

INSPECTION REPORT

Delamere CE Primary School
Kelsall, Tarporley

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique Reference Number: 111259
School Inspection Number: 187416

Headteacher: Mrs P Luker

Reporting inspector: Mr E Jackson
3108

Dates of inspection: 20 – 22 September 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707069

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:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Stoney Lane Delamere Kelsall, Tarporley Cheshire CW6 0ST
Telephone number:	01829 751450
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs R Unsworth
Date of previous inspection:	March 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
E Jackson, Registered Inspector	Mathematics; science; information technology; religious education; design technology; art; physical education.	Characteristics of the school; attainment and progress; attitudes, behaviour and personal development; teaching; spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; management and leadership; efficiency.
M Roscoe, Lay Inspector	Equality of opportunity.	Attendance; support, guidance and pupils' welfare; partnership with parents and the community.
K Hurt, Team Inspector	English; Under-fives; geography; history; music; special educational needs.	curriculum and assessment; staffing, accommodation and learning resources

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MAIN FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The school has maintained its above average results in national tests in English, mathematics and science for 11-year-olds, despite wide variations in the levels of entry attainment.
- The quality of education offered is good, supported by good teaching, particularly at lower Key Stage 2.
- There is a good working atmosphere, and the school is secure and friendly.
- The whole staff team works very well together, flexibly adopting a variety of roles.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are good, and the information gained is used well in curricular planning
- Provision for multi-cultural and multi-faith development is good.

WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS WEAKNESSES

- I. The Headteacher has had insufficient time away from her teaching duties to enable her to monitor the work of the whole school effectively, and to ensure that information for and communication with parents are fully developed
- II. Long-term strategic planning does not take sufficient account of all the factors involved in setting priorities for the school.
- III. The layout of the accommodation in the main school severely limits the flexibility of teaching and learning, and there are no spaces where quiet group work or confidential conversations may be held.

Delamere CE Primary offers a good standard of education, where weaknesses are far outweighed by what the school does well. The weaknesses identified will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents and guardians of pupils at the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory improvements based on the key issues from the last inspection, and has gone a long way to implementing its action plan. National initiatives and changes to curriculum requirements have overtaken the school's schedule for the development of its own detailed schemes of work in some subjects, where it has sensibly paused to await the publication of new national curriculum guidance in the year 2000. Standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science, averaged over the past three years, have been maintained at above average levels, and there is comprehensive guidance available for teachers in most subjects. They have implemented the National Literacy Strategy well, and have made a good start to the adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy. As recommended in the last report, the teachers have taken responsibility for the coordination of the subjects between them, involving the headteacher, for instance, in overseeing five subjects as coordinator, as well as her overarching school-wide management role. Resources for Design and Technology and music have been improved, and the teaching of music is now in line with National Curriculum guidance. With the support of governors, the staff have set up a comprehensive range of tests for pupils, which are reviewed as part of the evaluation and monitoring of pupils' standards of attainment and the quality of education offered. Multi-cultural and multi-faith elements have been enhanced, so that there is now good provision. Whilst some adaptations and improvements have been made to the accommodation, particularly for storage, it is still unsatisfactory overall.

The school is satisfactorily placed to implement further plans for improvement.

STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS

*As there were fewer than 10 pupils in the Year 6 cohorts in 1998 and in 1999, direct comparisons with national averages and results in similar schools are unreliable.

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

The small cohort size suggests caution in interpreting test results, as there are often wide fluctuations in the overall levels of attainment in such small groups, and comparisons against national and other data are unreliable. However, although there were only seven Year 6 pupils who took the 1999 national tests, the school's results have returned to the 1997 levels, after a fall in 1998. Trends in attainment over the three years to 1999 show the school's results to be well above national and similar school averages at the expected Level 4, although below average overall at the higher level 5. Such comparisons must be treated with caution, however.

From the scrutiny of pupils' work saved from last year, and the lesson observations made during the inspection, the standards attained by the age of five are broadly in line with that of pupils of a similar age. At the end of Key Stage 1, recent results in national tests in English and mathematics have been below the national average, and well below those in similar schools, but reflect satisfactory progress overall. This judgement is based on the levels of attainment for those groups at entry to the school, from entry level assessments. Only six Year 2 pupils took the tests in 1999, when the results showed improvement. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science are above average, although standards in reading are much better than in writing. In information technology pupils at both key stages attain standards in line with those expected for their age, and in religious education they attain good standards against the expectations in the locally Agreed Syllabus. In the other subjects of the curriculum, standards and progress are generally in line with those expected of pupils of primary age.

QUALITY OF TEACHING

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 – 7 years	7 – 11 years
English	Sound	Sound	Good
Mathematics	Sound	Good	Good
Science	NA	Good	Good
Information Technology	NA	*	Sound
Religious education	NA	*	Good
Other subjects	Sound	Sound	Sound

IV. No teaching seen

Teaching is always at least sound. It is good in over half of lessons, and it is occasionally very good. Teaching leads to satisfactory and often good progress, particularly for pupils in lower Key Stage 2.

During the inspection, the class containing the reception and Key Stage 1 pupils was taught for two of the three days by a supply teacher, as the class teacher was absent. However, the teaching seen was always at least satisfactory, and it was good in one in three lessons. The youngest pupils in the reception year often received good support, and the teacher was ably assisted here by a newly appointed classroom support assistant. At Key Stage 2, six in ten lessons observed were good, with the occasional very good lesson, and teaching was never less than satisfactory. Teaching at

lower Key Stage 2 is almost always good or better.

The best teaching includes good explanation by the teacher of what is to be learned, well-planned activities, which engage the pupils' interest, good control, and good use of resources. In some English lessons at both key stages, however, teachers' expectations of the pupils' standards of written work are not high enough.

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

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good in lessons and around the school; a few pupils with behavioural special needs are helped skilfully by staff to improve their attitude to cooperation with others, and to their own learning.
Attendance	Good; above the national average.
Ethos*	There is a purposeful working atmosphere, and the happy, secure learning environment is welcomed by parents.
Leadership management	and Satisfactory. The headteacher leads the staff team well, and is well supported by staff and governors, but has had no time away from class teaching duties for the last year in order to monitor the school's work, and to keep parents fully informed. Development planning is sound, but insufficient weight is given to some important factors when setting priorities.
Curriculum	Broad, balanced and relevant; good planning for lessons; good range of extra-curricular activities.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Mainly good. Spiritual development is satisfactory overall, but is better in Religious Education lessons than in assemblies. Social, moral, and cultural development is good.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	and Teaching staffing is generous, and there are sufficient support staff; resources are generally adequate, although there is insufficient large play equipment for the under-fives, and the reference library is also inadequate; the internal accommodation in the main building is unsatisfactory, and does not allow sufficient flexibility in teaching.
Value for money	The overall standards attained are generally above average, and the quality of education is good. The cost per pupil is well above the national average. The school gives sound value for money.

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

THE PARENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What most parents like about the school

- V. it has a caring, friendly atmosphere, and their children enjoy school
- VI. they are encouraged to play an active part in its life, and the staff are approachable, keeping parents well-informed about their children's progress
- VII. high standards of behaviour are encouraged and achieved
- VIII. there is a good range of after-school activities

What some parents are not happy about

- IX. the school's response to their concerns, or
- X. the amount of information they receive about what
- XI. the variability of homework expectations between

At the meeting and through a questionnaire, parents were pleased with the caring, friendly atmosphere of the school, and the pupils' standards of attainment and progress. They feel that the school promotes the values and attitudes they support well, and generally achieves high standards of behaviour. There was some discussion as to the school's response to complaints, and the consistency of its approach to matters of discipline, including bullying, with a minority expressing concern regarding specific issues. Written reports on pupils' progress were praised, as was the general level of information provided for parents, such as in the welcome pack for new parents. There was some confusion for some parents as to the school's current approach to the teaching of reading, although those who had attended a meeting to discuss this with the teachers had found it helpful. Most parents are pleased with the extra-curricular opportunities available for their children, and feel that they enjoy coming to school.

Overall, the inspection confirms the parents' positive views of the school. The overall quality of information for parents, including the prospectus and general curricular information, could be improved, however.

A few parents spoke to inspectors individually, criticising the school's handling of complaints, and some disciplinary matters. They felt that the school was not sufficiently sensitive to the importance of the issues involved. However, an equivalent number of parents praised the school and the time and trouble taken by the staff to look after and teach their children, and deal with parental concerns.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

To further improve the pupils' standards of attainment, and the quality of education provided, the governors, headteacher and staff should :

1. ensure that the headteacher has sufficient time free from direct teaching duties to enable her to
 - a. monitor the effectiveness of all teaching, and pupils' work;
 - b. improve overall communication with parents, including the information they receive about the work their children are engaged in; (paragraphs 38; 40; 57; 60; 61)

1. when reviewing the School Development Plan, consider a full range of options for the strategic use of resources to fulfil the agreed aims, and provide high quality education, within the allocated budget: this should include class size, staffing, and the flexible groupings of pupils, as well as alternative sources of finance; (64; 70; 71))

3. explore how best to maximise the available accommodation in order to create viable teaching areas, including a suitable space for physical education, and other areas for quiet or confidential work or discussion. (67; 74; 141)

The governors may also wish to consider the following points for further development, alongside the key issues:

- i. setting higher expectations for the standard of pupils' writing, including their handwriting and presentation, within the targets for the literacy

ii.

reviewing and rewriting the school's prospects and aims in line with the school's current ethos and aspirations;
(57)

cy
strat
egy;
(80;
92;
93)

iii.

updating the child protection policy and procedures.(55)

iii. **INTRODUCTION**

iii. **Characteristics of the school**

1.This small Church of England primary school is housed in a Grade 2 listed building with an extra "mobile" classroom, having extensive grounds which include a fine Victorian garden and a separate wildlife area, and good playgrounds. It is on the main Chester to Northwich road, in the county of Cheshire. It has few houses close by, and its catchment covers a wide area. Many of the pupils joining the reception class have attended the private nursery in the converted school house in the grounds.

2.Socio-economic indicators locally vary widely, and the incidence of free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. There are no pupils learning English as an additional language, and the number of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is well below average nationally, though similar to most schools in the county. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above average nationally and locally. There is one pupil with a statement of special educational need, which puts the school above the national average in percentage terms. Of the 51 pupils on roll, 39 are boys, which is an unusual proportion in a mixed primary school. The number on roll has fallen slightly over the last five years, but has begun to grow again this year.

3.The attainment of pupils on entry to the school varies considerably from year to year, as the cohorts are so small. In the last few years it has been broadly average, but covers a wide range, with some very high attaining pupils, and some with moderate learning difficulties. One year group has 50% of its pupils with special educational needs. The attainment of cohorts moving through the school is also affected by those who join the school after the reception year, many of whom have had difficulties in their previous school. There are also, however, high attaining pupils joining the school from other schools, or because their families have moved into the area. Most pupils begin school part time in the September of the year they become five, attending full-time after a few weeks' induction.

