

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Aston by Sutton Primary School**

Aston

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique Reference Number: 110993

Headteacher: Mr C J Abbott

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Reporting inspector: Mr R S Moseley 16886

Dates of inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> November – 1<sup>st</sup> December 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707036

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
Type of control:	County
Age range of pupils:	4 -11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Aston Lane Aston Runcorn Cheshire WA7 3DB
Telephone number:	01928 711953
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs D Coker
Date of previous inspection:	January 1996

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<b>Team members</b>	<b>Subject responsibilities</b>	<b>Aspect responsibilities</b>
R S Moseley, Registered Inspector	Science Geography History Equal opportunities	Characteristics of the school Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management The efficiency of the school Attendance
K Rowland, Lay Inspector		Support, guidance and pupils' welfare. Partnership with parents and the community Accommodation
S Mawer	Special educational needs Areas of learning for children under five English Design and technology Music	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Learning resources
M Forsman	Religious education Mathematics Information technology Art Physical education	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development The curriculum and assessment Staffing

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- The school has created a happy and rewarding environment, which ensures a very successful climate for learning. Standards are rising in a number of important areas
- Pupils have developed very good attitudes to learning. They behave very well and there are excellent relationships throughout the school.
- Teaching is a strength of the school. It is good or better in almost four out of five lessons and very good in just over one quarter of the lessons.
- The teaching of English and mathematics is particularly well organised.
- The support and guidance given to pupils and the concern shown for their welfare is very good.
- The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good.
- The school's partnership with parents and the community is very good.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership; there is a strong commitment by the deputy headteacher and the chair of the governing body to continuous improvement.

### Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Standards in information technology are below national expectations by the end of both key stages.
- II. Procedures to assess pupils' attainment and progress are not yet fully implemented for all the core subjects. Consequently, it is difficult for teachers to match work to pupils' varying stages of development.

**The weaknesses are outweighed by what the school does well but they will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.**

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

The school has resolved most of the weaknesses pointed out in the last inspection in 1996 and has improved in a number of other ways. With regard to the key issues identified in the inspection, the school has extended its mission statement, revised its long-term curriculum plans to fit in with the requirements of the National Curriculum and revised or provided schemes of work for most subjects. Teachers have been involved in a good range of in-service training and the monitoring role of the subject co-ordinators has been strengthened.

In addition, the leadership has introduced other improvements. For example, the curriculum has been enhanced for many pupils, as all years from Year 2 upward now have the opportunity to have a residential experience away from school. The accommodation has been developed in a number of new ways. For instance, pleasant sitting areas and quiet corners next to books and computers stimulate learning. Children's work is displayed in a manner that encourages pride, as well as providing information for others. A school council has been set up and this is developing a sense of responsibility in many pupils. The provision for the under-fives has been strengthened as these children are now taught according to the areas of learning for this age group. All staff are encouraged to work closely as a team and to suggest and implement initiatives of their own. A good example of this has been a successful home/school link for the under-fives. There have been improvements in the information technology resources. The school has successfully introduced new strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy. The management systems now in place, including the effective leadership of the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the dedicated team of teachers and the chair of the governing body, are successfully ensuring that all school improvements are sustainable. The leadership has a very good capacity for initiating further improvement throughout the school.

## Standards in subjects

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

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

Very high results are indicated for the national tests in English and mathematics for 1999 with below average results in science. However, meaningful comparisons from year to year with the national picture and similar schools are difficult to make because of the small number of pupils involved in the tests. In some years there is a very low number of pupils, often as low as nine.

The inspection findings indicate that for this year's pupils, at the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is above the national average. Attainment in religious education is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Attainment in information technology is below the national expectation.

## Quality of teaching

Teaching in	Under 5	5 – 7 years	7 – 11 years
English	Good	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good	Good
Science		Good	Good
Information technology		Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Religious education		Good	Good
Other subjects	Good	Good	Good

III. The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in all lessons. In almost four out of five lessons, it is good or better. In just over one-quarter of lessons it is very good or excellent.

IV. For children under five, all the lessons are good or better, with almost one-third of lessons being very good. In Key Stages 1 and 2, just over seven out of ten lessons are good or better. In addition, in Key Stage 1, nearly one out of five lessons is very good and at Key Stage 2, one out of three lessons is very good.

V. This is an improvement on the last inspection where one-quarter of lessons were good in Key Stage 1 and one-third were good in Key Stage 2.

