Good; it promotes high standards and pupils co-operate in a happy, caring atmosphere.
Leadership and management	Good; the headteacher is supported effectively by the deputy headteacher, staff and governing body. Governors are fully involved in all aspects of the school and have a clear vision for the school. Subject co-ordinators have successfully introduced new planning procedures but have limited opportunity to carry out their monitoring role to ensure these systems are working in the classroom.
Curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced. Insufficient time is given to information technology in Key Stage 2. There is an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Many pupils take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities and out of school visits. The curriculum is suitably adapted for pupils with English as an additional language and they are fully involved in school life.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good provision both in class and in small groups withdrawn from class. Staff have considerable expertise in providing for the needs of pupils with learning difficulties.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Very good. Spiritual development is promoted in many subjects as well as in religious education and the daily acts of worship. Pupils develop very well morally and socially because of high quality provision. Cultural development is very good and pupils have a clear understanding about both their own cultural background and the diversity and richness of other cultures.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Adequate staffing, although the number of support staff is low and not always used effectively. Resources are good. Accommodation is spacious and enhanced by displays of pupils' work. There is no suitable outdoor provision for children under five.
Value for money	Good.

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

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<p>III. The high standards of good behaviour.</p> <p>IV. Staff are easy to approach.</p> <p>V. Children like school.</p> <p>VI. It transmits strong and appropriate values and notes good attitudes to work.</p> <p>VII. They are encouraged to play an active part in school life.</p>	<p>VIII. Parents do not always have a clear</p> <p>IX. Homework arrangements are inconsistent.</p>

Most responses from the questionnaire, written comments and contributions made at the Parents' Meeting were positive. The inspection team agreed with these. The team found that the arrangements for homework were good in Key Stage 1 but there were differences in the amounts given in classes in Key Stage 2. The quality of information to parents is good however there is scope to provide parents with more information about what is to be taught. The Governors' Annual Report has several omissions.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

To improve further the quality of education the head, staff and governors should:

X. Improve attainment in information technology at Key Stage 2 by:

- improving staff expertise through training;
- implementing more thoroughly the new scheme of work;
- making better use of the resources available.

(Information technology is a priority on the school's development plan)

(See paragraphs 11, 23, 28, 33, 65, 71, 87, 103, 105, 108, 109)

- Further extend the management role of curriculum co-ordinators to allow them more opportunities to systematically monitor the implementation of the new schemes of work.

(See paragraphs 32, 58, 71, 102, 109, 137)

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

- provide more opportunities for pupils to use the library for independent research (See paragraphs 71, 88)
- ensure non-teaching staff are always used efficiently (See paragraphs 62, 70, 80)
- provide parents with more details about work being studied in school (See paragraph 52)
- ensure there is consistency between classes in the amount of work given to be done at home (See paragraphs 30, 54)
- provide the deputy head with more non-contact time to carry out the managerial responsibilities demands of the role (See paragraphs 31, 58, 64, 73, 78, 80)
- improve facilities for outdoor play for the children under five (See paragraphs 31, 58, 64, 73, 78, 80)
- clarify the recording of expenditure in the school development plan (See paragraphs 59, 67)
- fulfil statutory requirements regarding staff appraisal, swimming and ensure the Governors' Annual Report to Parents includes all required items. (the school has plans to start swimming next term) (See paragraphs 52, 58, 63, 149)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. Manor House County Primary School was built in 1964 and is situated in Frodsham. The surrounding area is residential and pupils come from a broad spectrum of society. The school is about the same size as other primary school having 204 boys and girls on roll. About 2.5 per cent of pupils come from homes where English is an additional language and this is higher than most schools. Approximately 8 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals and this is below the national average. At present there are 20 pupils on the register of special educational needs. Of these three have formal statements of need and this figure is broadly in line with the national average. Overall attainment levels vary from year to year and based on the school's assessment as children start school their attainment is generally average for their age. The number on roll has fallen slightly since the previous inspection and the school now has seven classes. The average class size is 29 pupils.

2. The school aims to create a happy, caring environment where children can enjoy the learning process in an atmosphere of excitement, enthusiasm and support. Other aims include providing equal opportunities for all pupils to work to their full potential to acquire knowledge and to develop appropriate skills and attitudes.

The current priorities for the school include:

- to improve standards by target setting
- to broaden the professional expertise of staff
- to give the deputy headteacher more opportunities for global management in the school
- to implement the National Numeracy Project
- to continue the process of involving staff in self-evaluation
- to provide training in information technology prior to the introduction of the information technology suite.

Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	13	13	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	25	25	15
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	96(94)	96(89)	96(94)
	National	80(80)	81(80)	85(84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	12	12	13
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	25	25	26
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	96(94)	96(94)	100 (94)
	National	81 (80)	85 (84)	86(85)

Attainment at Key Stage 2

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	14	20	34

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils At NC Level 4 or above	Boys	11	10	14
	Girls	17	13	17
	Total	28	23	31
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	82 (75)	68(65)	91(78)
	National	65(63)	58 (62)	69 (69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils At NC Level 4 or above	Boys	13	13	14
	Girls	19	15	18
	Total	32	28	32
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	94(84)	82(78)	94(81)
	National	65 (63)	65 (64)	72 (69)

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the	Authorised	9
	School	3

¹ Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

latest complete reporting year

Absence	National comparative data	5
Unauthorised	School	1
Absence	National comparative data	0

Exclusions

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

	Nu
Fixed period	
Permanent	

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	70
Satisfactory or better	100
Less than satisfactory	0

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

· Attainment and progress of children under five

3. Attainment on entry to school is generally average. Children make satisfactory progress and the vast majority achieve average standards in personal and social education, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development by the time they are five. Teaching is good for language and literacy and children make good progress and many exceed the level expected in reading and writing by the time they start compulsory education. Numeracy is taught thoroughly and children quickly grasp the concept of number. They confidently do simple addition and subtraction sums and by the age of five many exceed the level expected in numeracy. All are familiar with information technology and already are confident following simple instructions on the computer.

Attainment and progress of pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2

4. Overall standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have remained well above average since the previous inspection. In 1999, the pupils' results in national tests for seven-year olds were well above average in writing, reading and mathematics when compared to all schools and those of similar intake. The proportion of pupils exceeding the national target was also high. Teacher assessment in science at the end of Key Stage 1 was also well above the national average. Boys and girls perform equally well. In the national tests for eleven-year olds in 1999, the pupils were in line with the national average in English and science when compared to all schools and to schools with a similar intake. The vast majority of pupils attain the level expected for their age but overall figures were affected by the drop in pupils exceeding this level. In mathematics attainment was well below the national average both for all schools and similar schools. Between 1996 and 1998 attainment in English, mathematics and science had been well above national averages. The school identified a dip in attainment at the higher level over the last two years and has taken appropriate action to remedy this. Results have been carefully analysed and the curriculum adjusted where gaps in learning were identified. Teaching has been strengthened and inspection findings indicate standards are improving. Throughout Key Stage 2 several pupils transfer to the school and are identified as having special educational needs. The school provides very well for the needs of these pupils and they make good progress. However, their attainment sometimes affects the overall proportion of pupils attaining the national average and above at the end of Key Stage 2. There is no difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Evidence from the inspection, including scrutiny of books, discussion with pupils and lesson observations, confirms the above average standards at the end of Key Stage 1, this is due to high expectations and the very good quality of teaching. At the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is above average in English and science, and in mathematics it is now average. There is an improvement in the number of pupils exceeding the nationally expected level in all subjects. The consistently good teaching and more rigorous attention to planning in Key Stage 2 indicates a good capacity for sustaining this improvement and the school is well placed to achieve both national and locally agreed targets.

5. Attainment on entry to school varies between years and is affected by the proportion of very young children starting in September. Analysis of the school's assessment data indicates attainment is generally average. The high standards attained in Key Stage 1 and the good proportion of pupils attaining the national targets in English and science and the improving standards in mathematics

indicate that overall progress is now good. Very good progress is made in Key Stage 1 and teachers set challenging work that ensures pupils work at a good pace and make the progress of which they are capable. Over time progress has not been as good in Key Stage 2 due to some aspects of the curriculum not being taught in sufficient depth and teachers not building on pupils' prior skills and knowledge. However, these problems have been resolved and in lessons seen during the inspection pupils made good progress and this represents an improvement since the previous inspection.

6. The National Literacy Hour has been introduced successfully and is having a positive impact on attainment. Attainment in reading is well above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and pupils make very good progress and read confidently and fluently with expression. Good progress is made in Key Stage 2 as pupils read a wider range of texts. They are beginning to read for pleasure as well as for information, and attainment at the end of the key stage is above the national average. As at the time of the previous inspection attainment in speaking and listening is high throughout the school. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are articulate and are developing a wide vocabulary. They listen attentively to teachers and one another. When pupils leave school they speak and listen very well. They reflect on what they hear and are confident sharing their opinions in discussions. They speak confidently in public. Pupils' writing skills are well above average by the time they are seven and most know how to use full stops and capital letters and many higher attaining pupils write short stories that are spelled and punctuated accurately. The range of writing improves in Key Stage 2 and good progress is made and by the age of eleven the proportion of pupils attaining the nationally expected level and above is higher than the national average. Pupils write for a variety of purposes, such as stories, poetry or factual accounts. By the end of the key stage most present their work well in clear, well-formed handwriting.

7. At both key stages, pupils make good use of their literacy skills to support learning in other subjects. For example, they read and write about life during the Second World War and have written poetry in response to their artwork on colour.

8. The pupils make very good progress in mathematics in Key Stage 1 and many are working at levels exceeding the national average. They sequence numbers accurately and recognise patterns of even numbers. Good progress is now being made in Key Stage 2 and attainment has improved and is now in line with the national average. The majority of pupils will attain the national target and the school has more pupils working at the higher levels than in the previous year. At the end of the key stage pupils have a good knowledge of place value and apply this to multiplication and division calculations. The Numeracy Hour has increased the emphasis on mental skills and pupils make good use of this to solve problems in the brisk introductions to lessons.

9. Pupils are confident to apply their numeracy skills in other subjects. In music they count the beats in a bar before other groups join the composition and in geography data handling skills are used to record the results of a traffic census.