4.The school's aims reflect its Church of England status, and seek to encourage the ability in its pupils to persevere and to experience success, working independently and cooperatively. The school seeks to offer a balanced and rounded education, with first-hand experience a priority, including regular visits and field trips, where pupils develop an understanding of the environment as a whole, their place in it and their responsibilities towards it. The current priorities are to maintain the number of pupils above 50, and to maintain three classes if possible. The targets in the literacy and numeracy strategies include increasing the number of pupils attaining higher than expected levels in national tests at the end of both key stages.

4. Key indicators

The tables usually included here, showing the school's results in national tests at the end of both key stages compared to national averages, have been omitted, as there were less than 10 pupils in the cohorts of pupils who took the tests in both 1998 and in 1999.

4. Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:			%
	Authorised	School	5
	Absence	National comparative data	5.7
	Unauthorised	School	0
	Absence	National comparative data	0.5

4.

4. Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:		Number
	Fixed period	0
	Permanent	0

4. Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	4
	Satisfactory or better	100
	Less than satisfactory	0

4. **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

4. **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

4. **Attainment and progress**

5. The small cohort sizes suggest caution in interpreting and comparing the school's results in national tests, as there are often wide fluctuations in the overall levels of attainment in such small groups, making comparison with available data for schools nationally, and those in similar circumstances, unreliable. The results of the 1999 tests are much higher than those in 1998, and above the school's 1997 results. Trends in attainment in recent years show the school's results to be well above national averages, and above those in similar schools, although such comparisons must be treated with caution. Towards the end of Key Stage 2 currently, standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science are above average, although standards in reading are much better than in writing. In information technology pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 attain standards in line with those expected for their age, and in religious education they attain good standards against the expectations in the locally Agreed Syllabus. Comparisons with results at Key Stage 1 in the previous report are unsafe, as there were only 4 pupils in the cohort. Similarly, at Key Stage 2, the national test results from 1995 are not reliably comparable with current data, particularly for small cohorts.

6. From the scrutiny of pupils' work saved from last year, and the lesson observations made during the inspection, the standards attained by the age of five in the areas of experience leading to the nationally recommended desirable learning outcomes are broadly average. At the end of Key Stage 1, recent results in national tests in English and mathematics have been below the national average, and well below those in similar schools, but such comparisons must be treated with caution. They do, however, reflect satisfactory progress overall, based on the levels of attainment for those groups at entry to the school. Only six Year 2 pupils took the tests in 1999, when the results showed improvement on the previous year. Currently, almost all the pupils nearing the end of the key stage are on line to improve further on these results, and to attain at least expected levels by the time they are seven. From teacher assessment in science in 1998 and 1999, pupils' attainment at seven was broadly in line with the national average at Level 2, but below it at the higher Level 3. Current attainment in science towards the end of the key stage is in line with nationally expected levels. Standards in information technology (IT) are as expected nationally, and in religious education (RE) they are in line with the recommendations in the Agreed Syllabus.

7. Literacy and numeracy are strongly developed, progress is satisfactory, and the school's strategies have clear targets for improvement. Standards in reading are above average towards the end of both key stages, they are average in writing, and they are good in the understanding and use of number by the end of Key Stage 2. Good use is made of the skills developed in literacy and numeracy in other subjects, such as in science, history, geography, and RE.

8. Progress is satisfactory overall, and it is often good at lower Key Stage 2, reflecting the strength of the teaching there. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) generally make satisfactory progress towards the targets in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs), and often make good progress when closely supported by an adult. For instance, a group of low-attaining older pupils made good progress in a design and technology (DT) lesson, developing and adapting the design, with support from the teacher.

9. Pupils make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening across the school, and pupils in Key Stage 2 demonstrate maturity when describing their hobbies and visits they have made. However, there were insufficient opportunities observed for pupils to prepare for speaking to larger audiences, such as in assembly. Satisfactory progress is made in reading at Key Stage 1, supported well by parents who listen to their children read at home regularly, making useful comments in the reading diary. Good progress is made at Key Stage 2, where teachers ensure that reading for information across the curriculum develops pupils' general skills well. However, the organisation and use of the school's limited reference library does not support the improvement of pupils' library research skills sufficiently. Progress in writing at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, building slowly on the often weak skills in this area at entry to the school. The quality of teaching helps pupils to learn to write for a variety of purposes, with growing command of sentence and story structure, for instance. However, handwriting standards are not rigorously encouraged, and teachers' marking does not always identify weaknesses and how to improve them in pupils' work. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall at Key Stage 2, and the school notes the improvement in spelling from the focus provided by new teaching resources. Older pupils organise their work well in paragraphs and chapters, often presenting their work well, and aided by well-focused teacher comments. However, marking does not always set high enough standards for improvement.

10. Progress in mathematics is satisfactory at Key Stage 1, and good at Key Stage 2. The concentration on developing mental strategies for recall of number facts and computation as part of the adopted numeracy strategy is having a marked effect on pupils' speedy facility with number. By seven, most pupils have a sound grasp of number operations to 10, and have good understanding of place value in writing numbers to 100. Higher attaining pupils compute money problems readily in their heads to values above £1. They learn to use standard units in measuring, and know the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. In recording their own work, they use a variety of methods, including the accurate use of symbols for addition and subtraction. By eleven, most pupils tackle number problems skilfully, using a good variety of strategies, and presenting and explaining their answers clearly. They have many opportunities to develop an understanding of number patterns, and handle data well, setting out their investigations and results neatly, using pencil and paper and IT methods. They compute accurately, and high attaining pupils work at high levels for their age. They understand simple geometry, and use their knowledge of angles to program and control simple robots.

11. In science, Year 2 pupils were observed discussing then recording their ideas about forces, and how they might use machines to increase their speed. They illustrated their ideas with drawings of bikes and skateboards, and one boy successfully described the use of gears and chain to transfer the force from foot to pedal to wheel. Year 3 and 4 pupils applied their knowledge and understanding of electrical circuitry to construct switched circuits, and to employ small motors to spin a clown's bow-tie, for instance. Year 5 and 6 pupils developed their knowledge and understanding of plants and the best conditions for healthy growth by instituting a series of experiments to test how the removal of a particular aspect of normal conditions, such as air or water, would affect a plant in comparison to a control, grown in normal conditions. They demonstrate good understanding of fair testing procedures, and high-attaining pupils offer skilled explanations and evaluations of their experiments

12. At Key Stage 1, progress in art, DT, geography, history, music and physical education (PE) is satisfactory overall. There are displayed examples of very closely observed observational drawings of cycle wheels, using chalks on black paper, in the infant classroom. The skills developed there were put to good use during a science lesson when pupils were asked to illustrate their understanding of how applied force could increase speed, for instance.

13. At Key Stage 2, in art, some pupils attain high standards by 11 in their sketchbooks, although too often the work is unfinished. Particularly good progress is achieved by pupils in Year 4 when working in the style of famous artists. Good progress was made in DT during the inspection by Year 5 and 6 pupils, and pupils make satisfactory progress overall. In geography, history, music and PE progress is also satisfactory, although singing is generally less tuneful than expected for pupils of a similar age. Older pupils coped well with the restricted space to create group dance sequences to music.

14. Overall, the school has established sensible targets for the improvement of pupils' standards of attainment, and the further development of teaching and curricular strategies to achieve them, and is making satisfactory progress towards these goals.

14. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

15. The pupil's attitudes to their work are generally good or better, and never less than satisfactory. They behave well in lessons and around the school, and make good progress in learning cooperative skills and independence in lessons. Their personal development is satisfactory overall.

16. The youngest pupils in the reception class are helped to settle quickly, and to feel secure. Their personal and social development is promoted well this year with the additional support for the class teacher provided by the newly-appointed part-time classroom assistant, who helps the pupils to understand what is expected of them, and to work at the assigned tasks purposefully.

17. In lessons, pupils have good attitudes to their learning. They listen carefully when spoken to by the teacher and in discussions, and contribute their ideas willingly. They cooperate well when working in pairs or small groups, such as in DT or PE. They show patience and respect for others when called upon to take turns in reading, for example when reading parts in a Shakespeare plays. Pupils are friendly and willingly discuss their work with adults.

18. They behave well in class, in assemblies and in moving round the school. They play together sensibly at playtime, quickly settling down when spoken to by a teacher if they become over-excited or boisterous. At lunchtimes, they

queue quietly for their meals, sit together calmly, and are polite to lunchtime staff. There have been no temporary or part-time exclusions.

19. Relationships at all levels are good, and pupils and staff get on well together. Pupils respond well to the school's ethos, developing social and moral understanding well. They respond well to opportunities to develop their spiritual awareness in lessons such as RE, art, English literature and science, and listen carefully in assemblies. They develop a good understanding of British and European cultural heritage in history, geography, music, and PE, and explore wider cultural awareness, including of multi-faith and multicultural issues, in RE, art and geography, as well as in assembly.

20. In lessons, pupils are helped by staff to become more independent in their learning, and to make their own decisions. There are opportunities for exercising responsibility, for instance as class monitors, or in performing small helpful tasks, such as operating the overhead projector in assembly. There are too few opportunities, however, for older pupils to assume school-wide responsibilities, in order to increase their personal development further.

20. **Attendance**

21. Attendance rates are good and above the national average, levels maintained since the last inspection. No unauthorised absences were recorded last year and levels of authorised absence are satisfactory. Parents are aware of absence procedures and are diligent in contacting school if necessary. Punctuality is good; pupils arrive on time and many hurry into school. This eager cooperation allows lessons to begin on time.

21. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

21. **Teaching**

22. Overall, the quality of teaching is good, as it was at the time of the last inspection, leading to satisfactory progress for the reception and Key Stage 1 pupils, and good progress overall at Key Stage 2. Teaching is never less than sound, and it is good in almost six out of ten lessons, and is occasionally very good. Teaching is almost always good at lower Key Stage 2, where its impact on progress is pronounced. The lower junior class is small, and the teacher plans carefully to cover the variety of learning needs on a group and individual basis, ensuring that her high expectations of behaviour and involvement in the activities are met.

23. During the inspection, the reception and infant pupils' class was taught for two days by a supply teacher, as the class teacher was absent after the first day. The teaching seen was never less than sound, and was sometimes good.

24. Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach overall, and in some areas such as mathematics, RE and art, it is particularly strong, showing in the quality of pupils' work. Staff have good understanding of the requirements of the National Curriculum, and the Agreed Syllabus for RE, and generally use their own and purchased commercial schemes successfully in planning their lessons, although still need to adapt the music scheme to fit the school's requirements. As there are only three teachers, they each carry a great deal of subject responsibility, covering at least four subjects, as well as other major areas of work such as special educational needs, or assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' progress and attainment. Between them, they frequently attend training courses run by the local authority to keep up-to-date with developments, which helps to inform their planning, and make lessons interesting for the pupils. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the learning needs of the pupils they teach, allowing them to prepare activities and resources to meet their needs closely, a demanding task met well, particularly in the class which contains the reception and all the infant pupils. For instance, whilst the teacher worked with the Year 1 and 2 pupils, the classroom assistant took the six reception children for an art and design and technology activity in the separate craft area, which resulted in high quality work and development for them.

25. Expectations of pupils' behaviour and concentration in lessons are high, and lead successfully to the pupils' engagement in the activities planned. These are also reinforced by the good working relationships that exist between the teachers and the pupils across the school. Teachers' expectations of pupils' progress and attainment vary, and although satisfactory overall, and generally high in lower Key Stage 2, pupils are sometimes not pushed sufficiently to reach higher levels. For instance, in some literacy sessions, pupils produce work with careless spellings and presentation without being reminded by their teachers to keep their standards high.

26. Lesson planning is good, based firmly on an agreed set of schemes of work and policies. Tasks are closely matched in the main to pupils' needs, and teachers take advantage of the small classes in the juniors to plan specifically for pupils of differing prior attainment. As there are mixed age classes throughout the school, the school

uses two and four year cycles in many subjects, in order to cover the required curriculum, and to ensure that there is no undue repetition for the pupils. Planning of work for pupils with SEN takes account of the targets in their IEPs, and often involves the teacher in working very closely with small groups or individuals, helping them to make satisfactory progress, particularly in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.

27. A good variety of organisational strategies is used, taking the best advantage of the limited accommodation in the main school. Here, teachers and pupils rearrange the furniture regularly for different activities, and great efforts are made to ensure that there are areas in each room supporting major elements of the curriculum. This is limited by the rooms having to be used as dining areas at lunchtimes. In the separate mobile classroom, areas are well arranged to support a variety of activities covering pupils from four to seven years-of age, and there is a separate small space which is used well for art and craft activities, or to withdraw a group for particular activities. Teachers have adopted both the literacy and numeracy national strategies effectively, and employ a range of methods effectively to promote oral and mental skills in both subjects. Teachers and other adults working in the school use questions effectively to encourage pupils to listen attentively, think more deeply and share their ideas in discussions. This provides valuable opportunities for pupils to speak to their classmates and helps them speak fully and confidently.

28. In English, teachers are clear about what pupils are to learn in lessons and provide appropriate activities for the different groups in their class. They organise and manage literacy sessions well, using the limited range of books and other resources effectively. The school has valuable information from a wide range of assessments, tests and standardised assessment tests over several years that provide a clear picture of strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainments.

29. The most effective teaching in mathematics was seen at lower Key Stage 2, but all teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject as it applies for the age groups they teach, and have adopted the main messages of the National Numeracy Strategy well. They ensure good pace in oral sessions, and encourage the pupils to compute and handle number in their heads speedily and accurately. They assess pupils' work regularly, and set new targets for pupils based on these assessments.

30. Lessons in science are well planned to include appropriate experimental and investigatory work, although pupils are not always encouraged to predict what might happen in their tests, in order that they might then compare their findings with their hypothesis. Teachers organise these sessions well, and explain and demonstrate teaching points clearly and accurately, as when a teacher described the functions of parts of a flowering plant, using clear illustrations, followed by direct observation and recording by the pupils using an actual flower.

31. All teachers expect pupils to behave well, and use a range of behaviour management techniques to encourage them. There are some pupils who have difficulty in controlling their behaviour in some situations, but teachers are sensitive to this and deal with any unacceptable behaviour appropriately. This leads to calm lessons in the main, allowing teachers to teach, and pupils to learn.

32. Teachers use the school's learning resources effectively to support pupils' learning, particularly commercial schemes bought to supplement the work in aspects of English, mathematics and science. Teachers produce useful resources and materials themselves, often directly focused to meet particular needs. Lessons begin and end on time, and teachers ensure that the different components of the lesson are used effectively to promote pupils' progress. They maintain good pace, and switch smoothly between activities, without undue time lost clearing away one activity, and setting out another.

33. Procedures for assessment are good, and teachers make effective use of them to monitor pupils' progress, and plan further work. They know the pupils well, and use the good relationships that exist to encourage pupils to discuss their work, and see how they might improve it. Marking is often good, giving pupils a clear idea of what they need to do to improve, although occasionally it is too perfunctory.

34. Homework is mainly set in English and mathematics, and makes a useful contribution to pupils' learning, particularly in reading, where parents add considerably to the progress made by their children

34. **The curriculum and assessment**

35. The curriculum is balanced and broadly based, and meets the statutory requirements for teaching the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. It effectively promotes pupils' intellectual and physical development

and prepares them soundly for the next stage of their education. There is a heavy emphasis on the development of pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy, but all other subjects are provided. The school has fully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and this is having a positive effect on raising standards, particularly in mental mathematics and reading. The valuable range of visits made in connection with the topics studied brings the work alive, and makes the curriculum relevant. The school now offers a good range of experiences, particularly through history, geography, music and art, to promote pupils' awareness of ethnic and cultural diversity. Health and sex education and the awareness of drugs misuse are successfully taught through the science curriculum, with a more formal programme of sex education for pupils in Year 6. The school has maintained the quality of the curriculum and assessment since the last inspection, and has responded appropriately to the many national changes and initiatives that have since been promoted.

36. Pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Pupils with SEN are supported appropriately in class lessons, and when withdrawn for extra work. The targets set for them in their IEPs are realistic and achievable. Teachers and support staff work closely together in planning, and this ensures most pupils with SEN make sound progress. However, a few pupils are sometimes withdrawn from assemblies in order to read to their teacher, so missing the statutory daily act of collective worship. Pupils taking guitar tuition miss a weekly literacy lesson, which reduces their full entitlement to the English curriculum.

37. The curriculum for children under five is satisfactory overall. There is a sound policy and scheme of work based on the nationally recommended desirable learning outcomes for children under five. This enables them to transfer smoothly into Key Stage 1 work in all the subjects of the National Curriculum. There are appropriate opportunities for purposeful play, talk and exploration.

38. Curriculum planning is generally good. The school has responded appropriately to the weaknesses in planning identified in its last inspection report, by providing detailed schemes of work for all subjects that successfully build on previous work. Some, such as history, geography and music, now need revising to take account of their time allocations and the demands of teaching mixed age classes. Short-term plans sometimes lack sufficient detail about the expectations for different ages and attainment groups within the mixed age classes. This means that opportunities are sometimes missed to challenge more able pupils and reinforce the learning of pupils with SEN, although there is good practice, particularly in lower Key Stage 2. The use of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies schemes of work provides good structure to English and mathematics lessons. There is a clear homework policy based on daily reading, weekly spellings and learning multiplication tables that supports literacy and numeracy appropriately.

39. A good range of well-attended extra-curricular activities is offered, particularly for such a small school. Pupils have opportunities to take part in mathematics, netball, football, golf and other after-school clubs offered during the year. Parents generously support these by leading some sessions, for example in football and golf. The school arranges a programme of termly visits to enrich the curriculum, including to museums and places of interest locally, such as Eddisbury Hill, Chester and Tattenhall.

40. Assessment procedures are good overall. Children are assessed on entry and regular observations are made throughout the reception year, and used effectively to plan work. Throughout the school, teachers know their pupils well, and have a clear idea of what they know, understand and can do in the core subjects. Pupils are regularly assessed using a useful range of tests and teacher assessments. These provide a valuable bank of information about pupils' attainments in English, mathematics and science stretching back over a period of time. Teachers have begun to moderate their assessments in writing and are compiling a portfolio of pupils' assessed work. This should help to focus attention more clearly on the requirements for each level, and improve the accuracy of teachers' assessments. Annual reports are good, providing useful information about pupils' progress. Each pupil has a portfolio containing details of some, though not all, of their assessments. As yet these do not contain individual records of pupils' attainments in a format that enables teachers to track their progress from year to year. This would enable them to more clearly and easily identify strengths and weaknesses on which to base their planning.

41. The quality of marking is variable. Very little written marking is seen in Key Stage 1, and inaccuracies sometimes go uncorrected, as in some science work on electricity. Key Stage 2 teachers mark work regularly, and provide useful comments to guide pupils towards improving their work. These are not always pursued sufficiently so that weaknesses, such as untidy handwriting, poor spelling and careless mistakes in punctuation and sentence structure, remain in subsequent work. Good practice is seen when pupils evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses and work with their teacher to set their own targets for improvement. This needs to be extended so that targets are regularly reviewed and revised and pupils become even more involved in improving the quality of their work.

42. The school makes good use of assessment information in planning the curriculum. This has allowed it to identify weaknesses, for example in writing. As a result strategies have been introduced to improve some aspects, such as pupils' spelling. Booster classes have been introduced for older pupils in Year 6 to raise standards and this reflects well in the improved English results in 1999. The results of standard assessment tests in Year 2 are used appropriately to set targets for these pupils when they reach Year 6. Assessment information is used effectively to identify pupils with SEN. Relevant targets are set for them, and their progress is regularly assessed.

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

43. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, maintaining the good work seen at the last inspection overall, and improving the multi-cultural and multi-faith provision.

44. During the inspection, spiritual development was stronger in lessons such as RE, art and science than it was in assembly. Pupils learn the principles that underpin Christian belief, and how these apply to generally accepted values and attitudes. They also learn how Islam also has specific beliefs, which are intended to guide the lives of believers, and how these overlap in some instances with Christian views. They have opportunities to reflect on influential myths and stories from a variety of religious and cultural traditions, and to relate them to their growing awareness and understanding of their own place in the world. During assemblies, pupils hear parables and stories of Jesus, and take part in collective worship, often led by pupils from Year 6. During the inspection, there was little opportunity for pupils to reflect at other than a superficial level on the issues raised by such stories as the raising of Lazarus from the grave, nor to take a prepared and active part in the assembly. However, pupils do take a full part in such events as Harvest Festival services, and in celebrating other Christian festivals both in the school, and in St. Peter's church.

45. Moral development is good, and welcomed by parents. Pupils are helped to develop an understanding of right from wrong, both from a Christian perspective, and in developing a personal response to their own and other's actions. Older pupils take the lead in helping younger pupils to understand school rules, and what counts as acceptable behaviour.

46. Social development is also good, and the youngest pupils in the reception class are helped to settle and work in new social groups successfully. In paired and group work, pupils work together patiently and cooperatively, and form and reform a variety of social groupings across different age groups. Boys far outnumber girls in all age groups, but the girls are confident in the school, and take a full part in all activities.