*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	Behaviour throughout the school is very good.
Attendance	Attendance is very good.
Ethos*	Excellent. A happy and rewarding learning environment. Promotes excellent relationships. There is a commitment to raise educational standards for all.
Leadership and management	The headteacher provides very strong leadership. He has made many improvements, created a strong and dedicated staff and developed strategies to maintain improvements. He is ably supported by the deputy head and the chair of the governing body. The role of the governing body is in need of further development.
Curriculum	Broad and balanced, apart from aspects of physical education and information technology. The curriculum is enhanced by valuable educational visits.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good provision. However, the targets set in pupils' individual education programmes need to be made more specific and related more closely to the area of concern.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Overall provision is good, with very good provision for moral and social development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Staffing is good. Resources are adequate. The accommodation is used very well. However, inside accommodation for physical education is inadequate.
Value for money	Very good.

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

## The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
VI. They are encouraged to play an active part in school life.	XIV. A very few parents felt that the
VII. The school gives a clear understanding of what is taught in class.	XV. A very few parents felt that the school
VIII. The good standard of work and good behaviour achieved by the pupils.	XVI. A very few parents felt that the school
IX. Many value the amount of homework.	
X. The school's values and attitudes which have a positive effect on their children.	
XI. The way they are kept informed about their children's progress.	
XII. That pupils are encouraged to get involved in more than just their lessons.	
XIII. That it is easy to approach the staff with any problems.	

Inspectors' judgements support parents' positive views. Inspectors also judged that the amount of homework was appropriate, that the school does handle complaints from parents well and the school achieves very good levels of behaviour.

## **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

To maintain the quality of education and provide further development, the governing body, headteacher and staff should address the following issues:-

Raise standards further in aspects of information technology by:

XVII. Ensuring coverage of the control and monitoring aspects of the information technology curriculum in both key stages. (paragraphs 13, 36, 105, 106)

Strengthen teachers' planning further by:

XVIII. Improving and refining assessment procedures in English and in information technology.

XIX. Devising assessment procedures for science and religious education.

XX. Using these records to plan future work more accurately matched to the individual needs of pupils.  
( paragraphs 31, 39, 40, 89, 90, 103, 110, 116)

In addition to the issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. These are indicated in paragraphs 31, 34, 36, 41, 46, 59, 68, 69, 80, 103, 139, 144.



## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Characteristics of the school**

1. The school is situated in an isolated, rural position in the village of Aston, which is close to the industrial and urban area of Runcorn. The school has many notable features, including its own extensive woodland and school garden.
2. There are currently 94 children on roll. Very few of this number come from the actual village. Children come from the nearby village of Sutton Weaver and from other areas, including Frodsham, Dutton and Elton. The majority of the children, however, come from the Halton district of Runcorn. They attend the school due to parental preference. There is a mixture of housing types.
3. There are four classes, two at Key Stage 1 and two at Key Stage 2. Children admitted to the school have experienced a range of pre-school provision. This ranges from County-run nursery unit to playgroups. Some children have received no pre-school provision. Pupils have varying standards of attainment on entry, ranging from average attainment in all areas of learning, to attainment levels below average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is lower than the national average. At present there are eight. Though there are eight pupils on the special educational needs register, there are no pupils who have a statement of special educational need. The pupils contribute greatly to the strong school ethos. There are no pupils from ethnic minority groups.
4. The senior management team is now firmly established. The whole-school community is committed to further developing a strong educational vision. There is a caring ethos and a 'whole-school' approach to the curriculum. The efforts of the school are well focused, leading to positive outcomes for pupils in terms of personal and academic progress. The literacy hour and numeracy hour have both been developed to further enrich the education provided without detracting from the wide and balanced curriculum that is evident throughout the school. Parents value the efforts of the school and support by working alongside teaching and non-teaching staff on a regular basis.
5. The school has fostered strong links with other primary schools in the Frodsham area. 'The Frodsham Family of Schools' formed by Frodsham High School, Aston and three other Frodsham primary schools has strengthened links with the local community. This allows for children moving on to secondary education to make a valuable contribution not only to their own education but to the community as well.
6. Current priorities are: the continuing development of mathematics and literacy with targets set in liaison with the local education authority; the raising of attainment in information and communication technology and strengthening the links with the local community and its small industries.

6.