10. Teacher assessment in science at the end of Key Stage 1 shows overall attainment to be well above the national average. Inspection evidence confirms this high standard and the pupils make very good progress. At the end of the key stage pupils conduct simple scientific investigations and understand that test conditions have to be fair. Progress is less marked in Key Stage 2 as the curriculum has not always been followed with sufficient rigour to extend learning. However, this has now been resolved and good progress was observed in lessons and the proportion of pupils attaining the nationally expected level for this age group is above the national average. At the end of the key stage pupils make sensible predictions about their experiments and understand that

altering conditions affects the results. Clear explanations are given for their activities and pupils use scientific terminology accurately.

11. In information technology attainment is a little above average at the end of Key Stage 1 but at age eleven attainment is well below average. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and use computers for word processing and supporting their learning in other subjects including mathematics and art. At Key Stage 2, pupils have insufficient opportunity to use computers and do not cover all the aspects in the National Curriculum. Pupils have some experience of word processing to copy and enhance their work but have made poor progress in other areas. The school has recently adopted a new scheme of work and has invested in new resources. The development of this subject is a priority in the school's development plan.

12. Standards in religious education have improved since the previous inspection and standards are in line with the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of Key Stage 1 and exceed this level at the end of Key Stage 2. Good progress is made throughout the school. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have a good understanding of Christianity and other world faiths. This understanding is further developed in Key Stage 2 as pupils begin to reflect on faith and analyse the main events of the life of Christ.

13. In the other foundation subjects of design and technology, geography and physical education pupils make satisfactory progress. In history at Key Stage 1 and music at both key stages progress is good. Progress is very good in history in Key Stage 2. Art remains a strength in the school and attainment is very high. Pupils make very good progress in their artistic skills in response to a range of interesting activities and good teaching.

14. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from additional support and they make good progress relative to their ability. Teachers ensure they are fully involved in lessons and plan tasks that carefully match their needs. These pupils are included in evaluations and performances to build up their self-esteem. The school has successfully integrated pupils who have English as an additional language and the support these pupils receive from teachers and pupils ensure they make good progress both academically and in extending their communication skills.

• **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

15. The school has maintained high standards in these aspects since the previous inspection and the parents are rightly confident that most pupils behave, work and develop well in this school.

16. Children under five have positive attitudes to their learning and their behaviour is good. They confidently obey the class rule that limits the number of children participating in an activity at any one time. They take turns but their ability to make choices at the beginning of the lesson is not developed. Children learn to work together harmoniously and to share equipment. They develop constructive relationships with their classmates, remain on task and develop their powers of concentration. Other opportunities for personal development however are limited.

17. Pupils in the infants and the juniors have good attitudes towards their work. They apply themselves well to tasks, concentrating, persevering and remaining on task without over close supervision. They are keen to learn and improve. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and confidently volunteer to answer questions or demonstrate how they solved a mathematical problem as part of their numeracy hour work. They show good levels of initiative, for example when they

completed a design technology project at home. They are enthusiastic readers who enjoy the Literacy Hour and choose to read at home. Older pupils are willing to take on regular jobs around the school. Pupils' behaviour is very good in both lessons and around the school, and this contributes effectively to their attainment and progress. Playground behaviour is energetic and good natured. Pupils are polite and helpful to adults and to each other. They respond well to the school rules which they helped to formulate. There have been no recent exclusions.

18. Relationships around the school are very good and this contributes to the caring ethos. It also enables pupils to work together productively and to seek help or advice when it is needed. The small number of pupils who have English as an additional language are fully involved in the work of their classes. There are many good examples of pupils being involved in collaborative work. For example when they paint large urban scenes in the style of Lowry, in music and dance and when they organise the gathering of information from the local population of Frodsham using questionnaires as part of their history and geography studies. Residential visits play an important role making pupils aware of the needs of others. The involvement of junior pupils in the regular clubs held in the school at lunch- time and after school enables them to develop positive relationships with adults in a social setting.

19. There is good provision for personal development. When given the opportunity, pupils show respect for the beliefs of others, particularly in religious education. Pupils are able to take responsibility and carry out useful tasks without direct supervision. The oldest pupils reliably and punctually complete their duties with the minimum of supervision. Many use their initiative to identify new ideas to raise money for charities. However, their ability to be involved in independent research such as using the school library is underdeveloped.

Attendance

20. Attendance is good and pupils have the same positive attitudes towards attendance as found at the time of the previous inspection. Last year the recorded attendance was 95 per cent. Levels of unauthorised absence are well above that found in similar schools nationally. This is because some parents chose to take their children on extended holidays during term time to the detriment of their schooling. Most pupils are punctual to arrive at school and lessons start on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

21. The overall quality of teaching is good and this shows a significant improvement since the previous inspection. During the inspection teaching was judged to be satisfactory or better in all lessons seen. It was good or better in 70 per cent of lessons and very good and excellent in 17 per cent of these lessons. Although good teaching was seen in all year groups it was particularly good in Key Stage 1. In the lessons seen in Key Stage 1, 81 per cent were good or better and 44 per cent of these were very good or excellent. The strength of this teaching impacts strongly on the very good progress pupils make and lays a firm foundation in all aspects of the curriculum. The teaching observed for children under five was satisfactory in 90 per cent of lessons and the rest was good. Teaching in Key Stage 2 has been strengthened by recent appointments and in 82 per cent of lessons it was good and better and in 8 per cent of these lessons teaching was very good. The previous inspection identified a significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching this was not the case during the current inspection and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed.

22. The quality of teaching for children under five is satisfactory and the teacher and support staff have a secure knowledge of the needs of young children. Activities are planned to meet the requirements of the learning experiences identified nationally as appropriate for these children. Management is positive and lessons are orderly. The balance between teacher directed activities and free choice is not always appropriate and children have insufficient involvement in the selection of tasks. When teaching specific skills, such as in numeracy and literacy the teaching improves.

23. Teachers at Key Stages 1 and 2 effectively build on the skills and knowledge acquired in the early years. Teachers have good subject knowledge and share their enthusiasm for many aspects of the curriculum. The previous inspection highlighted insecure knowledge in design and technology, science and geography, this was not evident during the current inspection. Teachers are confident teaching the National Literacy Hour and are prepared to adapt the lesson to match the needs of the pupils or to develop an aspect from another lesson. Similarly, teachers are competent teaching the Numeracy Hour and include brisk sessions of mental calculations that are already having an impact on pupils' numeracy skills. In science, teachers ask effective, probing questions to develop pupils' skills in scientific investigation. In Key Stage 2 teachers have an insecure knowledge and understanding of information technology and pupils make poor progress. The school has identified the need for more training in this subject.

24. Teachers' high expectations of attainment in Key Stage 1 are a major factor in the very good progress pupils make. Teachers consistently set challenging activities that keep pupils working at a good pace and level of concentration. Only in religious education could pupils have been given more difficult tasks when higher attaining pupils showed a readiness to challenge some ideas. Challenging work is now appearing in Key Stage 2 particularly in English and mathematics. Throughout the school teachers have high expectations of behaviour and attitudes to work and all lessons are conducted in an orderly, purposeful atmosphere.

25. Teachers' planning is good and lessons have clear learning outcomes. This was a weakness in the previous inspection and has now been resolved. Teachers plan different levels of work for the ability groups in their class and ensure all pupils are working at an appropriate level. This is particularly effective for pupils with special educational needs. When these pupils are withdrawn for support the teacher is involved in planning the activities and they match the targets set in the pupils' individual educational plans. Pupils with special needs are encouraged to participate in the discussions at the start of lessons before being withdrawn for more intensive support. This is effective in ensuring the pupils receive a balanced curriculum. Teachers in Key Stage 1 and the reception class also plan carefully for the pupils with English as an additional language. Work is always carried out in small groups to ensure effective inter-action with other pupils. Stories with imaginative resources are used to make these sessions exciting as well as extending pupils' vocabulary and communication skills.

26. Classroom organisation is very good and teachers use a good mixture of whole class, group and individual work in lessons. Practical activities are a feature of many lessons to challenge pupils' thinking and to help them clarify their ideas and opinions. Group collaboration is included in many lessons and was particularly good in music in Key Stage 2 when pupils worked to compose and perform a small piece of music. It was also effective in the history visit to Frodsham when pupils had to work together reviewing buildings and then sharing their findings with the whole class.

27. Management of pupils is very good and based on very good relationships throughout the

school. Teachers are patient when faced with difficult behaviour and any minor disturbances do not disrupt the learning of other pupils.

28. Time and resources are used well and most lessons include a lively introduction and a conclusion that evaluates, as well as celebrate achievement. Occasionally, introductions are too long and insufficient time is available to complete work. In physical education lessons organisation means pupils waiting for a turn but most lessons proceed at a brisk pace. A range of interesting artefacts are used in history and religious education to make learning more relevant and interesting. Classrooms are stimulating and teachers are imaginative in displays that provide advice as well as showing pupils' many achievements. In Key Stage 2, computers are underused across the curriculum.

29. Teachers evaluate pupils' strengths and weaknesses in all subjects in their daily planning files and adjust tasks if necessary. They give effective advice as they support pupils during lessons and clarify any mis-understandings. Marking is up-to-date and there are some good examples of teachers setting pupils' targets to improve their work.

30. Parents expressed a concern about the inconsistency in the amount of homework being given to their children. There were examples of good practice in many classes. For example, in Years 1 and 2 teachers plan tasks to be done at home that link to the focus activity in the Literacy Hour. In Year 5, pupils had been given a research project over the holidays and the models and written work showed considerable effort from the pupils. In Year 6, pupils have work in English and mathematics and most teachers do set work to be done at home. These activities have a positive impact on pupils' learning. However, inspection evidence did show that work set does vary between classes and does not always extend the learning done in class.

The curriculum and assessment

31. The curriculum provided for the children under five is satisfactory overall. It provides experience in all areas of learning, although the provision for energetic play is limited by the accommodation and lack of outdoor facilities. Generally it takes appropriate account of the required areas of learning and prepares children well for the National Curriculum. This is an improvement on the previous inspection, when the curriculum was planned to the National Curriculum and ignored areas of learning appropriate for this age group.