47. Cultural development has improved significantly since the last inspection, and the multi-cultural and multi-faith aspects are well taught, enhancing the good work in local and European culture. Aspects of art, music, literature, and RE promote a wide understanding of a variety of cultural traditions, and the school has ensured that new resources support this. For instance, a range of musical instruments representing a variety of cultures has been acquired, and in RE lessons, pupils are helped to understand the religious and cultural traditions of Islam, as well as Christianity. Work in history and geography also improves pupils' general cultural awareness, and the use of visits to places of artistic, historic and cultural importance is well developed.

47. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

48. The school makes good provision for pupils' welfare and guidance and with few exceptions has maintained the good standards highlighted in the last inspection report.

49. Procedures for monitoring progress and personal development are good. These begin with entry-level baseline assessment, which is used well to plan work for the children, along with reading records and results of various tests undertaken in school. The system used does not, however, provide an easily retrievable picture of each individual pupil's progress through the curriculum.

50. Educational support is generally effective, except when pupils are insufficiently guided towards making improvements in their written work or working towards agreed targets set for them. Classroom support staff make a strong contribution to pupils' language development.

51. Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and behaviour are good. A thorough written policy guides the work of the school. Staff have very high expectations of good behaviour and most parents report favourably on the

outcomes of the trust teachers place in pupils, although a small minority of parents question the overall consistency of the school's approach to disciplinary measures.

52. Support for those pupils with SEN is satisfactory. Liaison with external agencies has a positive effect on the standards achieved by pupils with SEN.

53. Staff make time in lessons and assemblies to promote a caring attitude among pupils helping them to be confident and outgoing. Those few pupils who find cooperating with others difficult are skilfully helped to improve. Many parents are pleased with the secure learning environment provided for their children.

54. The provision for the well being, health and safety of pupils is satisfactory. Hygiene practice is satisfactory and pupils dine in clean surroundings. Supervision at playtimes is satisfactory, and midday supervisors support welfare arrangements well. Good procedures are followed whenever accidental injury occurs and treatments are diligently recorded. Whilst there is some awareness of hazard identification, the careful approach taken is insufficiently rigorous or comprehensive to meet health and safety statutory requirements.

55. Child protection procedures are guided by locally agreed, but not school specific, procedures. The teacher responsible in such matters has not had recent training nor has training been provided for other adults in the school, and the prospectus omits the recommended necessary details about the school's role in child protection. The school recognises that this is an area for development.

55. Partnership with parents and the community

56. The excellent relationship enjoyed by the school with its parents and community reported at the last inspection has changed in character since then, and under the leadership of the headteacher, with support from the staff and a number of parents, the school is working hard to further develop the satisfactory partnership that now exists. For instance, a number of meetings have been held recently to explain to parents aspects of the school's work, although staff have been disappointed by low attendance on these occasions. Parental involvement in other areas of children's learning is good, and seen at its best in supporting reading at home. A number of parents help regularly in school and give extra support for outings and other activities. The vibrant Parent Teacher Association raises substantial amounts for pupils' benefit, and also provides social activities for the community. It was instrumental in maintaining teacher staffing levels last year through generous donations.

57. The progress reports issued annually are good, and appreciated by parents, as is the initial introductory information. Newsletters are frequent and friendly in tone, but contain few references to the curriculum. However, whilst many parents support the school's discipline policy, some complain that the handling of individual incidents falls below their expectations. Statutory published information to parents omits some details. For example, a full financial picture, attendance statistics, the success of the Special Educational Needs Policy and the role of outside agencies in child protection matters are not included as they should be: indeed, the prospectus appears to have been changed piecemeal, and to be ready for a complete rewrite. Parents are informed of provision for SEN, but the school is aware that better communication would involve them further in a partnership. Taken overall, however, the quality of information for parents is unsatisfactory and avenues of communication are underdeveloped.

58. Close links are maintained with local primary and secondary schools, and with the local church. For a small school, isolated geographically from its constituency, the level of enrichment by the community is satisfactory. Visits out to places of interest are prized by pupils, and add to the quality of education. A good contribution is made to pupils' social development when older members of the community dine on a monthly basis with pupils. An after school club supports pastoral care, and provides a service to the school community.

58. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

58. Leadership and management

59. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, but good in promoting a positive learning ethos, valued by parents and pupils. This is a different judgment than in the previous inspection report, when management and leadership were described as very effective. Comparisons between the effectiveness of management and leadership at the time of the last inspection and now are difficult, as the school's situation has changed so much. The staff work very

closely as a team, and spend their breaks and lunchtimes, as well as a great deal of time after school, in discussing together the pupils' progress, and school developments. One teacher was absent for two of the three days of the inspection, and the Headteacher managed a potentially difficult situation in the deployment of a supply teacher well.

60. The key issues identified in the last report have all been successfully addressed, particularly in the review and improvement of subject coordination, a difficult proposition in a school with such a small staff. The teachers have willingly undertaken subject development, each preparing revised policy statements and schemes of work for the four or five subject areas they cover. They have also enthusiastically taken on national initiatives in literacy and numeracy, led successfully by the Headteacher, who is herself subject leader for English, including literacy, mathematics, including numeracy, information and communications technology, design technology and history. The Governing Body offers good support to the staff, and fulfils its statutory duties effectively in the main, save for omissions in the information provided for parents. The main remaining issue concerns the adequacy of the accommodation to deliver a full curriculum, which still needs resolution. The school is satisfactorily placed to implement plans for development and further improvement.

61. The Headteacher has been in post two years, and is well supported by the rest of the staff, and the governors. It has been necessary for her to teach the mixed Year 5 and 6 class full time until this term, and she spends a great deal of time coping with management issues outside the normal school day. She has been hampered in her desire to monitor the work of the school closely by having to teach full time, and also having to reconcile a projected deficit budget which led to the loss of one and a half days' support teaching, previously deployed to free the Headteacher for three sessions. The church and the Parent Teacher Association have made direct contributions jointly of £5000 to supplement the teaching staff budget, as the chief aim has been to maintain three full time classes, despite numbers on roll falling to 48 in 1998. This year a temporary teacher is employed for one day per week to release the Headteacher, as the budget position has eased slightly, but the effects of this relief have not yet had time to show their effectiveness.

62. Arrangements to introduce the Literacy Hour last year, and the National Numeracy Strategy this year, have been effective, and the whole staff and the Governing Body monitor the implementation closely. Targets set in these areas are realistically based on the school's assessment of different pupil cohorts' potential, and the school is on track to achieve them. Many governors spend time in the school, and the LEA adviser has joined the Headteacher in beginning to monitor teaching in classes. The staff attend a good variety of training courses across the curriculum, and share the information gained effectively with their colleagues.

63. The school's aims, and its Christian foundation, are evident in its day-to-day work, although spiritual development is clearer in lessons than in the assemblies observed. Parents praised the school's ethos: encouraging as it generally does high achievement, equality of opportunity for all pupils including those with SEN, and a purposive working atmosphere, inspection findings support their view.

64. The school development plan (SDP) is reviewed year-on-year by the staff and governors, and sets out clearly the priorities and targets to be pursued. It has rightly addressed the key issues from the previous inspection, and assimilated national initiatives and local changes as they arise. Its curriculum section identifies a busy schedule of review and development, clearly focused on improving pupils' skills and standards of attainment. Further developing an issue from the last inspection, there is also appropriate focus on the monitoring of pupil and school performance, target-setting, and evaluation of the improvements gained. However, the range of possibilities consequent on the effect of small changes in the number of pupils on roll are not addressed, and there are no alternative models of staffing or class deployment ventured which might create flexibility in teaching groups, and the management of the school's finances. The determination to maintain three full-time classes has the support of parents, but may lead to very difficult funding issues in the near future, for which eventuality contingency plans should be laid now.

64. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

65. The number of suitably trained and qualified teachers to meet the needs of children under five and to teach the small numbers of pupils on the school roll is generous. Teachers are all experienced and work very well together as a team, sharing their expertise well in such aspects of their work as planning. They all have clear job descriptions outlining their many and various responsibilities for subjects and aspects of the curriculum. However, the SEN coordinator has little release time to undertake her duties. This means that sometimes parents of pupils on the school's register of special needs are not kept fully informed, and the review system is not sufficiently rigorous. Specialist music tuition for guitar and keyboards is provided at a charge. Class sizes are low, which enables teachers to work appropriately with pupils with special educational needs in lessons. Provision of extra support staff to work with pupils

individually and small groups is satisfactory. The recent provision of a classroom assistant in the Key Stage 1 class is considerably benefiting children, particularly those aged five and under. She is experienced and very effective, though not formally trained to work in the early years. Teachers and support staff all work closely together in planning relevant activities and this reflects in the sound, and often good, progress made by pupils. There are sufficient midday and administrative staff, some having several roles within the school and giving generously of their free time to provide extra support.

66. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are good overall. Teachers attend a wide range of courses and meetings in connection with their subject and other responsibilities. They have begun to examine aspects of their work, such as pupils' work and assessment results, to identify and address any weaknesses. The Headteacher has monitored some teaching. However, the school appraisal system has lapsed, and professional development is mainly connected with whole school issues, rather than focusing on staff's individual needs, for instance their leadership and management roles.

67. The school is housed in a Victorian building, which has listed status, and accommodation for Key Stage 1 pupils is in a mobile classroom. Space in the main building is very limited and classrooms are small. Though adequate for the small classes presently in the school, this limits the possibilities available for other types of class organisation. The hall is inadequate for whole school and physical education activities. The school has effectively addressed some of its storage problems, particularly in the hall, identified in the last inspection. The library has been moved to the entrance area and the school is currently developing the office area and accommodation in the roof-space. This will provide useful storage areas, but not address the continuing need to store some resources in the hall in order to ensure that they are easily accessible. There is no private, quiet area for confidential discussions, for example with parents, or for individual work with pupils with SEN. There are suitable hard play areas and an extensive playing field used for physical education and games. The mobile classroom provides appropriate space for the activities needed for younger pupils and children under five. The Victorian garden provides an interesting play area and the opportunity for all pupils to spend playtime in a quieter environment. Apart from occasional roof leaks and routine maintenance, the school is in a satisfactory state of repair. The caretakers ensure that the school is kept very clean and tidy. Attractive wall displays of photographs and pupils' work enhance the school environment well.

68. Resources available to support the curriculum and for working with children under five are satisfactory overall, but with some weaknesses. The school has addressed most of the weaknesses identified in the last inspection report, and now resources for all subjects, including physical education, design technology and music, are satisfactory overall. However, the reference library is not yet fully set up as a study area. Its storage system is not suitably adapted for primary age pupils, and there is insufficient information to help them locate specific types of book. Some of the book stock is worn and out of date. These weaknesses need to be addressed so that pupils use the library more frequently, in order to improve their research skills. There are insufficient books on display in the youngest pupils' classroom to stimulate their interest in books. The school has insufficient equipment to enable children under five to take part in appropriate outdoor physical activity. Throughout the school, staff make good use of the resources available through the local authority, and the cluster of small schools to which they belong. A wide range of visits to museums, and local places of educational interest such as Tattenhall and Chester, are provided, and these help to bring the curriculum alive for pupils.