6. **Key indicators**

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
For latest reporting year:	1999	7	7	14

6. National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or Above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	7	6	6
	Total	14	13	13
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	93 (100)	93 (100)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

6. Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or Above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	6	5	5
	Total	13	12	12
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	93 (100)	86 (100)	86 (100)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

## Attainment at Key Stage 2<sup>2</sup>

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	6	9	15

6. National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or Above	Boys	5	6	5
	Girls	9	9	6
	Total	14	15	11
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	93 (50)	100 (56)	73 (50)
	National	70 (65)	69 (58)	78 (69)

6. Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or Above	Boys	5	6	6
	Girls	9	9	6
	Total	14	15	12
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	93 (63)	100 (69)	80 (69)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

6.

## 6. Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete Reporting year:	Authorised	School	%
	Absence	National comparative data	3.6
	Unauthorised	School	5.7
	absence	National comparative data	0.6
			0.5

6.

6. **Exclusions**

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during

6. **Nu**

the previous year:

Fixed period

**mber**

0

Permanent

0

6.

6. **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

%

Very good or better

26

Satisfactory or better

100

Less than satisfactory

0

## 6. PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

### 6. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

#### 6. Attainment and progress

7. Attainment on entry to the reception class varies considerably from year to year. In many years, the numbers of children are low, which makes meaningful comparisons with average size schools more difficult because of the wide variations that can occur. However, generally, the attainment of children on entry is below the standard normally expected of four-year-olds in all areas of learning. Children's progress is largely good and a majority are on course to attain the desirable learning outcomes specified in national guidance in all areas of learning by the time they are five, apart from in aspects of physical development.
8. In the National Curriculum tests for 1999 at Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 or above in reading was very high at 100 per cent and those reaching Level 3 or above was above the national average. In writing, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 or above was very high at 100 per cent but those reaching Level 3 or above was well below the national average. In mathematics, the percentage reaching Level 2 or above and Level 3 or above was well above the national average. At Key Stage 2 in English, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 or above, as well as those reaching Level 5 or above, was well above the national average. In mathematics, the percentage reaching the expected Level 4 or above was very high and the percentage reaching Level 5 or above was well above the national average. In science, the percentage reaching the expected Level 4 or above was above the national average but the percentage reaching Level 5 or above was below the average. When the school's average results for 1999 are compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, they are again well above the average at Key Stage 1 and very high at Key Stage 2 for English and mathematics but below average for science. However, with such a variable and low number of pupils in some years, often as low as nine, meaningful comparisons with the national picture or similar schools are difficult to make. The inspection findings indicate that, for this year's pupils, attainment is still above the national average in English and mathematics at the end of both key stages and also in science at the end of Key Stage 2. In science, at the end of Key Stage 1, standards are average.
9. By the end of Key Stage 1, many pupils attain above the national expectation in English and mathematics. They are in line with the national expectation in science. Pupils' attainment in aspects of information technology is below average. Attainment in religious education is in line with the expectation of the locally agreed syllabus. By the end of Key Stage 2, their attainment is above the national expectation in English, mathematics and science. Their attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education but below the national expectation in aspects of information technology.
10. In English, by the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment is above the national expectation in speaking and listening. Pupils at seven are articulate and fluent and use formed sentences and a good range of vocabulary. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are very skilled at discussing and evaluating the meaning and purpose of a variety of texts they study. For example, pupils in shared reading examine closely the imagery, humour and style of the poem 'Colonel Fazackerley'. In the plenary session, using the same criteria, they discussed the quality and effectiveness of their own poems. At the end of both key stages, attainment in reading is above the national expectation. At the end of Key Stage 1, many pupils have a good understanding of text and can read fluently and with expression. By age eleven, most pupils read well from a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books. Writing is also above the national expectation by the end of both key stages, although, by age seven, only a few are using joins in their writing. By age eleven, pupils write with a good expressive language and a good grammatical awareness. There are good examples of extended writing. Standards in literacy are above the national expectation at the end of both key stages.
11. In mathematics, by the end of both key stages, attainment is above the national expectation. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils count, write and recognise numbers up to 100 and have a sound understanding of place value and the zero number. They identify patterns in numbers, recognise halves and quarters and know a variety of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. By the age of eleven, most pupils have a secure understanding

of addition, subtraction, division and multiplication. They know their tables and can construct a range of graphs and charts. Pupils understand the need for a systematic approach to investigations in mathematics and higher attaining pupils can explain their mathematical thinking well. Standards in numeracy are above average at the end of both key stages.