32. In both key stages, the curriculum is broad and well balanced and meets most statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and the Local Agreed Syllabus for religious education. The exception to this is in the curriculum for information technology in Key Stage 2 where few aspects of the subject are taught. The school has plans to include swimming next term. There is an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy. The curriculum provides well for equal opportunities and personal development. Personal, health and social education include appropriate units of maintaining a healthy lifestyle and time is given to discuss moral issues in a safe and supportive environment. There are many strengths in the curriculum and it is planned well to provide for the consistent and progressive development of skills. Short-term planning was a concern at the time of the previous inspection when learning targets were not always clear and there was a lack of detailed schemes of work to support this planning. This weakness has been corrected by the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and the Numeracy Project and detailed schemes of work. Many of these have only recently been adopted and are not yet having a full impact on standards but they are providing teachers with clear guidelines. A long-term planning framework and detailed medium-term plans are supporting teachers well and short-term

plans are now good. The role of co-ordinators has improved somewhat since the previous inspection and staff have carried out lesson observations and provided subsequent advice to colleagues. The school identifies the need to extend these opportunities.

33. The curriculum is planned well in topics and this provides a good balance over each year. Each subject maintains breadth and balance, other than in information technology. In Key Stage 1 the subject is integrated effectively into other subjects. However, in Key Stage 2 most aspects are not taught and computers are under-used across the whole curriculum. Opportunities for personal development are mainly good, although there are constraints on independent research in the library provision.

34. The curriculum has been planned well to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are potentially higher attainers. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection, when the planning of tasks and activities for pupils who were potentially higher attainers was highlighted as a weakness. The good co-operation between teachers and support staff aids access to the full curriculum for pupils with special needs and those with English as an additional language contributes to their progress. Individual programmes of work are planned well with clear targets. Outside agencies contribute positively, by advising on programmes of work to meet the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language.

35. The curriculum is enhanced by a good programme of extra-curricular activities. Personal development is encouraged through participation in a range of activities including choir, recorders, football, netball and cross-country running and all are well supported. There are approximately 150 places in different activities and these are organised efficiently by seven teachers and parents. A substantial number of school outings support learning and annual residential visits encourage independence. The school undertakes a visit to Holland in alternate years for the pupils in Years 5 and 6.

36. Assessment procedures and the way information is used in curriculum planning were identified as weaknesses in the previous inspection and there have been significant improvements. Assessment procedures for children under five are good and information is used well in planning the more formal aspects of work, such as in reading, writing and mathematics. Good procedures have been established for assessing pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science over the last year. There are now regular formal and informal assessments made every half term and information is recorded in such a way that it will be simple to track the progress of individuals as they move through the school. Individual records of achievement show pupils' progress throughout school.

37. Information gained about individuals and groups of pupils is used well to plan future work and identify curriculum development points. Assessment results are closely scrutinised and good use is made in planning work for all pupils, particularly in English and mathematics. Appropriate targets are set for school improvement and there is some good practice in setting and reviewing of individual targets in English and mathematics in Year 6.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

38. The school has maintained the high quality of provision for these aspects since the previous inspection and continues to strongly promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the corporate life of the school, the act of worship, religious education and other subjects of the curriculum. The school provides a welcoming and caring ethos and

effectively shares its aims, values and expectations with parents who are happy that the school's values have a positive effect on their children.

39. The school provides good quality assemblies, which benefit from a variety of formats and styles. The pupils have opportunities to be involved in the act of worship and good use is made of visitors to extend the range of pupils' experiences. Many teachers are careful to promote and direct times of reflection and pupils respond well to the provision.

40. There has been careful planning to ensure that pupils' spiritual development is good. Teachers provide introductory insights into the spirituality of non-Christian faiths involving the handling of sacred artefacts and meeting religious leaders. In art, pupils' careful sketches and pastel drawings of flowers and other living things promotes aesthetic appreciation of beauty. This appreciation extends to the care of living things as pupils observe the changing colours of the natural environment surrounding the school. The provision of merit awards and the organisation of regular celebration assemblies, effectively promote pupils' self worth.

41. The provision for promoting pupils' moral development is very good. Staff consistently reinforce pupils' understanding of right from wrong. There are very good constructive, friendly relationships between staff and pupils. Classroom rules, which are discussed and decided by pupils, promote successfully a sense of self-respect and an ability to help promote a happy and caring environment. The strategy of 'Circle Time' is used effectively to involve pupils in discussions about relationships and behaviour management.

42. Provision for social development is also very good. A wide range of extra-curricular activities is provided including residential provision for both infant and junior pupils. There are many opportunities for pupils to work together on whole school events, such as plays and concerts. The provision of the Fun House club, the Play Den Group and the morning and evening pupils' clubs successfully promote the important social values of co-operation and mutual support. The choir entertains elderly residents. Pupils develop a sense of social responsibility by organising regular events to support local, national and international charities. Pupils are often encouraged to co-operate together during lessons to share resources and work as members of a group. They undertake administration tasks within their classrooms. The oldest pupils carry out daily jobs around the school and help younger children with their reading.

43. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. This includes studying the neighbourhood to make pupils aware of the historical and geographical background to the area. They investigate the development of Frodsham as a town and the changes to its architecture in different periods of history. Pupils have many opportunities to study a range of British, European and world artists. Regular day and residential visits extend pupils' knowledge of different cultures within the British Isles. Residential visits to Holland, the contribution from visitors from different cultures at assemblies, the teaching of multi-cultural dances and the religious education programme make valuable contributions to the pupils' awareness of the richness of other non-European cultures. The Literacy Hour makes a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development by giving older children opportunities to study the works of Shakespeare and Dickens.

44. The high quality of display around the school, including the reproductions of work by famous artists, African drums, masks and drawings, effectively supports the school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

45. As at the time of the previous inspection the school makes good provision for the educational and personal support of pupils and they are cared for very well. Parents are pleased with the support and guidance provided by the school.

46. The school's arrangements for young children when they start school are good and parents were appreciative of these procedures. Children have opportunities to visit before they start school. Children from the playgroup held in the school attend special occasions.

47. The school now has good procedures to assess and monitor academic progress. Teachers keep detailed records of progress and adjust lessons to ensure activities match the pupils' needs. An individual record of achievement is kept for each pupil and this contributes towards discussion at the parents' evenings held each term. Personal development is monitored carefully and promoted through health education and 'Circle Time' when pupils discuss relationships and any concerns. Pupils with special educational needs and those pupils who have English as an additional language are sensitively supported both by adults and pupils.

48. School procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. Pupils like the system of apple awards in Key Stage 1 and team points in Key Stage 2, which culminate in certificates. Success is suitably recognized and shared in school assemblies. Overall behaviour is very good throughout the school. The school's anti-bullying policy is effective. During the inspection there was no evidence of bullying and pupils understand it will not be tolerated in school.

49. The school has good systems to promote, monitor and record attendance. Child protection and health and safety procedures are in place. Teachers are familiar with child protection procedures and the designated coordinator is suitably trained. The school has conducted a risk assessment as required. There are no major outstanding issues from the previous inspection. The school has made parents aware of the potential road safety hazards caused by inconsiderate parking outside the school.

50. The school has a very caring ethos and adults are sensitive to pupils' needs and this makes a significant contribution to pupils' academic and personal development.

Partnership with parents and the community

51. As at the time of the previous inspection the school enjoys a good and constructive relationship with parents.

52. Parents find that the school is welcoming and open. Information provided for parents is good. The prospectus covers the required information. A home school contract is in place. There are some omissions from the governors' annual report to parents. Parents appreciate the frequent newsletters, which keep them fully informed about school life. Some parents suggested they would like to have more details about the forthcoming work their children would be studying. This would enable them to help more effectively at home. Meetings between teachers and parents are held each term to review children's progress and these are very well attended. Pupils' written reports give a good picture of the work covered, areas to improve and meet statutory requirements. Parents of children with special educational needs are fully informed of their children's progress and are invited to attend all meetings. The special needs co-ordinator has compiled a useful booklet to inform parents about school provision for pupils with special educational needs.

53. Parents are very supportive of the work of the school and involvement in children's learning is good. Most parents regularly hear their children read at home. This has a positive effect on the standard achieved. The Manor House Home School Association gives sterling support to the school with social events and fund raising for computers. Several parents help in the classroom on a regular basis and many others help with visits and sporting events. Parents coach the football team and this makes a very positive contribution to pupils' social as well as physical development.

54. In the replies to the parents' questionnaire 20 per cent of parents expressed concern about the inconsistency in the amount of work to be completed at home. The inspectors partly agree with this. There are examples of good homework being set in Key Stage 1 when in response to concerns about reading at home teachers provide tasks linked to the Literacy Hour. In Key Stage 2, research work was given over the holidays and resulted in some very detailed models of the solar system. In Year 6, pupils have a homework book for English and mathematics. However, there is some inconsistency between classes.

55. The school's good links with the community have a positive effect on pupils' personal development. The pre-school group meet in school and this enables children to settle quickly when they start school. The school is a member of local Arts and Sports Association. Pupils take part in art exhibitions, workshops and sports' tournaments. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are studying the local area in a history and geography project. There are good links with the local secondary schools, with some opportunities for specialist lessons, including a special group for higher attaining pupils at Frodsham High School.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

56. The overall quality of leadership and management is good. As at the time of the previous inspection this is a strength in the school and the combined efforts of the headteacher, governing body and staff provide a clear educational direction for the work of the school and significant improvements have taken place.

57. The school benefits from the caring and committed leadership of the headteacher. She enjoys the full support of the governing body, staff and parents. She is ably supported by the deputy headteacher who has made a strong contribution to the leadership of the school since her appointment. She has successfully implemented good assessment procedures as well as managed the introduction of the National Literacy Hour. At present the deputy headteacher has an unrealistic number of responsibilities and no allocated non-contact time. This restricts opportunities for the development of management skills linked to the position of deputy headteacher. The role of subject co-ordinators has been strengthened since the previous inspection as a result of the school's participation in the Local Education Authority's "Whole School Self-Evaluation." Co-ordinators now carry out an efficient audit of their subject and identify areas for development. Co-ordinators are more involved in planning and although many are new to the management position have produced schemes of work and new policies. Very little non-contact time is available for monitoring the implementation of these schemes in the classroom. Observations in class have been carried out by staff with subject responsibilities and these have provided useful advice to improve teaching. Detailed analysis of test results is shared with curriculum co-ordinators and has led to curriculum provision being adjusted to resolve identified

weaknesses. This has been particularly effective in raising standards in English when it was identified pupils did not perform well in tests when they selected the information writing task.