68. The efficiency of the school

69. The school makes satisfactory use of the resources available. Financial planning is sound overall, and teaching and support staff are effectively deployed. Good use is made of learning resources and the accommodation, overall, although the reference library is underused by pupils. Financial control and administration is efficient and effective, and a good response has been made to the latest auditor's report. Since the last inspection, schemes of work have been adopted in most areas of the curriculum, and the governing body has become more closely involved in monitoring and evaluating curricular developments, and pupils' attainment. The staffing policy has been reviewed, and some savings made, although this is an area that requires constant vigilance in order to ensure that the overall budget is in balance.

70. The governors oversee the budget appropriately, and have worked closely with parents and the church to maintain a three-class structure. This is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain, as this year there is a very small surplus carried forward, and last year over £5000 was required in donations to pay staff salaries. That this year a days' extra teaching to release the headteacher has been funded, and a part-time classroom assistant has been appointed in the infants, is to be welcomed. However, there is little evidence from the development plan, or in discussions with governors, that a range of alternative arrangements has been considered in order to manage the budget more

effectively in the future, and to ensure that there are adequate funds to resource the school in other areas, such as purchasing new books. Similarly, the accommodation was raised as an issue at the last inspection, and other than some changes to storage arrangements and maintenance and repairs, no overall plan has been developed for the improvement of the accommodation to facilitate more flexible teaching arrangements, or to provide suitable indoor PE facilities.

71. The teaching staff are effectively deployed to classes under the three class arrangement, and the deployment of the classroom support assistant with the infants is good, and makes a good contribution to pupils' learning, particularly the under fives. There are times, however, when class groups in the juniors could be reorganised in order to allow more focused teaching, or to take further advantage of teachers' specialist skills.

72. Other support staff are effectively deployed to support specific groups and individual pupils. The appointment of a part-time classroom assistant to support the teacher in the reception and infant class has made a good contribution to the quality of education offered, particularly for the youngest pupils.

73. The resources for learning are used well to support pupils' learning, and are well supplemented by visits to places of educational interest, and by visitors and resources brought in by staff, or borrowed from the local authority's loan services. The accommodation is also used well in the main, and staff are creative in trying to take best advantage of it.

74. Funds allocated to the school for staff development and to promote the learning of those pupils with SEN are used appropriately. Financial administration and school organisation are efficiently and effectively managed, although the shared space used as a school office, staff room, headteacher's office, quiet teaching area, and corridor for staff and pupils to the toilet facilities makes this difficult at times.

75. The overall standards attained in English, mathematics and science are above average, and the quality of education, particularly the teaching, is good. The cost per pupil is well above the national average for primary schools with over 50 pupils. Given the well above average unit cost and the good quality of education provided, the school gives sound value for money. The judgement in the last inspection report that the school provided good value for money was based on a unit cost which was within the median expenditure for schools of this type nationally, whereas now the unit cost is well above average for schools with 50 or more pupils. This accounts for the difference in the overall judgements.

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

75. **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

76. There is no clear statement of the attainment of pupils at entry to the school in the last inspection report, where it is described as covering a broad spread of ability. It is therefore not possible to compare the situation pertaining then with now. Further, there was no separate section detailing the work and attainment of the under-fives, which is summarised as having very sound foundations laid. New national recommendations for the promotion of progress and learning for the under-fives have also been adopted by the school, and nationally, leading to new reporting requirements. Accordingly, comparisons between this report and the previous one are not possible.

77. At the time of the inspection, the children under five had only been in school for two weeks, attending mornings only. The class teacher was in school on the Monday, but her absence was covered by a supply teacher, known to the school but not the under-five children, on Tuesday and Wednesday. It was a mark of the successful induction of these children, the help of the classroom assistant, and the skill of the supply teacher, that this was relaxed and trouble-free.

78. The children under five, who attended in the mornings only during the inspection, are in the same class with pupils aged from 5 to 7 years of age. By the time they reach statutory school age, children's attainments are broadly average, though their language and literacy skills are sometimes weaker. The cohorts of children entering the school are very small, only 6 children at the time of the inspection, and this leads to wide variation in overall attainment from year to year.

79. Most of the children under five at present in the class are on target to reach expected levels in personal and social skills by the time they reach statutory school age. They make good progress due to the good teaching by their teacher and classroom support assistant who promote this aspect well. Pupils soon settle on entry, and play happily with other children. There is a caring atmosphere and individual attention that ensures they feel safe. Adults encourage children to become independent in moving around the activities and tidying away. They praise children's efforts, and the children become confident and eager to try out the activities provided for them. They are appropriately inquisitive and interested in the activities set out for them. They persevere when faced with tasks such as rubbing in the fat to make pastry. They become absorbed when listening to stories. They play cooperatively when sharing toys in the water tray, and building models with large wooden blocks.

80. The provision for pupils' language and literacy development is sound overall. Adults take every opportunity to promote language development, and teaching in this aspect is good, particularly when children are working with the classroom assistant in small group activities. Teachers and the support assistant have a lively manner that creates good relationships, and engage children in purposeful talk by their skilful use of questions. As a result children talk eagerly about their work, for example describing how they made their junk models. They listen carefully to instructions and stories. Provision for literacy development is satisfactory. Children show a keen interest in the stories they hear. They know that print tells a story and handle books appropriately. Some children make good attempts at telling a story from the pictures in storybooks. Some more able pupils recognise a few letters. Children's writing skills are emerging steadily. They make marks to represent their name and describe their pictures. Pencil control develops appropriately so that some children shape their letters with increasing accuracy. More able children begin to write simple sentences with some recognisable words. There are insufficient large captions, labels and attractive books displayed around the classroom, and available for children to read, to stimulate their interest and "thirst" to read, and to provide valuable models for their own emerging writing skills. This slows the progress they make in literacy development.

81. Children's mathematical development is sound. Adults working in the reception class promote it well when talking with children about their work and in more formal activities. Teaching is good. Children count out spoonfuls of flour for their baking, the number of jugs of water to fill a large container, and frequently count to ten and beyond accurately. They recognise shapes and use their mathematical understanding to choose appropriate shapes when constructing models. Children enthusiastically take part in number songs and rhymes, improving their number recognition and counting and ordering skills.

82. Children reach the expected levels in knowledge and understanding of the world. An appropriate range of experiences is provided, and teaching is sound. Children begin to sort and classify, for example, things that melt, and record their results in simple pictorial charts. They understand the need for good hygiene when making their apple pies and the dangers of hot foods and ovens when cooking. They observe what happens to apples when they are cooked, using appropriate words such as "melting" and "sloppy" to describe the changes. They cut and shape junk

materials to create models of buses, cars and boats. They competently use tape and glue to join materials.

83. Creative development is promoted appropriately and children make sound progress. Children become more competent in handling paint brushes, crayons and pencils. They paint pictures and create collages of people with attention to details such as eyelashes. They engage happily in role play such as in the play shop or "office". Children sing songs and enjoy listening to others singing and the music in assembly. No judgment can be made about the teaching of music as no direct teaching was seen during the inspection.

84. Provision for children's physical development is limited. Children develop sound skills in manipulating tools such as pencils, scissors and paintbrushes, using them with greater control and accuracy. They move confidently in the playground. Some play happily among the more boisterous older pupils in the large playground. Children run, skip and jump using the space available to them appropriately. There is a good outdoor play space, but the school has insufficient toys and equipment to provide opportunities for young children to develop physically by riding, climbing and balancing. Children under five join in with the rest of their Key Stage 1 class for physical education lessons, but the school hall is inadequate for the full range of activities required for children under five and this limits the progress they make.

84. **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

84. **English**

85. Year group cohorts below 10, the low attainment of some pupils on entry and the number of pupils moving in to the school with SEN affect standards in each year group. This means that any comparison of results in both key stages over previous years, and with similar schools nationally based on percentages has to be treated with extreme caution, as such comparisons are likely to be unreliable.

86. Overall standards in English are barely in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1 and standards in writing are low. No pupils attain the higher levels in the different elements of the English curriculum. Results in 1999 show that in English overall, based on average national curriculum levels, results were low. Trends show a decline in standards in reading and writing from 1996 to 1999. The results of standard assessment tests in 1999, however, show that performance in reading has improved slightly whilst standards in writing remain fairly static.

87. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in English overall are above the national average. This confirms the results of teacher assessment and standard assessment tests and tasks in 1999. Results fluctuate from year to year as seen in the school's English results over the four years from 1996 to 1999, although overall they are well above average. Compared to schools nationally the number of pupils attaining the expected level 4 in 1999 was very high, but a lower than average proportion of pupils gained the higher level 5. Based on average National Curriculum levels, performance was well above average. When compared to similar schools results were very high at the expected Level 4, but below at higher levels, and well above the average overall against similar schools. 1999 results show a marked improvement in reading, with all pupils attaining expected levels and a significant number attaining the higher level 5. These results represent marked improvement for the school on the previous year, and on the results at the time of the previous inspection, but must be treated with caution as explained above.

88. Standards of speaking and listening are at least as expected by the end of both key stages, with a few pupils attaining higher levels. Throughout the school pupils make sound progress. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 develop confidence in talking about the stories they read, and their activities. They speak clearly when telling their classmates about their ideas for story writing. Pupils become more attentive when listening to their teacher and express their own ideas clearly and competently, for instance when describing the good and bad features of their school grounds in geography, or in Year 4 when a pupil described a sloth from memory in great detail, confidently and accurately. By Year 6 most pupils develop clear diction and a keen ear when listening for information. Some pupils demonstrate mature speaking and listening skills when discussing their hobbies and visits they make to museums. During the inspection, however, few opportunities were seen for pupils to extend their skills further by speaking to a larger audience, for example in assembly, other than in reading a prayer from a book.

89. Attainment in reading is broadly in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1, though no pupils attain higher levels. Attainment is above the national average by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils make sound progress in Key Stage 1 in view of the low attainment of some pupils in literacy and language on entry to the school. They

develop a useful bank of basic words they read on sight, and recognise an increasing range of letter sounds and phonic blends that they use when meeting unknown words in their reading books. They enjoy their well-structured shared reading sessions in the literacy hour and develop an increasing awareness of books and authors. Sometimes in these sessions pupils take only a listening role, and opportunities are missed for them to practise their own skills by reading along with their teacher. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 begin to read independently and this is well supported by some parents who read regularly with their children at home. However, there are insufficient books, both fiction and non-fiction, on display and available to pupils in KS1 to stimulate their interest and curiosity about books, and to provide opportunities for them to read for information and enjoyment. This limits their progress, particularly in extending their skills in reading different texts and seeking information.