12. In science, standards are in line with the national expectation by the end of Key Stage 1 and above these expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. For instance, by the age of seven, pupils have a sound understanding of life processes and living things, materials and their properties and of physical processes. By the age of eleven, pupils have a good knowledge of how materials can change with the application of heat. They have a good knowledge of plants and animals and can explain basic facts about the solar system. Throughout the school, pupils have developed an enquiring mind and in investigations they identify those factors which ensure fairness in experiments. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils carry out investigations in science well and reach valuable conclusions. Pupils use of an appropriate scientific language is good.
13. In information technology, attainment at the end of both key stages is below the national expectation in certain aspects. For instance, younger pupils get little opportunity to develop skills of making devices respond to signals and commands, such as giving a floor robot instructions and older pupils have little experience of control technology or of monitoring with sensors. However other aspects, like word processing skills, are satisfactory and some pupils have advanced skills in these areas. They are beginning to understand that computers can be used to improve many aspects of life.
14. In religious education, attainment at the end of both key stages is in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good knowledge of some events in the Bible and can retell stories leading up to the birth of Jesus. They have a basic understanding of Christianity and know that the Jewish faith has a different building in which to worship. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a deeper insight into Christianity. They have a limited understanding of Hinduism. The pupils demonstrate a high moral awareness when studying the Ten Commandments. Debating skills are well developed and much work is based on these discussions. This contributes much to pupils' moral and social development.
15. There are strengths in art and history. Pupils' artwork around the school shows some very good examples of observational drawings and sculpture. Many pupils in Year 6 have a deep knowledge of different periods of history. Attainment in the dance and gymnastics aspects of physical education is limited by a lack of appropriate hall facilities and equipment.
16. Throughout the school, there are strengths in speaking and listening, reading, writing and in numerical skills. Presentation skills are good. The skills needed for independent learning by using books and computers are satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2.
17. In many years, pupils enter the school with attainment levels that are below those expected for their ages. In some years, attainment levels are higher. Many attain standards above and sometimes very much above the national expectation by the time they reach the age of eleven in a number of subjects, including English, mathematics and science. Progress is therefore at least good throughout the school. The introduction of the literacy hour and the numeracy strategy is making a major contribution to this progress, as well as improved teaching strategies. The improvement in science is also partly due to the introduction of a good scheme of work. However, many of these initiatives are quite new and the good progress has not had time to build to even higher attainment at the end of Key Stage 2. Progress is less secure at times, in some core subjects, where assessment procedures and record keeping are not fully in place and, consequently, work is not always planned to meet the needs of pupils' differing stages of development. Progress is slower also, in the dance and gymnastics aspects of physical education, which is due to the lack of hall facilities. Within Key Stage 1, progress is good in speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics. It is also good in religious education, information technology and in art. Progress is satisfactory in all other subjects. Within Key Stage 2, progress is good in English, mathematics, science, information technology, religious education, history and in art. It is satisfactory in all other subjects, apart from aspects of physical education. There is no significant variation in the progress of boys and girls. There has been a good improvement in attainment and progress in English and mathematics at both key stages since the last inspection. Also, an improvement in science in Key

Stage 2.