58. The governing body is effective and works through an organised system of committees. As at the time of the previous inspection many are regular visitors and often help in school. Governors are kept well informed of current national initiatives and are linked to a specific class and this enables them to be aware of the current situation in school. Together with the headteacher and staff they have resolved most of the issues from the previous inspection. Schemes of work are now in place for all subjects, assessment procedures are good, provision for design and technology has improved and attainment is now satisfactory. The curriculum for under fives has improved and now provides experience of all areas of learning, although provision for physical development is restricted by the lack of outdoor facilities. The role of the curriculum co-ordinator has improved although the school identifies this is an issue that has not been fully resolved. The governing body fulfils most of its statutory requirements but the school does not meet the requirements for staff appraisal and there are some omissions in the Governor's Annual Report to Parents. Information about the implementation of the last OFSTED action plan, a statement on school security, a description about the admission of pupils with disabilities and a comment on the school's special education provision are missing from the report. The school does not provide opportunities for swimming but this difficulty has been overcome and the school is introducing swimming lessons in the spring term. Governors have been actively involved in target setting and in the recent initiative to introduce home school contracts.

59. The school development plan is a collaborative document and priorities are based on clear evaluations of the previous year's priorities. Since the previous inspection a new format for the plan has been adopted and this is easy to follow and clearly identifies priorities for the school. Resource implications and success criteria are identified and financial implications recorded for most items. However, not all resources are costed and there is a lack of detailed costings to support this expenditure. Current priorities are appropriate for the school. They include a response to government initiatives, issues from the previous inspection and on-going areas of development identified in the evaluation of previous targets.

60. The school implements its aims and values very well and all policies reflect the school's aims. A comprehensive policy is in place for special educational needs and the provision for these pupils is good. The school provides equal opportunities for all pupils and has very successfully integrated pupils who have English as an additional language.

61. The school has a positive ethos and parents are very happy with the education their children receive. The school has a purposeful atmosphere and the very good relationships that are a strong feature in the school have a very positive impact on the good and often very good progress pupils make. The school has a strong team of committed teachers and the capacity for improvement is good.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

62. The school has an appropriate number of suitably qualified teachers to meet the demands of the National Curriculum, religious education and education of children under five. There is a good balance of new appointments and staff with longer service. All teachers have an appropriate record of training and all have expertise in respect of the subject they manage. Teachers have completed training in teaching the Literacy Hour and the National Numeracy Project. The number of classroom support staff available is low, and support for the children in the reception class is

limited. Teachers attend relevant courses to increase their expertise and then share their new knowledge with the whole staff.

63. Other professional development is informal. There is no system for appraisal and the decisions made at annual professional development interviews between the headteacher and individual teachers are not recorded. This makes it difficult for the school to evaluate its professional development programme. There is a useful staff handbook for supporting new members of staff who are supported by the relevant key stage co-ordinator. The school provides good support for newly qualified teachers and follows local authority guidance.

64. The school accommodation provides a bright, enriching environment for learning. It is generally clean and maintained well. Classrooms are spacious and generally enhanced by attractive and stimulating displays of pupils' work. The school is set in pleasant surroundings and much work has been completed to make the grounds a resource to support learning. The accommodation for children under five is satisfactory but there is no provision for outdoor activities. Careful planning has utilised spare classroom capacity to support a playgroup and another room has been designated to site the new information technology computer suite. Very good library facilities are available with seating for pupils' independent study. Other spare classrooms provide a music area and an area for small group teaching activities.

65. Resources are good overall. The school has spent wisely providing sufficient resources for literacy and numeracy. Recent expenditure has also improved resources in geography, history and religious education and has enabled teachers to provide more stimulating and challenging lessons. The library is resourced well although there are some out of date books that need to be replaced. The provision of support for information technology is currently unsatisfactory but new resources are ordered, and when available, will ensure that the subject is very well resourced. Music is equipped well with a good range of tuned and untuned instruments together with instruments from multi-cultural environments. Resources in all other subjects and for children under five are at least adequate.

66. The site is maintained to a good standard. However, there are significant leaks to the roof. This was noted in the previous inspection report and the situation has deteriorated.

The efficiency of the school

67. The quality of the school's financial planning is satisfactory. Priorities are identified in the school development plan and funds are allocated to them but there are no detailed costings to provide a basis for the figures given. Whilst a suitable surplus is carried forward each year for contingencies, the governing body believes that the maximum amount possible should be spent on maintaining single age classes and providing a good quantity of teaching staff. As a consequence difficult decisions have to be made about the areas of support staffing and resources. This led to a shortage of information technology equipment which has now been resolved. However, there continues to be low levels of support staff. The latter point particularly affects the provision for the children under five, as the teacher is the sole trained person in a large class in the afternoons. Whilst governors investigate the standards attained in national tests each year there is no systematic approach to checking the cost effectiveness of spending decisions in relation to these standards.

68. Money provided by parents and the budget has been specifically targeted for improving resources for information technology in preparation for the establishment of a computer suite in the

year 2000. Resources provided will be substantially enhanced by a specific grant from the National Grid for Learning. Funding granted for specific purposes, such as the further professional development of staff is spent effectively, with improvements in teachers' subject knowledge, across the whole curriculum. Money allocated for pupils with special educational needs is well spent in providing effective support and promoting good progress. The local authority provides support for pupils with English as an additional language and this is used effectively to improve these pupils' self esteem as well as extending their language skills.

69. Financial control and the daily administration are sound. There are correct procedures for handling cash and in the use of the school fund cheque book. The school has not had an audit of its finances since before the previous inspection. The school's administrative officer manages procedures effectively on a daily basis.

70. All teachers are deployed effectively to provide efficient education. The allocation of responsibilities to senior staff results, however, in some overload for the deputy headteacher. There is ineffective practice in allowing support staff administration time when the reception class teacher is the sole adult in charge of a large group of young children each afternoon

71. Co-ordinators audit and manage resources, making recommendations for additional resources as curriculum needs evolve, although they do not control their own budgets. Resources are usually used well but computers are under-used at Key Stage 2 and the school library is not fully developed as a base for independent research. The use made of the accommodation is generally good although the additional area provided for the reception class is difficult to supervise and this limits it being used to its full potential.

72. Taking into account the average expenditure per pupil, the standard of attainment when pupils leave school, the quality of education provided, particularly teaching, and the very good relationships, attitudes and behaviour, the school provides good value for money. This is the same as at the time of the previous inspection.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

73. Children enter school at the start of the year in which they are five. At the time of the inspection there were 29 children under five in the reception class. Few children have attended a nursery but most have attended a pre-school playgroup based within the school. There is a good programme of visits to the reception class before the children begin school and those in the playgroup also attend special school assemblies and events. This helps the children settle quickly into the school routine. Attainment levels of children on entry to the school have fallen recently and are now average. The school has improved the curriculum since the previous inspection report, through ensuring that most areas of learning are covered. However the classroom is small for the number of pupils and there is no direct access to an outdoor play area to develop children's physical skills. Overall provision is satisfactory and children have a sound base for their work in the National Curriculum. They make sound progress overall and good progress in language and literacy and early number work

· *Personal and social development*

74. Children make sound progress and, at five years old, their development is appropriate for their age. Teaching is satisfactory and provides appropriate opportunities for children to learn specific rules about working and playing together. Most children understand class routines and behave sensibly. They are polite and most take turns in speaking during class discussions. However occasionally, when whole class or group sessions are overlong a few become restless. For example, in a news session, children all give a piece of news as they sit in a circle and it takes a long time for all to have their turn. In group-work, children work well together and join in appropriately, such as when playing in the role play area. They have few opportunities to develop independence in choosing their activities as most are directed by the teacher. The washing facilities are unsuitable for young children as they find it difficult to press the taps and this limits their independence in caring for themselves and developing hygienic habits. Assembly times provide them with good opportunities to learn how to listen and interact in a larger social setting. By the time children are five years old, they obey class rules and play together well.

· *Language and literacy*

75. Teaching is good overall and children make good progress in early reading and writing skills. Most are confident in speaking and usually listen carefully to adults and each other. They speak clearly, using a sound spoken vocabulary. However in undirected activities, such as role-play and construction, there are many missed opportunities to extend children's language further. This is compounded by the low level of trained staff in the afternoon sessions, when the teacher usually works with the class by herself, although there is sometimes support from untrained volunteers or students. Children learn about the names and sounds of the different letters of the alphabet and begin to understand alphabetical order. They recognise patterns in words that rhyme and most recognise simple common words and read books from the early stages of a commercial scheme. Children write their names accurately and at age five most are confident in attempting their own writing. Many write simple words correctly and higher attaining children begin to apply capital letters and full stops in sentences. Overall, by the time children are five years old, their attainment is above average in reading and writing.

• **Mathematics**

76. Teaching is satisfactory overall and good in more formal work in numeracy. Children make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in numeracy. They sort objects by shape and colour and order them by size. They copy and continue simple patterns. Children count to 10 confidently and name the numbers of the empty beds on the number line. At age five they add and subtract numbers to 10. They know a range of counting songs and rhymes. Most children recognise basic shapes, such as circles, triangles, and squares. At age five children meet the level expected for their age and most exceed it in numeracy.

• **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

77. Teaching is satisfactory and children make satisfactory progress in extending their knowledge of the world. They talk confidently about their homes, families and school and discuss the visits they make. They develop sound observational skills through experiments, such as when growing seeds or on visits. All are familiar with information technology through the use of cassette players and the computer. They play word and number games independently and use the keyboard or mouse to move shapes around the screen. They use simple tools to make models. At age five attainment is average.

• **Physical development**

78. Children make satisfactory progress overall. It is better in the use of mark making tools and manipulation of jigsaws, clay and construction toys than in energetic play, such as climbing, balancing or riding because the curriculum is limited by the lack of facilities for energetic play. There is no indoor area that can safely be used as the space within the classroom is small for the numbers of children and the extra space made available outside the classroom is difficult to supervise. The children have two physical education lessons a week and most develop appropriate control of their bodies in these directed sessions. Children's dexterity is promoted through the use of puzzles and construction kits. They use scissors and a range of simple tools safely to cut out shapes and they manipulate plasticine and dough. At age five attainment is average with most children reaching the levels expected and many exceeding them. Teaching is satisfactory in this area of learning.