90. Pupils make good progress in reading in Key Stage 2, reflected in their high standards by 11. Teachers place appropriate emphasis on reading and promote it well in other subjects, such as researching information about Ancient Egyptian artefacts in history in Years 3 and 4. Literacy hour sessions are carefully planned to extend pupils' reading skills, with opportunities for pupils to read for their classmates, for example when reading the parts of characters in Shakespeare's Twelfth Night in Year 6. Most pupils become fluent readers by the end of the key stage. They employ an increasing range of strategies to help them read complex words and to make sense of the text. They develop increasing skills of inference and deduction when exploring the underlying meanings in the text. They become more efficient in using contents and index pages, and in skimming and scanning the text for information, but their library research skills are often weak.

91. Library resources were seen as weak in the last inspection. There has been some improvement as the library has since been moved from the hall to the entrance area and is more accessible for all classes. However, it is not set up as a study area for pupils and the stock of books is insufficient in range and quality to support the research needs of pupils. Some stock is worn or out of date, and needs removing. Pupils struggle to locate books on specific subjects and a simpler labelling system and catalogue is needed to help them. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to practise their library retrieval skills.

92. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' standards in writing are below average and their progress is barely satisfactory. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are average and pupils make sound progress throughout the key stage. Baseline assessments of pupils on entry show that writing skills are often weak. However, with encouragement young pupils in Key Stage 1 soon begin to make marks to "write" about their pictures. They develop greater pencil control and begin to write some recognisable letters so that by the end of Year 1 most pupils write simple sentences with some recognisable words. They begin to write in different styles for different purposes, for example stories, lists, reports and instructions, for example describing how to make honey. By Year 2, more able pupils' stories develop a clear structure of beginning, middle and end. Pupils practise a joined handwriting style, but much of their daily work, even that of more able pupils, is printed. Whilst pupils show understanding of sentence structure and punctuation, teachers' marking often does not identify weaknesses sufficiently in their books to help pupils' improve their work. As a result, weaknesses, such as inappropriate use or lack of capital letters, full stops, spelling and untidy handwriting persist. Sometimes in lessons there is an over-emphasis on drawing pictures, for example as seen in a story planning session in a literacy hour. Such lessons do not challenge pupils sufficiently to practise and extend their writing skills, particularly older and high attaining pupils, and this adversely affects their progress. More visible words, labels and captions around the classroom would create a word-rich environment, and provide valuable support for young pupils practising their emerging writing skills.

93. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2. Their writing becomes more extended and its structure more effective, so that many older pupils in the key stage organise their writing into appropriate paragraphs and chapters. They write competently in a wide range of styles, adapting the layout to suit the purpose. They begin to use different strategies such as speech bubbles, capital letters, and a range of punctuation, like exclamation marks, to add impact to their work. By the end of the key stage many pupils use expressive words and strategies, such as alliteration, to interest the reader, as seen in a Year 6 pupils' writing in response to Rudyard Kipling's stories. Teachers use science, religious education, history and geography lessons effectively to promote literacy skills. Pupils write reports of their investigations in a clear logical format, they write accounts of the prodigal son story from the viewpoint of his brother, stories from the Benin culture and accounts of a visit to Chester. The quality of handwriting and presentation in these is often good, though pupils sometimes use a mixture of print and cursive writing. However, standards are not consistent, and sometimes untidy handwriting and carelessness in spelling, punctuation and sentence structure adversely affects pupils' everyday writing. There is evidence of good marking practice in Key Stage 2 with well-focused comments to guide pupils towards improvements. However, sometimes marking is over generous and sufficiently high standards are not demanded of pupils. The school is aware of weaknesses in writing and has

identified it as an area for development with spelling being its first focus. New resources have been purchased and a structured programme is being implemented. The school is already noting some improvement from this.

94. Pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress overall, and often make good progress at lower Key stage 2. Their targets are clearly identified and realistic. Some pupils benefit from the extra support provided by the teacher for special educational needs and the classroom support assistant who work with them on spelling and reading.

95. Pupils have good attitudes to their learning. They generally behave well. They listen carefully in discussions and contribute their ideas willingly. They co-operate well with their classmates when working in pairs or small groups. Pupils enjoy the literature they study in literacy hour shared reading sessions, and show patience and respect for others when called upon to take turns in reading, for example when reading challenging Shakespeare plays. Pupils are friendly and willingly discuss their work with adults.

96. Overall, the quality of teaching is sound in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. All the teachers show a firm commitment to ensuring that the literacy hour is effective. They are all trained, and use support from local support groups well. They are working hard to adapt the literacy hour for their mixed age classes. Teachers are clear about what pupils are to learn in lessons and provide appropriate activities for the different groups in their class. The strategy is beginning to have a positive effect on standards in Key Stage 2, particularly in reading. Teachers know their pupils well, and regularly assess their work. This information is not always used fully in planning further work, however. The school has valuable information from a wide range of teacher assessments and standardised assessment tests over several years that provide a clear picture of strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainments. Teachers have begun to moderate their assessments and build up a portfolio of assessed work. This could be developed further to ensure that teachers all demand the same high writing standards and that targets are set, and regularly evaluated, for individuals and groups within each class.

96. Mathematics

97. There were only seven pupils in the 11 year-old cohort in 1999, and the results in national tests in mathematics reflect satisfactory progress from their levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. However, the small cohort sizes suggest caution in interpreting and comparing these results, as there are often wide fluctuations from year to year in the overall levels of attainment in such small groups. The school's results in the national tests for 11-year-olds in 1997 and 1999 were well above the national average, and above average in comparison with those in similar schools, although again there were very small cohorts. Trends in attainment over the last three years show the school's results to be well above national averages, and above those in similar schools.

98. From the scrutiny of pupils' work saved from last year, and the lesson observations made during the inspection, the standards attained by the age of five are broadly average. At the end of Key Stage 1, recent results in national tests have been below the national average, and well below those in similar schools, but reflect satisfactory progress overall, based on the levels of attainment for those groups at entry to the school. Only six Year 2 pupils took the tests in 1999, when the results showed improvement.

99. Currently, standards of attainment towards the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with national averages, but cover a wide range in a small cohort; similarly towards the end of Key Stage 2 there is a wide range, but standards of attainment are above average overall.

100. Pupils' performance in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 are lower than at the time of the last inspection, and have been maintained at the levels attained then at the end of Key Stage 2. It is unreliable to draw firm conclusions from this, however, as the pupils cohorts are so small, and the nature of the tests has changed since then.

101. By seven, most pupils have a sound grasp of number operations to 10, and have good understanding of place value in writing numbers to 100. High attaining pupils compute money problems readily in their heads to values above £1. They learn to use standard units in measuring, and know the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. In recording their own work, they use a variety of methods, including the accurate use of symbols for addition and subtraction.

102. By eleven, most pupils tackle number problems skilfully, using a good variety of strategies, and presenting and explaining their answers clearly. They have many opportunities to develop an understanding of number patterns, and handle data well, setting out their investigations and results neatly, using pencil and paper and IT methods. They compute accurately, and high attaining pupils work at high levels for their age. They understand simple geometry, and

use their knowledge of angles to program and control simple robots.

103. Progress is satisfactory at Key Stage 1, but is good at Stage 2. Pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress, and good progress when closely supported by an adult. For instance, pupils in Year 3 with SEN made good progress in data handling, using sweets, as this was motivating, and the teacher was on hand to prompt and direct. There is a good concentration on the development of numeracy, and the staff have made a good start in their implementation of their planned introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. Both in mathematics lessons, and where there are opportunities in other lessons, teachers stress the importance of the speedy recall of number facts and accurate computation. A good example was seen incidentally during an art lesson, when the teacher asked the pupils to compute the artist's life-span from his birth and death dates, resulting in a series of other quick calculations which the teacher encouraged without interrupting the central focus on the artist's work. Pupils in Year 2 made good progress in spotting number patterns on a 100 square, after a fast recall and place value oral session with the teacher. High attaining pupils in Year 6 developed the ability to manipulate a complex string of computation problems, ending up with a seven-figure result, which they accurately represented on the calculator display.

104. Pupils' attitudes to their work are generally good, but vary from sound to very good. In general, they pay close attention during whole class sessions, being keen to offer answers to oral and mental mathematics questions. They listen to their teachers, and to each other, sensibly, and cooperate well in paired or group activities, such as playing number games, or using calculators. A group of Year 3 and 4 pupils, trusted not to eat the sweets given out by the teacher for tallying and data-collection purposes, were rewarded appropriately at the end of the lesson for their exemplary behaviour.

105. The quality of teaching is good overall at both key stages, ranging from being sound to being very good. The most effective teaching was seen at lower Key Stage 2, but all teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject as it applies for the age groups they teach, and have adopted the main messages of the National Numeracy Strategy well. They ensure good pace in oral sessions, and encourage the pupils to compute and handle number in their heads speedily and accurately. They plan the sessions well, having regard to the specific needs of the individual pupils, and have high expectations of their concentration, cooperation and application of their number knowledge and understanding. They make good use of commercially produced resources to ensure full coverage of the requirements of the National Curriculum, and introduce the pupils at Key Stage 2 to the use of IT for data-handling and work on spreadsheets. Homework is given regularly, and contributes well to pupils' progress. Marking of pupils' work is up-to-date and accurate, and in the best examples, challenges pupils to extend their thinking.

106. The Headteacher coordinates the subject effectively, and has planned and introduced the school's numeracy strategy well. She has also developed a useful system of evaluation of teaching and learning, which each teacher reports on termly.

106. Science

107. Results in national tests at Key Stage 2 and in teacher assessment at Key Stage 1, in comparison with the national average and with schools in similar circumstances, must be treated with extreme caution, as there are so few pupils in each year group. This makes such comparisons unreliable.

108. At Key Stage 1, teacher assessment in 1999 showed that pupils' attainment was broadly in line that expected by seven at Level 2, but below average at the higher Level 3. It was in line with those in similar schools at Level 2, but well below at Level 3. In national tests in 1999 at the end of Key Stage 2, all the pupils attained the expected Level 4, and one pupil attained Level 5, which maintained the trend over a number of years of performance well above the national average. Attainment was very high compared to the national average at the expected Level 4, but below it at the higher Level 5. It was also very high in comparison with that in similar schools at expected levels, but below average at the higher level 5. Standards of attainment have been maintained since the previous inspection.