18. The small number of pupils with special educational needs make good progress in language acquisition, mathematical skills, and social and personal development. The attainment of these pupils is generally below national expectations.
18. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**
19. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good throughout the school. They demonstrate positive attitudes and work with purpose, readily accepting the necessity to complete tasks. They show interest and discuss tasks constructively among themselves and with their teachers. They are proud of their work and set themselves high standards in presentation and completeness. Pupils are developing independent learning skills, which are notable among the oldest pupils who show good self-discipline. Personal research skills were evident in science and history lessons. Overall, pupils' attitudes make a very strong contribution to their attainment and progress.
20. Homework is accepted as a proper part of school life and reinforces pupils' personal responsibility for their learning. Pupils have strategies for finding help and will try to solve problems themselves. They are familiar with reference books and are developing competence in retrieving information with computers.
21. Pupils' behaviour is very good in and around the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Movement is orderly. They are sensible when opening and closing doors. Assembly in the main building is cramped but pupils enter and leave in a disciplined way.
22. They show common sense when moving around their classrooms and undertake routine tidying responsibly. Pupils are courteous and trustworthy and treat visitors politely. Behaviour is good in games and in extra-curricular activities. Pupils show respect for property and treat school resources with care. Books are taken home and returned in good condition. Equipment and materials are handled properly. Behaviour at lunch-time and in the playground is good.
23. The quality of relationships in the school is excellent and a strength of the school. This is particularly evident and effective for the under-fives who respond very well to these relationships and settle quickly into school life. There is an obvious mutual trust between staff and pupils, which fosters a good-natured rapport. Pupils show mutual respect and listen to each other. They share tasks and resources without fuss. Pupils turn confidently to their teachers and to all adults involved in the school. They are clearly developing a sense of personal worth and are learning to build good relationships with their peers. Older pupils look after younger ones as a matter of course. The school's ethos of valuing everybody has a very positive effect. The teachers present good role models for pupils and assist them develop confidence in building successful relationships. The shared philosophy creates a harmonious community.
24. Pupils' personal development is very good. The orderliness of the daily life in the school shows how well pupils share responsibility. Pupils co-operate well and work together in different combinations, in groups and in pairs. In games lessons in Key Stage 2, pupils played together sensibly in mixed age teams. In class, pupils sit together amicably, for instance in shared reading sessions or when using the computers. Pupils show initiative in class, sometimes anticipating teachers' requests.
25. The school has recently set up an elected 'Children's Council', which allows the pupils to put forward their concerns. The job of the Council was described convincingly by its members as being 'to sort out any problems the children have'. The Council has recently taken up the issue of the outdoor play area and is writing to the Sports Council to ask for help. Other pupils also show initiative in organising charity events such as a 'Bring and Buy Sale' for the current Blue Peter appeal. Pupils who act as monitors carry out their duties efficiently and unobtrusively. The Junior Road Safety Officers address the whole school on safety issues and run occasional competitions to maintain awareness.
26. Pupils are developing respect for other people's feelings, values and beliefs, through the study of world faiths in

religious education and in discussions in other subjects. They become aware of different values through the experience of the many visits. The experience of residential visits gives them the opportunity to develop skills of self-reliance and also the importance of working as teams.

27. There are no pupils with statements of special educational needs, but in the Reception/Year 1 class the pupils with special needs require support to succeed in managing their own behaviour. Pupils are totally integrated within the school and have good relationships with their peers and adults. Everything is done to build up self-esteem and avoid emphasising the difficulties of any pupil.

27. **Attendance**

28. Attendance at the school is very good and standards have remained high since the last inspection. The school performs well above national averages, pupils arrive on time and lessons start promptly. Registration satisfies statutory requirements and takes place with the minimum of fuss at the start of both morning and afternoon sessions. Parents support the school well and most absences are explained. Appropriate procedures are in place for monitoring and follow-up of any attendance issues. A good range of extra-curricular activities support and extend the curriculum and encourage pupils to attend on a regular basis.

28.

28. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

28. **Teaching**

29. The quality of teaching is mainly good with almost four out of five lessons being good and just over one-quarter of lessons being good or excellent. This record is a good improvement on the last inspection, where one-quarter of lessons were good in Key Stage 1 and one-third were good in Key Stage 2. For children under five, all the lessons were good or better, with almost one-third of lessons being very good. In Key Stages 1 and 2, just over seven out of ten lessons were good or better. In addition, in Key Stage 1, nearly one out of five lessons were very good and in Key Stage 2, one out of three lessons were very good.

30. The Reception class teacher and her classroom support assistant have a good understanding of how young children learn. They fully understand the details of the specific areas of learning for children under five. They provide a wide range of stimulating and purposeful activities. They use their day-to-day and baseline assessments of what children know, understand and can do, to plan future activities and identify what they want children to learn next. This gives the lesson and activities purpose and direction. The teacher adopts a calm and pleasant manner and forms effective relationships with the children. Classroom organisation is good and the teacher's expectations, planning and management of children is also good.

31. The good and very good teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is characterised by the use of a wide range of well thought activities and teaching styles to motivate pupils. Teachers manage pupils very well and achieve high standards of discipline. This effective relationship between the teachers and the pupils is a strength of the teaching, as well as a strength of the school. The teachers use of time is very good and lessons proceed quickly with little waste of time. Teachers have a secure knowledge of all the subjects they teach. The quality of the teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. For example, in a Year 4 lesson the teaching of literacy was particularly effective when computers were used to extend editing skills. Pupils were then challenged to explain these improvements. The effective teaching at both key stages in most subjects is also characterised by good written planning. There are clear lesson objectives and a list of well thought out ideas in a structured sequence. Some of the core subjects have defined assessment procedures and these are used to plan future work and to prepare appropriate work for pupils with differing abilities. However, in other core subjects, such as in science, information technology and religious education, assessment procedures and records are not yet fully in place. In these subjects, planning is not always as effective in providing work matched to pupils' needs and abilities. Teachers' day-to-day assessments are adequate and they do know the pupils' capabilities well. The schemes of work, which are in place for most subjects, support the planning well. A scheme of work for design and technology has yet to be completed. Work is sometimes marked well and contains helpful comments, which inform pupils how they can improve. However, this type of marking is not always consistent throughout the school. Good use is made of homework throughout the school to reinforce and extend the work being done in