• **Creative development**

79. Overall teaching is satisfactory and children make sound progress. Teaching in art is good and children make good progress. Children are encouraged to enjoy art and they draw and paint recognisable pictures with an increasing eye for detail. Time is taken to teach skills and techniques to small groups and individuals. For example, the nursery nurse made good use of a large mirror to develop good observational points when a child was drawing her own face with chalks. She then encouraged the child to consider colour and demonstrated blending techniques, allowing the child to select her own colours and experiment with blending. Resultant pictures are above average. Children have access to role-play areas, such as a home corner and a health clinic but there is little adult intervention to enrich vocabulary or develop imagination. They play simple rhythms on untuned instruments and sing a variety of traditional songs. At age five, attainment is average with most children attaining the levels expected and exceeding them in art.

80. The overall quality of the teaching is satisfactory and the adults have sound knowledge of the needs of children of this age. The teacher and nursery nurse plan an appropriate range of activities across the curriculum. However, opportunities to provide fully for physical development are limited by the accommodation and low level of staffing in the afternoon session. Most work is directed and there is little opportunity provided for children to make choices of what they do. Activities which are not the direct focus of the teacher or nursery nurse often lack clear objectives

and there is only supervisory input to them. Direct teaching of groups and individuals is sound and good in early reading, writing and number skills. A range of trips and visits supports the curriculum well.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

81. The pupils' results in national tests for seven year olds in 1999, were well above the national average in reading and writing at both the target and higher level. When compared to schools with a similar intake, attainment is also well above average. These results have been consistently above the national average since 1996 and the school has shown significant improvement in the number of pupils attaining the higher levels. Boys achieve similar to girls. In the national tests for eleven year olds, attainment in English was in line with the average when compared with all schools and with schools where pupils come from similar backgrounds. Over the last four years results have been improving in line with the national figure. However, there was a slight drop in results in 1998 and 1999 particularly in the number of pupils exceeding the target level. The school's analysis of the 1999 tests identified a weakness in writing non-fiction texts. This is now being addressed. The teaching has been recently strengthened and the school is now well placed to achieve the targets set for the school by the local authority. Results in tests shows that boys are performing better than girls, which is against the national pattern, but the inspection found no indication of inequality of opportunity. Evidence collected from the inspection confirms that attainment is well above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and has improved at the end of Key Stage 2 and is now above the national average and more pupils are identified as exceeding the national average. Since the previous inspection high standards have been maintained in Key Stage 1 and there has been an improvement in Key Stage 2.

82. Pupils enter the school with average attainment in early reading and writing skills and make very good progress throughout Key Stage 1 in all aspects of English. Teaching is very good and teachers have high expectations of attainment and pupils respond well and achieve very good standards. Pupils for whom English is not the first language are well integrated and receive additional help within a small group to extend their vocabulary. This help is organised well and ensures the pupils make similar progress to other pupils. Progress overtime has been more uneven in Key Stage 2 and the disruption caused by staff changes and temporary staff have restricted the progress in the middle of the key stage. The school also has a number of new pupils entering the school who have not benefited from the good foundation provided at Manor House School. However, the current situation is of good teaching and a stable staffing situation and progress in lessons seen during the inspection was good. The successful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has had a significant impact on the good progress now being made in Key Stage 2. The pupils with special educational needs are identified early and receive good support both in class and intensive one-to-one support when required. Teachers plan work matched carefully to their needs and these pupils make good progress relevant to their ability.

83. As at the time of the previous inspection progress in speaking and listening is very good throughout the school and pupils attain high standards at the end of both key stages. At Key Stage 1, pupils listen attentively to teachers to gain information and follow instructions accurately. They are confident asking questions to clarify their understanding. Pupils take turns in conversations and class discussions. They have a wide vocabulary to express their ideas and enjoy using new

vocabulary to explain their work in other subjects. Teachers plan lessons to include opportunities for discussion and this ensures pupils develop in confidence as they move into Key Stage 2. Pupils become more articulate when discussing their work and speak confidently in front of an audience. During the inspection pupils read aloud the poems they had written to the whole school assembly and this was performed very confidently. Most pupils listen carefully to one another and this contributes significantly to the quality of collaborative group work. By the end of the key stage pupils use clear English to discuss a range of controversial issues in many subjects. When they talk about their work their vocabulary is enriched by the use of appropriate technical terms. Pupils understand that speaking varies to suit the audience.

84. Progress in reading is very good throughout Key Stage 1 and standards are well above average by the end of the key stage. They receive a good introduction to sounds and letters and use this knowledge effectively when reading. Pupils quickly build up a range of familiar words and in Year 1 many read simple texts for themselves. They recall the main events of their favourite stories and enjoy explaining what happens to the characters. Teachers provide additional reading work to be done at home linked to the activities being covered in the National Literacy Hour and this has a positive impact on the progress pupils make. By the end of the key stage the majority know the difference between fiction and non-fiction texts and are able to research information using the contents and index pages. Good progress is made in Key Stage 2 and the majority of pupils attain or exceed the national average by the end of the key stage. Pupils become more discerning readers with a wide range of authors and preferences for different types of texts. Pupils in Year 6 had enjoyed reading extracts from Dickens and Shakespeare as part of the Literacy Hour. They found the style of the authors difficult to read but all were able to make sense of the text. Good progress has been made in research skills and pupils scan texts quickly for main points. They recognise how authors create suspense in stories and are able to predict suitable endings. These skills make a positive contribution to progress in other subjects. For example, pupils have researched information on the solar system for homework and produced some good examples of informative writing. Teachers provide opportunities in history for locating facts from interesting sources to enable pupils to increase their confidence as they practise their skills.

85. The standard in writing is very good at the end of Key Stage 1 and this indicates the very good progress identified in the previous inspection has been maintained. Pupils quickly learn the functions and basic conventions of writing. Most make very good progress in the correct formation of letters and in using capital letters and full stops correctly in simple sentences. Teachers provide imaginative ways to present finished work and this encourages neat, careful handwriting. For example, in Year 2 book reviews have been written in simple pop-up books to make an interesting classroom display. By the end of the key stage all are writing unaided and higher attaining pupils write short stories that include correctly punctuated dialogues and descriptive elements. Good progress is made through Key Stage 2 and this reflects an improvement since the previous inspection when writing was generally satisfactory. The proportion of pupils attaining the national target level is above average. The school has extended the range of writing both in response to the results of national tests and the previous report. Pupils now have a good understanding of writing for different purposes. For example, in Year 5 as part of the history topic on Ancient Greeks pupils have written formal and informal letters recounting the daily events of a Greek soldier. Poetry is written in most classes and pupils used descriptive vocabulary and rhyme and the finished poems are often very good. By the end of the key stage the majority are joining-up their handwriting and spelling and punctuation are generally accurate. Stories are written to an appropriate structure and higher attaining pupils write in paragraphs and include very effective description and with events changing in time and place. Teachers provide opportunities to practise and refine their skills across the curriculum. Pupils record facts and results of investigations. For

example, in history pupils write in a diary style the details of the life of a chimney sweep in Victorian times. Bullet points and lists are used correctly in reports about the conditions in Victorian factories.

86. Pupils' attitudes to their work are good and often very good in Key Stage 1. Most pupils concentrate and enjoy the introduction to the Literacy Hour. They are responsive to questions and participate well in discussions. Most take pleasure and pride in their books and their writing. The vast majority settles quickly to tasks and work well unsupervised allowing teachers time to give more intensive support to other groups. Behaviour is very good and only starts to lapse if the introduction becomes too long and they start to get restless. Pupils appreciate the efforts of other pupils' work when it is shared with the class at the end of lessons.

87. The overall quality of teaching is good. In 87 per cent of lessons seen teaching was good and better and in 37 per cent of these it was very good. No teaching was less than satisfactory. In Key Stage 1, 75 per cent of the teaching seen was very good and the rest was satisfactory. All of the teaching seen in Key Stage 2 was good. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the Literacy Hour and have sufficient confidence to adapt lessons to meet the needs of the pupils or to adjust them in response to progress in previous lessons. Teacher expectations of behaviour and attitudes to work are every good throughout the school. In Key Stage 1 teachers have very high expectations of attainment and this has a significant impact on the very good progress made. Classroom organisation and management are good and lessons are conducted in an orderly atmosphere. Time is generally used well although on occasions too much time is spent on the introduction and the evaluation has to be done at a later time. Resources are appropriate and teachers select imaginative texts to interest the pupils. Computers are used for copying final scripts but in Key Stage 2 are underused for drafting and editing work. Classrooms are made very attractive by displays of work and useful guidelines of spelling and punctuation to encourage independent learning. Teachers are competent following the guidelines of the National Literacy Strategy and provide additional opportunities for extended writing and the requirements of the National Curriculum are met in full.

88. A very detailed analysis of provision and of the results of national tests has been effective in improving standards in the range of writing in Key Stage 2. Assessment procedures are now fully in place and used effectively to inform planning. Reading records are maintained well although the present system means teachers do not record progress in group reading during the lesson and this leads to some records lacking sufficient detail about the reading techniques pupils are using or the problems they are encountering. Resources are generally good although some books in the library are old and at present the library is underused for independent research.

Mathematics

89. The results of the 1999 statutory tests for seven-year old pupils were well above the national average and well above those for schools where pupils came from similar backgrounds. Although the number of pupils reaching the higher level was slightly down on the previous year, the trend over the last three years has been well above the national average. Inspection evidence confirms these high standards. Attainment by the age of eleven has varied considerably over recent years. In 1996 they were slightly above the national average, in 1997 they were well above and in 1998 they were around the national average. In 1999 the pupils attaining Level 4 was close to the national average but the attainment at the higher level was well below. The performance of the school was well below the national average for all schools and for schools with pupils of similar backgrounds. The results were affected by the number of pupils with special needs who joined the

school in Key Stage 2 who had not benefited from the good introduction to mathematics that other pupils experienced in Key Stage 1. Inspection evidence indicates attainment has improved and is now in line with the national average. Approximately three-quarters of the current Year 6 are working at the national average and marginally more than one quarter of pupils are working at the higher level. The implementation of the National Numeracy project has provided more detailed guidance for teaching mathematical skills. This new approach improved the teaching of mathematics and increased pupils' accuracy. This is now beginning to be observed in more challenging work being set and marking that is positive and includes appropriate guidance for further improvements. The school is well placed to achieve its locally agreed targets.

90. Very good progress is made in Key Stage 1. Many of the current Year 2 are already working at the higher levels which is well above the national standard. They use addition to calculate, for example $5+5+5+5=20$, then identify the link between addition and multiplication. Most pupils accurately sequence numbers and understand how to add 'one more' and 'two less' to make a two-digit number. Lower attaining pupils sequence numbers to 14 and add one or take 1 away. All recognise patterns of even numbers. The youngest higher attaining pupils order numbers in their correct sequence to 20 showing a good understanding of place position. Pupils of average ability recognise the value of the tens and units and collect blocks to represent a tens in numbers.