109. Progress is satisfactory at Key Stage 1, and good at Key Stage 2. Pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1, and often make good progress at Key Stage 2 when closely supported by an adult. Year 2 pupils were observed discussing then recording their ideas about forces, and how they might use machines to increase their speed. They illustrated their ideas with drawings of bikes and skateboards, and one boy successfully described the use of gears and chain to transfer the force from foot to pedal to wheel. Year 3 and 4 pupils applied their knowledge and understanding of electrical circuitry to construct switched circuits, and to employ small motors to spin a clown's bow-tie, for instance. Year 5 and 6 pupils developed their knowledge and understanding of plants and the best conditions

for healthy growth by instituting a series of experiments to test how the removal of a particular aspect of normal conditions, such as air or water, would affect a plant in comparison to a control, grown in normal conditions. They demonstrate good understanding of fair testing procedures, and high-attaining pupils offer skilled explanations and evaluations of their experiments

110. Pupils' attitudes and response to the work is good overall. They behave well, and take part in experimental and investigative work with enthusiasm. They cooperate successfully in the use of space and materials, and develop good independent learning skills.

111. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is sound, judged on a lesson taken by a temporary teacher. However, from pupils' work and teachers' planning saved, it is clear that lessons cover the requirements of the National Curriculum, and promote investigative and recording skills well. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2, observed in two lessons, is good. Lessons are well planned to include appropriate experimental and investigatory work, although pupils are not always encouraged to predict what might happen in their tests, in order that they might then compare their findings with their hypothesis. Teachers organise these sessions well, and explain and demonstrate clearly and accurately, as when a teacher described the functions of parts of a flowering plant, using clear illustrations, followed by direct observation and recording by the pupils using an actual flower. Good links are made with other subjects, such as DT, and literacy and numeracy skills are reinforced effectively. Good use is made of resources, and pupils are helped to respond to the teachers' high expectations by skilled intervention, allied to opportunities for pupils to develop open-ended investigations. The curriculum covers all required elements, and promotes logical thinking for the pupils.

Information Technology

112. Standards of attainment are in line with national expectations by 11, and are similar to those reported at the last inspection. There was insufficient evidence to support a judgement at the end of Key Stage 1, although pupils use the computer to write stories, create and print pictures and play mathematical games. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have well-developed word-processing skills, use data-handling programs successfully, and are introduced to working with spreadsheets. They program robotic toys skilfully, and work effectively in controlling and adapting computer simulated models, such as mazes and surreal landscapes.

113. Progress is good at Key Stage 2 in those aspects of the subject seen, including for pupils with SEN, although there was little evidence of control technology during the inspection. Pupils learn to handle data using dedicated programs, and to present and print their results in a variety of forms. They become skilled in using word-processing packages, manipulating text on screen, and using a variety of fonts and methods of presentation. Older pupils begin to use spreadsheet packages successfully, and Year 6 pupils, who have been introduced to the work previously, help Year 5 pupils to familiarise themselves with the work. Many pupils have access to personal computers at home, and develop their research skills in searching information sources, such as encyclopaedias, selecting and printing the aspects they require. Some also use e-mail and the internet, and will soon have this opportunity in school as the rector from the link church is timetabled this term to help each pupil in Key Stage 2 to set up an email address, and to access the internet.

114. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject, and are eager to work in pairs to complete set tasks. Pupils in Year 3 sensibly operated an English program to find matched pairs of rhyming words, and older pupils searched a Shakespeare information disk diligently to help them in their work on "Midsummer Night's Dream". When the teacher is demonstrating a new application on the computer, pupils behave well, and concentrate actively on what is being shown, despite the often cramped nature of the space.

115. Teaching was observed only at Key Stage 2, where teachers skilfully led pupils through the intricacies of a data-handling package, and introduced Year 5 pupils to a spreadsheet program, reinforcing the techniques for Year 6 pupils, using good visual aids. Planning is effective, and shows that all the required elements are covered, or will be during the year. Each teacher has a timetable for pupils to use the computer in their classrooms, and expect the pupils to keep records of the time spent and activities undertaken. They encourage pupils to use IT resources at home, and regularly set homework which allows those with computer access to develop their understanding and skills.

116. The ratio of pupils to computers is six to one, and resources are being improved as funds allow. The school was recently connected to the Internet. It is planned that the rector will introduce the older pupils to e-mail this term, and will help them construct a school web site. The school has adopted recently published national guidance to help teachers with their lesson planning, and governors have adopted an effective scheme of work since the last inspection.

Religious Education

117. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection, but evidence is also taken from work scrutiny, discussions with pupils, and assemblies. No comparison is possible with the findings of the last inspection, as the subject was not reported in the Section 10 inspection.

118. Attainment by eleven is good against the expectations in the Agreed Syllabus, and pupils develop good inter-faith understanding from their close study of Christianity, Islam and Judaism. There is secure knowledge and understanding of the central tenets and beliefs of Christianity, reinforced by the retelling of familiar Bible stories and parables, with explanation and discussion., and pupils attain good standards against the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils have also explored Islamic faith, showing respect and understanding. In assemblies, they learn how Jesus told stories to illustrate issues of faith and morality, and are encouraged to think about how these stories affect their own lives. Progress is good across the school, including for pupils with SEN. Some of the writing by older pupils is lively and thoughtful, for instance in the guise of a reporter present at the wedding at Caana, or rewriting the story of the Prodigal Son from the viewpoint of the brother

119. Pupils generally have good attitudes to their studies, listening with reverence and interest to their teachers, and joining in discussions well. Occasionally, some younger junior boys find activities such as role play difficult, and start to be a little silly, but their teacher quickly restores order, and they settle down again to the lesson well. They behave well in assembly, offering sensible responses when asked, and leading prayers for the whole school quietly but sensitively.

120. The teaching in the one lesson seen at Key Stage 2 was good, and teachers' overall planning shows that the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus are followed. The teacher's secure subject knowledge and understanding was clear in the skilled questioning used, helping pupils to explain their own understanding of the Bible story of the widow's mite, and extending that to how this matches modern giving, for instance to charities. High expectations of behaviour and involvement were instrumental in controlling a potentially difficult situation, and channelling the excitement back to the lesson focus. Through good organisation, and appeal to the pupils' imagination, the teacher encouraged good progress.

121. Good links are maintained with the church, and the rector is closely involved in the school's work. Local places of worship, such as the foundation church, and a local Methodist church, are used to supplement the work in the subject. Very good resources are available to illustrate aspects of major faiths, many of them borrowed from the local authority loan service. Major Christian festivals are appropriately celebrated, in school or in the parish church.

121. OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Art

122. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall at both key stages, but make good progress in lower Key Stage 2, and by the end of Key Stage 2 achieve standards similar to that of pupils of the same age in other schools. Pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress, but some at lower Key Stage 2 make good progress in applying stylistic techniques from artwork studied. Infants have a variety of opportunities to develop their drawing, painting, and craft skills, including creating careful and colourful weavings on a twig frame. Some of their observational drawings of bicycle wheels are skilled, and most mix shades of green accurately when painting apples from life. They have painted lively self-portraits, which show joy and excitement in the handling of paint to express character. Younger juniors develop good skills in working from different artists' work to create their own pictures and images using aspects of the style observed. They offer imaginative responses to this work, and show creativity and perseverance in reproducing their own landscapes in the style of Cezanne or Chagal, for instance. Older pupils create still-life and observational drawings of great skill in their sketch books, although the work displayed in the classroom is not of the same standard. Many of the skills developed here are transferred to work in other subjects, partly in illustrating English or science work, but also in creating models in DT with an aesthetic approach. Little detail was given in the last inspection report about the subject, and no direct comparison is possible as to relative attainment and progress.

123. Pupils' attitudes to their work are good, and sometimes very good. They listen attentively when the teacher is introducing them to new techniques, and offer their views sensibly in discussion, respecting what other pupils say.

They behave well, and are careful to move round the cramped classroom without disturbing others, or upsetting water pots and paint trays. They concentrate well, and use their imaginations to employ the skills they have learned to create images and models which express their ideas and feelings.

124.The quality of teaching is good overall, and it is particularly good at lower Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1, the teacher promotes good observational skills, and introduces the pupils to a variety of techniques for recording their observations. Displays show good use of chalk and pastel in drawing a cycle wheel, and in a lesson in still life drawing, the classroom assistant encouraged pupils to observe closely, and mix the shades and colours seen carefully and accurately. This work is fully reinforced and developed at Key Stage 2, where landscape drawings, portraits, and still-life paintings are skilfully used to develop pupils' observational, drawing and painting techniques effectively. The teachers' knowledge and understanding is sound, and sometimes good, and helps pupils to develop skills and techniques, and to consider how different artistic styles might influence their own work. Impressive artwork on display shows considerable influence from a variety of cultures, including from native African and Australian sources.

125.Good additions have been made since the last inspection to the school's resources reflecting the variety of art from different cultures, and these are used well to increase pupils' wider cultural awareness.

Design Technology

126.Progress overall is good, including for pupils with SEN, leading to above average standards of attainment in comparison with those expected of seven and eleven-year-old pupils. Progress is very good when the pupils visit the local authority specialist design centre, where the pupils from both key stages work with skilled help in specialist workshops equipped with an extensive range of tools and equipment. Here, infant pupils made wheeled vehicles, with axles that allow the wheels to turn, and seating for a driver attached, using a glue gun under supervision. Juniors made motorised vehicles, some using plastic formers to cast the body shell, and applying a good variety of design and making skills, such as accurate measurement, careful cutting of resistant materials, and skilled fixing and gluing techniques. The recording of the project on paper, in text and drawings, was of good standard. Good examples of work undertaken also include designing and making a pair of slippers to fit their own feet, and currently working to the latest curriculum guidance in designing a shelter. Attainment and progress have been maintained at the levels reported at the last inspection.

127.Pupils' attitudes to their work are good. They concentrate, carefully considering design options, and work cooperatively in pairs and groups, sharing ideas and equipment willingly. They develop initiative well, pursuing specific points, and checking with the teacher if they need guidance.

128.The quality of teaching is good overall, and is enhanced by the work at the local authority design centre. Here, pupils have access to a wide range of resources and materials, in dedicated workshop conditions, with skilled technical support available. This has the double effect of providing the pupils with high-level experiences, where they develop designing and making skills strongly, and of helping teachers to develop their understanding of the subject alongside highly-skilled teachers and technicians. Attendance annually at the centre has helped teachers to develop good knowledge and understanding, and they have adopted the latest national guidance, following its advice and plans carefully. They plan their lessons well, providing pupils with an appropriate balance of planning, making, and evaluating opportunities. For instance, in making a pair of slippers, pupils were encouraged by the teacher to use an imaginative variety of ideas and materials in their planning, then to try out their ideas, and adapt and improve their developing models as experience grew. Teachers expect pupils to behave well, have due regard for safety in the use of tools and materials, and to set themselves high standards of finish. They help pupils to evaluate their own work seriously, and through observation and discussion, effectively assess pupils' developing skills and work in progress, using the information to plan further experiences for the pupils.

129.Resources have improved since the last inspection, and there is a good range of tools, equipment and resources available. The accommodation, however, still restricts how teaching and learning can be organised, although teachers and pupils adapt their work to its limitations well.