the classroom. Some parents assist in classrooms and this is very much appreciated by the teaching staff. These parents and the classroom assistant are well briefed to ensure the smooth running of the lesson.

32. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is generally good, particularly when the work set in class relates closely to individual targets, and when the support assistant gives attention to small groups. This is particularly successful during literacy and numeracy lessons in reception where the support assistant is based and where there are the majority of pupils with special educational needs. The support assistant also gives a short individual withdrawal session each week to the special educational needs pupils where the focus is on literacy. There is close teamwork between the class teachers and the support assistant and staff are familiar with the information in the education plans for the pupils in the class. They use this information to plan appropriate work for pupils that meets their needs and enables them to make progress and maintain motivation. Sometimes homework is set which relates directly to the targets in the education plans.
32. **The curriculum and assessment**
33. The school provides a good quality curriculum that promotes the pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development. The curriculum is broadly based and well-balanced and enriched by a very wide range of visits and by the significant contribution of visitors to school. In addition, there are residential visits for all pupils from Year 2 to Year 6. These visits to the Foxhowl Centre, to Llandudno and to the Lake District provide a relevant setting for much of pupils' work and support across the curriculum. They contribute to the positive attitudes pupils have to their work and add depth and range to the curriculum.
34. The school meets the requirements for the teaching of the National Curriculum and religious education. Some aspects of physical education are not covered adequately. The limitations of the physical education curriculum are directly related to the inadequacy of the interior accommodation. The teaching of sex education and drugs awareness is integrated into the teaching of personal and social development, science and health education across the school. Appropriate time and attention is given to the raising of standards in literacy and numeracy. This is seen in the well-organised implementation of the literacy hour and the recent adaptation of the school's teaching of mathematics to the National Numeracy Strategy.
35. The school has improved the provision for the under-fives since the last inspection by providing a curriculum based on the nationally recommended Desirable Learning Outcomes for children under five. Activities, which are often based around topics, are delivered very well through teaching and structured play.
36. In both key stages there is satisfactory planning at all levels. There are effective policies and schemes of work in all subjects except design and technology, which is under review. The schemes of work are of good quality and make clear the expectations of what should be taught to pupils as they move through the school. In this respect the school has successfully met the issue raised in the last inspection and has secured the long-term curriculum planning. All pupils have the equal opportunity to learn and make progress in all subjects except in physical education and in some aspects of information technology. Although the school has adequate long-term planning for physical education, the inadequacy of the interior accommodation makes it necessary to select activities that can be done outside in good weather. For example, gymnastics in Key Stage 2 is done outside on the grass area in the summer term. This reduces the opportunities for progressive skill development. Long-term planning for information technology is good but the control and monitoring aspects are not given sufficient emphasis in implementation. There are co-ordinators for all subjects who oversee all subject planning. Teachers use common planning formats for each stage of planning. However, work is not always closely matched to pupils' different learning needs and insufficient note is taken of these needs in teachers' short-term planning. This was particularly evident in some planning for literacy. Teachers ensure curriculum coverage for pupils moving through mixed age classes by providing a two-year cycle of subject planning in Key Stage 2 and a three-year cycle in Key Stage 1.
37. There is a good range of extra-curricular sporting activities, including football, netball, rounders and cross-country. Participation in competitive sport with other schools promotes pupils' personal development. In addition, there is provision for drama, chess, guitar and choir and pupils participate in performances of music and drama. The school has a clear policy for extra-curricular activities that explains the school's provision in

Key Stage 2 and also the commitment expected of pupils and parents.