91. Throughout Key Stage 2 good progress is now being made by most pupils, including those with special educational needs. Younger pupils employ doubling techniques to multiply by two. By the end of the key stage pupils' numeracy skills are now more accurate. Pupils in Year 6 use formula to calculate the perimeters of regular four sided shapes. Other less advanced pupils calculate perimeters and others accurately measure the sides of compound shapes to find their perimeter. Pupils have good knowledge of place value to include tens of thousands, thousands, hundreds, tens and units and apply this to multiply and divide by ten and a hundred. They quickly and accurately identify patterns in sequences of numbers and have appropriate knowledge of negative numbers to move the pattern below zero. Most pupils accurately investigate equilateral triangles to create trapeziums then apply these skills to trapeziums to assemble hexagons. All pupils have developed accurate mental strategies to reach solutions to problems set during the warm up to their lesson. Many pupils use data handling techniques effectively in completing census work in Frodsham as part of their geography studies and the oldest show sound understanding of rotational symmetry.

92. These findings represent an improvement on those of the previous report, particularly in the school's work to ensure that pupils of all abilities in Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress.

93. Pupils enjoy mathematics and are responsive in lessons. They are keen to please and anxious to complete the tasks. The Year 2 pupils showed obvious pleasure and concentration using apparatus to collect sets of numbers linking continuous addition with multiplication. The oldest pupils required perseverance to identify a formula for their work to calculate the perimeter of a rectangle and were eager to test the new formula in new situations to assess its accuracy. In almost all lessons pupils listen attentively to their teachers, handle resources with care and behave well.

94. Overall the quality of teaching is good. It is best in Key Stage 1 when it is very good and at Key Stage 2 it is good. The predominance of good teaching arises from several factors. Teachers set clear tasks and published schemes are used only to support learning not to direct it. All teachers have good knowledge of the Numeracy Project and use it effectively to challenge the pupils. The mental mathematics strategy at the beginning of lessons is planned well and takes into account the range of abilities in the class. Very good use is made of support materials to help

pupils contribute to this aspect of the lesson. In many lessons there is a direct link between the 'mental maths' activity and the main core of the lesson. There is always effective planning which ensures pupils of all abilities are challenged by appropriately targeted work. Teachers are skilled in questioning techniques which they use to help pupils organise their learning and to assess their understanding. This information is fed back into future planning to ensure that the group work responds to pupils' levels of attainment. This use of assessment is particularly successful in Year 6 where the lessons consolidate learning prior to challenging the higher attaining pupils. The 'mental maths' strategy has promoted accuracy of calculation. Imaginative approaches to topics and the use of apparatus often captures the pupils' attention and demonstrates the teaching points very well.

95. Management of the subject is effective. There is a commercial scheme of work and good use is made of the National Numeracy Project. The requirements of the National Curriculum are fully met. National test results are analysed carefully and have identified a need for more challenging work in the middle years of Key Stage 2 if improvement is to be sustained. This is supported by the inspection evidence.

Science

96. In the 1999 national teacher assessments for seven year olds, the proportion of pupils attaining the national target level and the higher level was well above average. It was well above average when compared with similar schools. Inspection evidence confirms these high standards and indicates that levels identified in the previous inspection have been maintained. In the 1999 national Key Stage 2 tests, attainment was average when compared to all schools and similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the national target level was above the national average although the proportion of pupils exceeding this level was below average. Inspection evidence confirms that overall attainment is above average and the vast majority of pupils attain the level expected for their age. At Key Stage 2, although the proportion attaining the target level is high there has been a fall in the proportion of pupils attaining above this level.

97. The previous inspection highlighted a lack of a detailed scheme of work in Key Stage 2. This led to poor planning and much repetition and omission in pupils' work and the school has only just addressed this issue. Pupils in Year 6 have repeated several aspects of work in each year and have not built satisfactorily on these aspects. This particularly affects those pupils who are higher attainers and they have made insufficient progress over their time in the early part of Key Stage 2. However, the school has recently introduced a new scheme of work that provides well for the progressive teaching of skills and knowledge and all pupils are making at least sound progress. Pupils in Year 6 are now making good progress although this is hindered by the need to repeat some aspects of work to ensure that skills and knowledge are understood thoroughly. There was a lack of opportunities for challenging, investigative work at Key Stage 2 but this is no longer the case. All pupils, including those who are higher attainers and those who have special educational needs, are now appropriately challenged by opportunities to research information and to explore and test ideas independently.

98. In Key Stage 1 pupils make very good progress and at the end of the key stage they observe, discuss and carry out simple experiments to a good standard, beginning to understand that test conditions should be fair. They have sound knowledge in the full range of study on materials, physical processes and living things and are beginning to develop a scientific vocabulary. They learn about living things, such as how plants reproduce through seeds and pips and understand the need for healthy diets. They understand that materials have properties, that they can be changed

and that some changes are permanent. For example, Year 2 pupils experimenting with a range of materials, including aluminium foil, wood and sponge, discover that when squashing the sponge it always bounces back to its own shape but that when tearing aluminium foil it will not join itself up again. They experiment with simple electrical circuits and know how to make a bulb light up or a buzzer sound, such as when designing an alarm for a jewellery box they make in a joint science and design technology challenge. They record their findings well in a scientific manner, including tables and charts and make good use of their literacy skills in writing reports.

99. Through Key Stage 2 progress is now satisfactory and it is good at the end of the key stage. By the age of eleven, most pupils have a sound understanding of scientific processes and fair testing. They know that altering conditions affects the results of experiments. They make sensible, reasoned predictions and record their results independently. Scientific terminology is understood and used confidently. Pupils record their work in a good variety of scientific forms, such as reports and tables. Pupils have sound knowledge and understanding of living things, the properties of materials and physical processes. They classify living creatures and plants and understand how they are adapted for their habitats. Pupils know about food chains and the importance of maintaining these in our environment. They understand the need for healthy diets and a balance of nutrients and make good use of numeracy skills when measuring the effects of exercise upon the body. They have satisfactory knowledge of materials and learn how solutions and mixtures can be separated. Pupils know about the solar system and understand about light sources and electricity. They test the effects of gravity and time how long it takes for different materials to fall. Pupils who have special educational needs take a full part in lessons and make similar progress to other pupils.

100. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work in Key Stage 1; in particular they enjoy their opportunities to experiment independently. They listen carefully to teachers and make sensible comments. Pupils in Key Stage 2 generally have good attitudes to learning but a significant number in Year 6 say that they are bored with having repeated the same topics over and over again. They say they enjoy the variety of new topics and are enthusiastic about independent work in these areas, such as when experimenting with solutions. Pupils work very well in groups, sharing resources sensibly and behaving well. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated well into lessons, taking a full part in investigations.

101. The quality of teaching is very good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory overall in Key Stage 2, though good in lessons observed. It was only possible to observe two lessons in each key stage during the inspection and judgements are supported by examination of pupils' work and discussions with pupils. Teachers in Key Stage 1 have very good subject knowledge, whilst for those in Key Stage 2 this is sound overall, and improving through the introduction of the new and supportive scheme of work. Teachers use their knowledge well in planning a good range of well timed investigative activities to meet the targets set for their lessons. Teachers are generally well organised and manage their classes well, making good use of resources. In the best lessons, teachers have very good subject knowledge and very high expectations. They plan challenging lessons, which are conducted at a brisk pace. They constantly assess their pupils and immediately guide them on how to improve and offer further challenge. Although activities are usually the same for all pupils there is ample challenge for those who are higher attainers through independent research and experimentation. Support for those who have special educational needs is good and tasks set match their need.

102. The introduction of a new scheme of work and additional resources have had a positive impact on the teaching of science and pupils' progress. There are good procedures for both formal

and informal assessment, and the information gained is used well in planning future work. It has taken some time to improve the curriculum in Key Stage 2 since the criticisms of the previous inspection but recent developments are now beginning to have a positive impact on teaching and learning. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met in full. The co-ordinator has limited opportunity to monitor implementation of the new scheme of work in class to evaluate the continuity of learning is sustained.

OTHER SUBJECTS

Information technology

103. It was only possible to see two lessons during the inspection and evidence is also based on observations of pupils working independently, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils and the subject co-ordinator. At age seven, attainment is a little above the national targets but at age eleven attainment is well below the levels expected.

104. In Key Stage 1, pupils experience the full range of the subject curriculum and at age seven attain appropriate levels in data handling, control, and in using simulations to make decisions and solve problems. They make good progress in operating computers, word processing and the use of art programs. They develop above average skills in these areas. Pupils access programs using icons and save and print their work. They use programs to support other subjects such as literacy and numeracy games and puzzles and record work in many subjects. For example, pupils in Year 2 located information about Florence Nightingale and wrote word-processed reports of The Great Fire of London in history. They use graphics programs with confidence and good control, producing good pictures. They use various painting tools, such as the spray gun and the pencil tool and change the patterns these tools produce to achieve a desired effect. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when attainment was satisfactory.

105. In Key Stage 2 pupils have few opportunities to work on computers and do not cover the areas of learning prescribed by the National Curriculum. They do not build upon the skills learned in Key Stage 1 and make poor progress. At age eleven attainment is well below the level expected in all aspects of the subject. The previous report stated that standards were satisfactory but, currently, even in word processing where pupils do have limited experience, attainment is well below average. Pupils enter their work, previously drafted by hand, and enhance it by changing font sizes, colours and styles but they cannot highlight, copy and move text or insert pictures. They also have some limited opportunities to apply their good literacy skills in extracting information from a CD-ROM in some subjects. Pupils do not enter data and produce reports or graphs, although those in Year 5 are just beginning to learn about spreadsheets. Year 6 pupils have not used the robotic toy and there are no more advanced control units in school to build upon the Key Stage 1 experiences. They do not use simulation programs to solve problems. There is no equipment with which pupils can monitor external events, such as temperatures and wind speeds in their studies of the weather. Pupils in Year 6 are beginning to learn about multimedia programs and have designed their own Internet websites in preparation for an Internet link. Pupils use a range of other equipment, such as cassette recorders, confidently. Pupils with special educational needs use computers successfully to support literacy skills, through spelling and punctuation games.

106. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make similar progress to others of the same age.

107. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good in both key stages. Boys and girls work well together, with good concentration. Pupils persist when difficulties arise and willingly share their knowledge and understanding with others. Behaviour is good and the expensive equipment is well cared for. All pupils have equal access to the subject. In Key Stage 2 only pupils with special educational needs were seen using computers to reinforce their spelling skills.

108. In Key Stage 1 teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and make good use of time in teaching skills directly to the whole class. They involve pupils fully in these whole class sessions and manage the class well. Teachers integrate information technology well into other subjects and resources are well used throughout the day. In Key Stage 2 teaching is unsatisfactory because most teachers do not teach all aspects of information technology and fail to use it in most lessons. During the inspection, other than a direct teaching lesson in Year 5 and occasional use by special needs pupils, the computers were not seen in use. The direct teaching of skills in the Year 5 lesson on spreadsheets was good. The teacher made good use of time and resources and motivated pupils well. Teachers in Key Stage 2 have weak subject knowledge because they have had insufficient resources and have not developed the expertise needed in many areas of the curriculum.

109. The school has recently adopted a scheme of work which, when fully implemented, will provide a good framework for the progressive teaching of skills. A new information technology suite is currently being established which will provide sufficient up-to-date computers. Training is planned both for the co-ordinator and for the whole staff. At present there are no opportunities for the co-ordinator to support other teachers or monitor classroom implementation of the new scheme. However, the school is now in a position to make the required improvements to the subject.

Religious education

110. Pupils make good progress in both key stages. Attainment is in line with the agreed syllabus by the age of seven and most pupils have exceeded this level when they leave school. These findings indicate an improvement on standards achieved in the previous inspection report. Work in pupils' books features stories from both the New and Old Testaments which includes The Creation and stories from the books of Genesis and Exodus. The infant pupils are gaining introductory knowledge of the Hindu religion and its festival of Divali. The older pupils are beginning to ask questions about some Old Testament stories. Some pupils are questioning the veracity of the story of Noah but do not have opportunities to follow their train of thought. Pupils in Key Stage 2 know about the miracles Jesus performed and study events of the Marriage Feast of Cana. They begin to reflect on the Christian belief that Jesus received His power from God the Father. Other pupils experience moments of silence when the teacher uses candles to create reflective moments, asking the pupils to remember special events in their lives. The oldest pupils know the main events surrounding the death and resurrection of Christ and begin to analyse them. All pupils have a developing knowledge of Christianity and non-Christian religions. They show knowledge and appreciation of sacred artefacts and books from these religions.

111. Pupils respond positively to religious thinking. They contribute sensibly to discussions and role-play and listen attentively to the thoughts of classmates. Many are organising, developing and confirming their beliefs about such questions as the presence of God as detailed in the sacred books and festivals.

112. The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 2 and satisfactory in Key Stage 1. Detailed planning is guided by the locally agreed syllabus and supports the lessons. However, the planning

at Key Stage 1 does not take into account the ability of some older pupils who want to challenge such events as the story of Noah. Teachers ask challenging questions to extend pupils' thinking and the high quality of display and use of sacred artefacts aids the depth and insight to lessons. A good variety of teaching techniques is used, particularly role play, and the oldest pupils use Circle Time very effectively to debate and discuss their developing knowledge of the story of Christ's death. These practical activities ensure pupils with special educational needs and the younger pupils in Key Stage 1 who have English as an additional language are able to take a full part in lessons and make the same progress as other pupils.

113. The recently established scheme of work effectively highlights the school's response to the agreed syllabus and meets fully its requirements. The very effective display in many classrooms strongly supports the religious theme being studied. The subject makes a very good contribution to the school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Art

114. Standards in art are very high. Since the previous inspection standards have been maintained at Key Stage 1 and improved in Key Stage 2 and inspection evidence indicates that at both key stages, pupils make very good progress and achieve results well beyond those found in most schools. Teachers value the contributions of pupils with special educational needs and this builds up their self-confidence and ensures they make very good progress in developing their artistic skills. The improvement in Key Stage 2 reflects the provision of more adult support and the use of specialist artists working with both teachers and pupils.

115. At Key Stage 1, teachers have high expectations of pupils' attainment and introduce a wide range of media. They use artistic terminology accurately and pupils respond well and discuss primary and secondary colours confidently. In Year 1, pupils discuss shades of colours and make sensible choices when mixing colours. They know that adding white lightens colours. Very good progress is made and in Year 2 pupils talk about "neutral" colours and "tints" as they lighten and darken colours to create a range of shades. Artistic skills are taught carefully by teacher demonstration and pupils have made good progress in pencil control and brushwork. Great care is taken to produce good results. Parents help when pupils go on visits in the locality to do observational drawing and the detail included in the houses painted by pupils in Year 1 is excellent. As at the time of the previous inspection a wide range of famous artists are studied in the school. During the inspection pupils in Year 2 painted bold patterns in vibrant colours to reflect the work of Paul Klee. Higher attaining pupils recalled the word "impasto" and were happy to explain it means working on a raised texture.

116. These promising beginnings are built on well throughout Key Stage 2 and pupils make very good progress. Although it was only possible to see one art lesson the displays on the walls and the co-ordinator's portfolio of pupils' work provided good evidence of the wide range of artistic experiences offered to the pupils. In Year 3, pupils have investigated how a piece of perspex can be used effectively to print patterns. Pastels and silhouettes have been used imaginatively in Year 4 to create striking skylines of the blitz as part of their history topic. A visiting artist worked with pupils in Year 6 to give the pupils experience of working on large scale paintings. The work of Chagall was the focus for this work and the pupils used paint, sponges and pastels to produce some very striking pictures that are attractively displayed in the school hall. Pupils' knowledge of other artists is further extended in Year 6 when pupils extended their observational skills when drawing

detailed patterns in the style of William Morris. The additional adult support was used most effectively in Year 6 when pupils worked in groups on a large class collage reflecting the work of L. S. Lowry. Colours have been mixed effectively to achieve Lowry's sombre mood and the pupils' characters successfully capture the artist's style. The scheme of work and photographic evidence indicates pupils have experience of three dimensional work and working with textiles although it was not possible to see this during the inspection.

117. Pupils respond very well. At both key stages, pupils work with care and concentration. They clearly enjoy what they do and in Year 6 are beginning to identify their problems and suggest how these can be overcome. Pupils are justifiably proud of their work and are eager to explain the methods used to achieve the high standards on display. Resources are used carefully and pupils readily accept responsibility for tidying the classroom at the end of lessons.

118. The quality of teaching in lessons seen was good and in one lesson in Key Stage 1 it was very good. Evidence on display indicates pupils often benefit from very good teaching from visiting artists. Teachers have good subject knowledge and ensure lessons are prepared well. They take time to research information on artists and provide pupils with appropriate insight into the life and times of the artist. Teachers give good advice as pupils are working and as a result pupils work carefully and evaluate and modify their work as it progresses. Teachers use time and resources well and include opportunities to evaluate work at the end of lessons. Classroom organisation and management of pupils is very good and lessons are carried out in a busy but orderly atmosphere. The co-ordinator has successfully implemented a scheme of work to ensure skills are taught thoroughly and teachers effectively build on prior learning.

119. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate the beauty of colour and the world around them and their experiences exhibiting their work in a local art exhibition and their knowledge of famous artists ensures the subject makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Design and technology

120. It was only possible to see three lessons during the inspection and evidence is largely drawn from scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning and from discussion with pupils and the subject co-ordinator.

121. Pupils make satisfactory progress in both key stages and develop satisfactory skills in both designing and making, which are similar to those of other pupils of the same age. This represents a significant improvement from the previous inspection when designing was a weakness. Most of the work completed is based upon paper and card and pupils have few opportunities to use other materials.

122. In Key Stage 1 pupils plan their designs and select and list the resources needed. They use simple tools safely to cut materials and fix them together appropriately, with glue and fasteners. They then evaluate the success of their products.

123. Teachers build on these skills through Key Stage 2. Pupils start to consider the purpose of the product and the recipient. For example, Year 3 pupils designing a photograph frame for a friend or relative knew that it would be finished in different ways, such as by adding flowers for their mother or football images for a grandad who is a football supporter. They consider carefully the strength needed in materials and test their hypotheses. For example, when Year 6 designed and made bridges they first investigated how using the paper in different ways enhanced its strength.

They then make and test their product and evaluate its success, considering how it might be improved. They increasingly widen their experiences in using a satisfactory range of tools. The planning process contributes well to the development of literacy skills and the making process provides satisfactory opportunities for pupils to apply measuring skills.

124. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, take a full part in lessons and discuss their work enthusiastically. They enjoy the subject and have good opportunities to share ideas and support each other in group tasks.

125. Evidence indicates that teaching is at least satisfactory at both key stages. Teachers plan suitably for both designing and making within topics and provide for the progressive development of skills. They promote satisfactory opportunities to develop both literacy and numeracy skills. They sometimes provide extra motivation by providing a class challenge, such as when Year 2 pupils were challenged to produce an alarm device containing an electrical circuit to prevent Burglar Bill stealing their jewels.

126. The scheme of work ensures progressive teaching of skills and this is effective in supporting teachers in planning. The range of resources is adequate, although materials are largely limited to paper and card. Overall there has been good improvement since the previous inspection in the curriculum provided and in the range of resources, which are now adequate.

Geography

127. Throughout the school progress is satisfactory and standards are similar to those found in most schools. This reflects a small improvement on the previous report where standards were found to be more variable. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language receive appropriate support and also make satisfactory progress relative to their ability.

128. In Key Stage 1, pupils study exotic fruits and locate on maps where they grow naturally. The younger pupils carry out fieldwork to identify the range of styles of houses and homes in the area. They produce good paintings and drawings to record their information. Steady progress is made as pupils acquire deeper knowledge of their own locality and begin to use atlases to identify countries where exotic fruits are grown.

129. In Key Stage 2, the oldest pupils use secondary sources of evidence accurately to compare temperature ranges between London and Athens. They understand the process of erosion and deposition and how this occurs in rivers. Pupils study the Twentieth Century issues of pollution and conservation and how these issues affect the lives of people today. Pupils make sound progress in developing geographical skills. For example, pupils involve themselves in field-work to identify the adequacy of car parking in Frodsham, the traffic flow and the interaction between the pedestrian and the car. During the inspection pupils in Year 5 made good progress when analysing the results of questionnaires. They used the data correctly to deduce how the environment is affected by traffic and how the influence of mankind has changed the features of places.