Geography

130.Pupils, including those with SEN, make satisfactory progress overall. Throughout Key Stage 1, pupils develop a sound understanding of the use of maps and plans. The youngest pupils draw simple maps to show the "three little pigs" houses in response to a story, drawing the houses and the roads between. By Year 2, pupils' maps become more

detailed and precise, as when they draw plans of the position of furniture in their bedrooms. They study maps of the United Kingdom and identify London, and their own village, Delamere. Pupils' mapping skills develop appropriately in Key Stage 2 and they become confident in using maps when seeking information about Nigeria, Ancient Greece and the climatic regions of the world. The previous report gives little detail, but it appears that levels of attainment and progress have been maintained.

131. Good use is made of visits and fieldwork to promote geography. Key Stage 1 pupils develop a sound understanding of attractive and unattractive aspects of their environment when they study features in the school grounds. They make thoughtful contributions to discussion, for example, "I like the Victorian garden because it is quiet". They study the weather and begin to use symbols to represent weather types on their maps. Pupils in Key Stage 2 steadily extend their understanding of places both local and world wide. They visit Chester and Tattenhall village producing useful maps to identify the location of different features. Good links are made with their work in history in such topics. They gain an increasing awareness of places further away, such as Nigeria and Greece. Through their studies of rivers they gain a more detailed understanding of features such as meander, source and waterfall. They know of major rivers in the world such as the Rhone, Niger and Danube. They study world climates and gain a deeper understanding of the impact of different climates on the people living in those regions.

132. Teaching is sound throughout the school. Teachers' plans are clear and activities are interesting. As a result pupils show a keen interest and enjoy their work. The school has a scheme of work that operates on a rolling cycle in each key stage. In Key Stage 2 insufficient attention is sometimes paid to ensuring that pupils are extending their geography skills as they move from year to year, particularly when all the year groups study the same topics. There are few resources such as globes and Ordnance Survey maps. These factors sometimes result in weaknesses in pupils' skills, for example in interpreting map symbols and using coordinates.

History

133. During the week of the inspection no history lessons were seen in Key Stage 1. However, examination of teachers' planning and pupils' work, and the lesson observations in Key Stage 2, indicate that pupils are making satisfactory progress.

134. When talking about their history work, pupils show a keen interest in the topics they study. This is particularly evident when they discuss the visits they make to museums and places such as Chester. The school places a firm emphasis on pupils learning from first hand experience and this is proving effective in engaging their interest in the subject. Pupils in Key Stage 1 develop a sound understanding of chronology when studying the different stages in people's lives. They draw a simple timeline placing a baby, grown up and old man appropriately on it. In Key Stage 2, pupils extend their understanding of events over a longer time scale extending back 4000 years to Ancient Egyptian times. The understanding of younger pupils in the key stage is significantly strengthened by the display of a large time line to which pupils add the new historical periods they study. This acts as a visual reminder, and reinforces their understanding of chronology considerably.

135. Pupils develop a growing awareness of their local history by visits to Eddisbury Hill where they learn about the different inhabitants living there in the past. Older pupils begin to understand its significance to these peoples and why they settled there. History is taught through topics where useful links are made with geography in such topics as studying Chester. Pupils have a growing awareness and understanding of people's lives in the past. They learn what it was like to live in Victorian times and the impact of World War 2 on the lives of children who were evacuated. They learn of famous people such as Christopher Columbus and appreciate the significance of his voyages on people's understanding of the world today. Pupils develop sound skills in examining artefacts and researching in reference books to find out about the past, for instance when examining replicas of Ancient Egyptian artefacts. However, the range of such experiences is not sufficiently comprehensive to enable pupils to pose and answer their own questions about diary accounts, old records, documents and photographs.

136. Teaching is sound overall with good teaching of the younger pupils in Key Stage 2 that reflects in their secure understanding and good progress. Strengths lie in the imaginative use of artefacts, displays and other resources to interest and support pupils in their work. Teachers use questions effectively to check what pupils know and to encourage them to think more deeply about their work. There are weaknesses, however, when opportunities are missed to check and reinforce pupils' understanding, for example in plenary sessions. The school has responded appropriately to its previous inspection report by adopting a detailed scheme of work. However, recent curricular changes mean less time is available than previously. As a result teachers select some parts of the scheme of work and have to omit others.

This sometimes results in skimpy coverage and insufficient emphasis on historical enquiry skills. The school needs to develop a more realistic scheme of work that clearly identifies how the skills will be developed within the topics covered.

Music

137.The previous inspection reported weaknesses in provision of opportunities for pupils to play instruments, to sing and perform for an audience and to respond to music, expressing their views. The report indicated a need for staff training to help teachers deliver the full National Curriculum requirements for music. The school has responded well to many of these issues, so that pupils now make generally sound progress throughout the school in music.

138.Pupils in Key Stage 1 identify and explore the sounds made by an increasing number of percussion instruments. They listen carefully to sounds made by their teacher and classmates, appreciating differences such as loud and soft, high and low and slow and fast. They handle instruments carefully, showing greater control and awareness of pulse and dynamics. They enjoy listening to music and record their impressions using words such as "fast and happy" to describe pieces such as "Morningtown Ride. Pupils in Key Stage 2 develop a keen listening ear, for instance when copying the sound compositions of other pupils, either by finger clicks, vocal sounds or playing percussion instruments. They are introduced to the use of simple notation by creating symbols to represent sounds and instruments when performing as a class. Older pupils learn to read formal notation, and have a growing awareness of major and minor scales when learning new songs. They become more aware of different types of music, including pieces from other cultures, and respond thoughtfully to the moods created by them.

139.Progress in singing still has some weaknesses. It is often spoiled by the predominance of low and out-of-tune voices. Pupils are not trained sufficiently to listen to the tune and to sing more tunefully, specifically in a higher register. The school has purchased an appropriate range of percussion instruments so that pupils play from a wider range. The school now offers, at a small charge, guitar and keyboard tuition, which is taken up by some pupils in Key Stage 2. A number of pupils in Key Stage 2 have private tuition in playing instruments, such as the violin and piano. As a result, there is a useful bank of musical expertise among the pupils. They have some opportunities to perform in school concerts, but opportunities for them to perform on a regular basis, either individually or as a group, for example in assembly, are sometimes missed.

140.Teaching was sound in the lessons observed. Since its last inspection the school has purchased useful resources, to complement the local authority scheme. These provide valuable ideas and support for the teachers who do not feel confident in their ability to teach the subject. However, these have not been adapted sufficiently to meet the demands of teaching mixed age classes. Teachers sometimes struggle to plan lessons that will extend the musical skills, and cover all the strands of the music curriculum, for the different year groups. A simpler scheme is needed, tailored to the needs of this school, to support teachers in their lesson planning.

Physical Education

141.The indoor accommodation severely restricts opportunities for gymnastics and dance, although it is timetabled for use by all classes, but there are good playgrounds and fields for games and athletic activities, and all pupils have opportunities to attend the swimming baths. Older pupils transferring to the main local High School have the opportunity to take part in adventurous outdoor activity during a joint-schools' residential trip in the summer term. During the inspection, only one lesson was observed.

142.Progress observed in the dance lesson was satisfactory. Most pupils attain at least the national expectation in swimming, and the school achieves well in team competitions against other local schools in football and netball. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils have a satisfactory repertoire of movements in creative dance, which they use successfully to create a group sequence dance based on weather formations, such as a tornado, or a whirlwind. One boy shows outstanding skill and a group of girls successfully illustrate a wide range of weather types in their movements.

143.Pupils' attitudes are good, and they clearly enjoyed creating the dance sequence. They behave and cooperate well, and concentrate successfully to remember the variety of moves. Some pupils develop leadership qualities well when leading their group in the sequence.

144.The quality of teaching seen was satisfactory. The teacher successfully encouraged all the pupils to take a full

part in the work. She had good control and a good working relationship with the pupils, which allowed her to prompt them to develop their ideas well. Although she had reasonable expectations of their progress, she could have raised the level of performance by pointing out how individuals and groups might refine their ideas and movements more. Teachers' planning, using both local authority and commercial scheme guidance, covers the subject well, and teachers take advantage of the good quality outdoor facilities as often as the weather permits.

145. There are good opportunities for both boys and girls to be involved in after-school games activities, and volunteer parents offer valuable support here.

145. **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

145. **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

146. A team of three inspectors spent seven inspector days in the school, including a lay inspector for one day;

- 79 observations were recorded, including 28 lessons or parts of lessons, totalling 40 inspection hours;
- over ten per cent of pupils were heard to read
- individual and group discussions were held with pupils about their work;
- a representative sample of pupils' work was scrutinised;
- records and reports of pupils' attainment and progress were examined, including the SEN register and IEPs;
- registers of attendance and the system were checked;
- discussions were held with all members of staff about their roles and responsibilities;
- a meeting was held with the governing body before the inspection;
- a meeting was held for parents, and discussions were held with individual parents during the inspection;
- the results of a parental questionnaire were analysed;
- teachers' planning documents and other school documentation were inspected;
- photographic and other evidence was consulted.

· **DATA AND INDICATORS**

· **Pupil data**

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full- time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR - Y6	51	1	13	5

· **Teachers and classes**

· **Qualified teachers (YR - Y6)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	17.7

· **Education support staff**

Total number of education support staff:	0.5
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	15

Average class size:	17.7
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• **Financial data**

Financial year:	98/99
	£
Total Income	120560
Total Expenditure	126741
Expenditure per pupil	2640
Balance brought forward from previous year	9649
Balance carried forward to next year	3468

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out: 37

Number of questionnaires returned: 16

Responses

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	9	2	1	4	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	8	5	1	1	1
The school handles complaints from parents well	5	5	2	1	3
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	7	4	1	1	3
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	6	7	2	1	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	6	6	1	0	3
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	5	10	0	1	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	5	5	2	1	3
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	7	4	2	0	3
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	8	5	3	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	10	6	0	0	0

Other issues raised by parents

At the meeting, parents expressed themselves pleased with the caring, friendly atmosphere of the school, and the pupils' standards of attainment and progress. They feel that the school promotes well the values and attitudes they support, and generally achieves high standards of behaviour. There was some discussion as to the school's response to complaints, and the consistency of its approach to matters of discipline, including bullying, with a minority expressing concern regarding specific issues. Written reports on pupils' progress were praised, as was the general level of information provided for parents, such as in the welcome pack for new parents. There was some confusion as to the school's current approach to the teaching of reading, although those who had attended a meeting to discuss this with the teachers had found it helpful. Most parents are pleased with the extra-curricular opportunities available for their children, and feel that they enjoy coming to school.

The inspection confirms the parents' positive views of the school.

A few parents spoke to inspectors individually, criticising the school's handling of complaints, and some disciplinary matters. They felt that the school was not sufficiently sensitive to the importance of the issues involved. However, an equivalent number of parents praised the school and the time and trouble taken by the staff to look after and teach their children.