38. The regular pattern of homework contributes to progress in independent learning and helps to prepare pupils for their secondary education. The school's policy was recently reviewed and the provision now includes a homework diary for Key Stage 2, which allows communication between parents and teachers. A very few parents felt that homework was not consistent in some classes but inspectors judged that the amount was largely appropriate.
39. The school's assessment procedures are satisfactory overall but show some variation. In addition to the end of key stage statutory tests, there is a regular pattern of testing and assessment in English and mathematics in all year groups. However, assessment in science is not developed to the same level and is still in the early stages for information technology. There is no formal assessment of religious education. In the foundation subjects, assessment is related mainly to pupils' coverage of the curriculum and teachers keep regular records. Portfolios of work are kept for writing mathematics and science to illustrate different National Curriculum levels of attainment.
40. The school makes some use of the information gained from assessment. Assessment opportunities are identified in teachers' termly plans but the recording of assessment conclusions varies. Teachers know their pupils very well and make adjustments to meet their learning needs on a day-to-day basis. There are some examples of assessment information being used to raise standards through grouping of pupils. For example, the use of assessment in mathematics to determine the organisation of pupils into groups has helped in raising the attainment of older, higher attaining pupils. Information from reading age tests is used to monitor progress and teachers are beginning to use data from formal tests to forecast national standardised test results. The school has plans for improving the planning and assessment for science, information technology and religious education but at present, the use of assessment to inform long-term planning is underdeveloped in these areas.
41. The school has maintained its good provision for pupils with special educational needs since the last inspection. Provision overall is good but better in Reception/Year 1 where the support assistant is based. Pupils have equal access to the curriculum by means of individual education plans, which are of an adequate quality. Although targets are set they sometimes need to be more specific and related to the area of concern. At the moment they are too general and where mathematics or handwriting is identified as an area of concern there is no specified strategy suggested to improve provision. The targets are reviewed regularly to ensure that the plans remain appropriate. Apart from a short period of withdrawal the support is provided within the classroom. Assessment and recording processes that are part of the assessment strategies for all pupils are used in assessing the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Assessment of pupils' achievements soon after they start school to identify early any potential pupils with special educational needs.
41. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**
42. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school places a high priority on establishing a successful ethos in the school. This they do outstandingly well. The ethos is excellent and has a significant effect on the quality of education provided and is a strength of the school. These findings reflect the satisfaction expressed by parents on the promotion of high standards of behaviour and caring attitudes. Since the last inspection, the school has made some progress in improving the resources to support life in a multi-cultural society and cultural development is satisfactory.
43. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Assemblies are used well to promote a positive sense of community and shared values. A very spiritual approach to Advent was presented to the Key Stage 2 pupils and their responses were handled with great sensitivity. The assembly themes contain a strong Christian element and within stories, worship, music and prayer there is time for pupils to reflect on an understanding of themselves and the beliefs and values of others. There are good incidental opportunities to explore spirituality in certain areas of the curriculum. During 'circle time' and through class discussions in the literacy hour pupils listen and respect each other's ideas and express their own emotions and views. In religious education the lower junior pupils, through their role-play, experience some of the joy and relief of the Jewish people in being

set free to leave Egypt. In all classes the rich natural environment around the school is carefully studied to heighten the pupils insight into the beauty and purpose of life. Through art, pupils are helped to understand and interpret the ideas of many famous artists, with great care taken by the staff to display pupils work well. In the upper junior class poetry and other literature has a high focus and displays of the pupils' own work, alongside those of well known poets and authors, helps them to explore their own and other people's ideas and views. The contribution made by music is an improving element of the school's spiritual dimension, with the choir performing in church at important festivals.