130. During the lessons observed, pupils worked hard to complete their projects. They listen carefully to the teachers' explanations and show good levels of concentration. The older pupils argue convincingly about the issues surrounding the provision of car parking in Frodsham and the possible extension of provision. They accurately build up a large map of the area on which they record their information. They use a good range of media including sketches and photographs.

131. Insufficient teaching was observed during the inspection to make an overall judgement of its quality. The examination of teachers' planning together with the work in pupils' books and on display indicates that now the teaching is at least satisfactory which is an improvement on the general findings included in the previous report.

History

132. Standards in history have improved since the previous inspection and are above those found in most schools. Progress is good in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2.

133. Younger pupils learn about famous people and gain knowledge about events of the past. They make good progress in gaining a sense of the passing of time. In Key Stage 1, pupils write and draw expressively about the Great Fire of London and know that Samuel Pepys recorded the events of those times in his diaries. The younger pupils identify the differences between old and new teddy bears. Higher attaining pupils show empathy in their writing about old bears with other pupils writing simple sentences and producing sketches. Pupils with special needs produce pictures of old and new teddies and, with help, organise simple sentences.

134. Very good progress is made in Key Stage 2 with pupils becoming increasingly proficient in identifying and analysing historical evidence. They make very good gains in knowledge and empathy. For example, the younger pupils have clear insights into what it was like to be an evacuee. Year 4 pupils have gained very good insights into what it was like to live in the United Kingdom during World War II. The display of information around both classrooms and corridors, which includes a large townscape painted in the style of L.S.Lowry and a full size Anderson shelter, indicates that pupils have very good knowledge of these historical periods. The oldest pupils know about the inventions and improvements made during Victorian times. Year 6 pupils show good knowledge of architectural styles in Victorian times. Very good progress is made in developing skills of historical investigation. Pupils involve themselves in field work to identify those buildings constructed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, recording their evidence through intricate sketches. In school they very effectively use secondary evidence in the form of Victorian and modern photographs to identify familiar places in Frodsham. Higher attaining pupils describe the changes made to familiar places and identify possible reasons why this has happened.

135. Almost all pupils demonstrate good or very good attitudes towards their work. They listen attentively to explanations and volunteer to answer questions or share their knowledge and ideas. The oldest pupils quickly organise themselves into small groups to scrutinise photographic evidence about Frodsham 100 years ago. They handle these resources with great care and appreciate their value.

136. Teaching in history is good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. This indicates further improvement in the quality of teaching found in the previous inspection. Lessons are prepared well to capture the pupils' interest. Pupils in Year 4 and Year 6 show great interest in the authentic historical artefacts they are examining. In classroom discussions pupils are encouraged to give full explanations which develops their speaking skills. Good use is made of role-play, fieldwork, collaborative discussion and art techniques to help pupils understand the historical knowledge and to develop their skills. Teachers have good subject knowledge and teach the subject through an investigative approach. Classroom organisation is good and lessons move forward at a brisk pace.

137. A new scheme of work has been introduced and the school has plans for evaluation in the 2000/2001 academic year. The co-ordinator is effectively managing this change but does not have any time to observe and evaluate the effect of the changes. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

• **Music**

138. Although it was only possible to see two lessons during the inspection evidence was supported by review of the new scheme of work, singing in assemblies and attendance at the school choir practice. Good progress is made throughout both key stages and this reflects an improvement since the previous inspection. The weakness in planning has been resolved as the school has implemented a detailed scheme of work.

139. In Key Stage 1 pupils understand "loud" and "soft" and sing and play percussion instruments accordingly. They listen carefully to a story and select suitable instruments to represent the noises of animals. They know the names of most of the instruments. They understand that symbols can represent sounds and give good reasons for playing certain sounds for each symbol. Good progress is made and these skills of simple composition are successfully extended in Key Stage 2. Pupils start to understand that music can represent moods and feelings. They work together very well in small groups composing pieces of music. Some of these pieces include repeating patterns and pupils refer to them as "ostinato" and they are performed in a very accomplished manner. Pupils change the quality and speed of their voices to create a spooky atmosphere and successfully introduce contrasting sounds to represent a tranquil scene. Good progress is made in recording their compositions and pupils recognise musical notation. Skills of appraising music are developing as pupils listen to different groups and offer constructive comments. Displays of pupils' work indicate pupils have listened closely to music. They have given appropriate titles to the music they heard, correctly identifying different instruments as well as recognising the mood created by the music. The previous inspection identified singing in assembly as sound and this has improved and is good. Pupils enjoy singing and during the inspection sang tunefully with good volume. Some hymns had alternative sections and actions and these were performed well and were an enjoyable part of the assembly.

140. Pupils enjoy singing and playing musical instruments. They maintain good levels of concentration as they persevere to compose short pieces of music. Collaboration with others is very good as pupils share ideas and accept the contributions of others. In Key Stage 1 pupils with English as an additional language are fully involved and this effectively builds their self-confidence as well as their language skills.

141. In the lessons seen teaching was good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' attainment. Musical terminology is used confidently and this ensures pupils use these terms correctly. Teachers include an appropriate mixture of composing, singing, listening and playing instruments and lessons are conducted at a lively, brisk pace. At Key Stage 1, adult support is used well to ensure all pupils have a chance to play an instrument. Time is generally used well although sometimes too many activities are planned for the lesson and then tasks are not completed.

142. The choir is flourishing and has approximately 50 members. They know a range of songs from memory and some pupils are confident singing solos. They perform in public for local charities and have sung in local music festivals. These opportunities enrich the subject and ensure

it makes a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

Physical education

143. Over their time in the school, pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress in physical education. This is similar to that identified in the previous inspection.

144. At Key Stage 1, it was only possible to see one indoor games lesson. Pupils made satisfactory progress in throwing and rolling a ball and understand the need to watch the ball carefully. They are able to keep a ball under control when dribbling round an obstacle course using a hockey stick. Higher attaining pupils aim carefully and are successful in scoring a goal in a small group situation. However, others do not learn to hold the stick correctly and their progress is restricted by having insufficient time to practise this skill before another task is introduced.

145. At Key Stage 2, pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their basic games skills. By the end of the key stage pupils use these skills in small games of netball. They use space well and dodge away from opponents to be in a good space to receive the ball. They catch and throw with increasing accuracy. Rules are obeyed and pupils understand the need for fair play. In gymnastics in Key Stage 2 pupils make satisfactory progress in finding different ways to travel and in performing jumps and rolls. They successfully combine these movements into a short sequence. However, pupils give insufficient attention to finishing their performances and do not plan suitable movements to combine the different actions in their sequences. Most pupils work well with a partner and adapt their movements appropriately. Pupils understand exercise is beneficial for the body. Pupils have opportunities to experience traditional country dancing as well as movement and music. They quickly learn the style of Irish dancing and of the steps and movements involved. In other lessons they understand imagery can be represented in movement and respond imaginatively to music.

146. Pupils take part energetically in physical education lessons. Behaviour is good even on cold days when tasks involve waiting for a turn. Pupils help each other and take turns. Pupils understand the need to consider the safety of other pupils. Many pupils are confident demonstrating their skills in front of the class.

147. In the lessons seen the teaching was satisfactory overall at both key stages. Lessons follow an appropriate structure and include activities to warm-up and cool-down. Pupil demonstrations are used effectively to clarify a task and to celebrate achievement although teachers do not always allow pupils to reflect and improve their skills. On occasions too many tasks are included and new activities are introduced before pupils have consolidated an earlier skill. Tasks do not always extend pupils' skills and particularly in Key Stage 2 pupils could work at more challenging activities. Teachers join in to demonstrate and provide good role models for pupils. Lessons are organised well and management of pupils is always good.

148. Teachers give generously of their time to organise a range of out-of-school activities. Parents also provide regular support coaching the football teams. Pupils have opportunities to be involved in football, netball, cross-country, cricket, rounders and athletics. Competitive matches against other schools are arranged. The dance club is also popular and visiting dance groups work with pupils. These activities ensure the subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.

· **Swimming**

149. The inspection of this school included a focussed view of swimming which is reported below. At the present time the pupils do not have an opportunity to go swimming. This has been the situation in the school for a long time as there have been no facilities available within travelling distance. The school has carried out a survey of the pupils' swimming abilities when they have reviewed the physical education curriculum. In 1998 and 1999 the school estimated 95 per cent of pupils were able to swim 25 metres. The situation is to change in the spring term 2000 as the Town Council has extended the use of the swimming pool at a nearby secondary school and is to provide funding for transport. The school has targeted the pupils in the early stages of Key Stage 2 to ensure the pupils will benefit from this tuition and any less confident swimmers may have the opportunity to continue the lessons as they move through the school.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

150. The inspection was carried out by a team of four inspectors, one of whom was a lay inspector. A combined number of 14.5 days was spent in the school gathering information.

The inspection team:

- observed 53 lessons or parts of lessons;
- spent 36 hours observing lessons and looking at pupils' work;
- recorded another 15 hours of observations including attendance at assemblies, registration periods, extra-curricular activities, break and lunchtime activities of pupils and discussions with the headteacher, governors, staff and other visitors involved with the school;
- observed pupils arrive and depart from school;
- heard pupils of different ages and abilities read from fiction and non-fiction books;
- talked with pupils at the school;
- reviewed written work of a representative sample of three pupils from each year;
- analysed the policy documents, teacher planning files, pupils' records, attendance registers for the whole year, the school development plan and budget figures;
- held discussions with the headteacher, members of staff, the chair of the governing body, other governors and many parents during the week;
- held a meeting prior to the inspection attended by nine parents and considered 66 responses from parents to questionnaires asking about their views of the school.

DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of fit pupils eligib free school
YR – Y6	204	3	20	17

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.85

Education support staff (YR – Y6)

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked each week	58.3

Average class size:	29.1
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Financial data

Financial year:	1999
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	£
Total Income	294586
Total Expenditure	314740
Expenditure per pupil	1542.84
Balance brought forward from previous year	31366
Balance carried forward to next year	11212

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:
Number of questionnaires returned:

204
66

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	26	61	6	3	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	34	61	1	4	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	15	61	23	1	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	17	54	14	15	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	24	56	11	9	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	24	61	14	1	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	27	58	9	3	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	18	53	8	20	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	32	61	6	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	38	61	1	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	33	59	8	0	0