44. The school promotes the moral development of pupils very well. The underlying basis of moral awareness is found in the respect and caring relationships that exist between all staff and pupils. The staff provide very good role models in reinforcing good behaviour and sharing positive values. Pupils respond well to high expectations of conduct and staff rarely need to correct behaviour. The school is a well-ordered community with established routines and pupils are taught to know the difference between right and wrong. The behaviour policy is closely linked to moral development, as are the discussions during 'circle time', which is a special period when the class gather together to discuss important issues. The sharing assembly each week is used well to reward pupils for their positive behaviour and concern for others. The mid-day supervisors are seen as having an important part to play in implementing the care and discipline policy of the school and they meet regularly with the deputy headteacher to discuss any concerns. All pupils feel safe and happy in the school and this has a positive effect upon the quality of learning. Moral issues are also explored successfully with older pupils through school initiatives on health and drugs awareness.
45. The provision for social education is very good. All pupils, parents and staff are valued members of the school community and relationships are excellent. The personal and social education programme is well designed to make a significant contribution to pupils' social development. Pupils under five are taught to listen to each other, to take turns and share. Other pupils in the school work together on shared tasks, such as when using the computer. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility. A School Council has recently been established to give pupils a voice in decision making in the school. They meet once a month with the headteacher and a parent governor and have recently planned a garden area in the grounds and produced a newsletter for parents and pupils. Older pupils are encouraged to take on additional responsibilities around the school and support the younger pupils at lunch-times. Residential experiences for all pupils from Year 2 and a very good range of after-school clubs and educational visits make a valuable contribution to social development. Local competitive events play an important part in school life and encourage pride in the school community. An understanding of the needs of others is shown by pupils through their involvement with charities. They are sometimes given the opportunity to organise their own activities for fund-raising such as filling boxes with gifts for the children of Romania and running a talent show. Pupils understanding of citizenship and links with the local community are very good and developing further.
46. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Good use is made of visits to museums, places of interest and the local church to develop an understanding of the local culture. The vicar is a regular visitor and the recent visit of a local sculptor to work with staff and pupils added a new dimension to cultural awareness. There are some opportunities in the curriculum for pupils to extend their understanding of other cultures in the wider world. With improved resources, multi-cultural awareness is promoted well in religious education and festivals through the teaching of Judaism and to a lesser degree Hinduism. Pupils also visit a local synagogue and cathedral. In other areas of the curriculum sound provision is made for pupils to appreciate the art, music and literature of some other countries but the respect for cultural diversity and the preparation for life in a multi-cultural society is not sufficiently developed through the school.

46. **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

47. The school provides a secure and caring environment for its pupils and the staff and governors maintain a high level of concern for the safety and well being of its pupils. Provision for support, guidance and pupils' welfare is very good overall. This is a small school and teachers and staff know and understand their pupils well. Non-teaching staff are an asset in the support provided for the pupils. Together with a good number of parents, they provide substantial in-class support for the teachers during lesson time and in a variety of curriculum areas. The support provided by adult helpers for out-of-school activities is highly valued. Lesson planning is good and policies are followed consistently. All pupils have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum. The site and buildings are clean and well cared for and this encourages pupils to show respect for their surroundings and

their environment in their work and their play.

48. Procedures for monitoring progress and personal development are good. Teachers have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of individual pupils and the presentation of stickers, certificates and other awards at the weekly assembly provides an effective inducement for good performances by the pupils. Teachers and non-teaching staff offer praise and encouragement to the pupils in all they do and this successfully raises their self-esteem. The academic development of the pupils is monitored informally by the teachers and formal assessment procedures are carried out in some subject areas. A written report is produced at the end of the year and this is used to inform parents of the progress of their children. Examples of good assessment procedures with a range of formal and informal tests are evident but this is not consistent across all the core subjects. Reading is very well monitored both at school and at home and the reading and homework diaries allow a good dialogue to take place between school and home. A range of extra-curricular activities support and enhance the learning programme and pupils gain valuable experience from field trips, visits to places of educational interest and residential activities. Pupils respect and care for each other and their environment as part of the school ethos and the family atmosphere which exists in the school encourages these values. This is reflected in the way pupils work and play in harmony and how they help and support each other.
49. Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are very good. The school effectively promotes this through its policies and through the care and concern which staff display towards the pupils. Sharing responsibilities with the pupils gives them an awareness and understanding of the standards expected of them. Parents expressed their appreciation of the standard of behaviour which the school promotes and support the initiatives which are applied. Bullying in the school is not a problem and pupils know what to do if they feel threatened in any way. The school ethos of respect and care for others is effective in teaching the pupils the virtue and values of good relationships and harmony.
50. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good and centred on making the school a happy place where pupils can work and perform to the best of their ability. This successfully achieves high levels of attendance and the range of opportunities which are available to the pupils ensures their continued very good attendance patterns. Good attendance is expected, pupils are happy to come to school and the attendance record has remained very good since the last inspection. Recording of attendance is in line with statutory requirements and procedures for notification of absences are clearly understood and carefully followed. Class teachers monitor attendance and unexplained absences are appropriately pursued.
51. The procedures for child protection and promoting pupils' health, safety and wellbeing are very good. The child protection policy is well established and understood by staff. The headteacher is the designated responsible person to whom all concerns are addressed. The school is a secure and safe area and the staff demonstrate a high level of care and concern for the welfare of their pupils and successfully promote their health and safety. Staff and governors have expressed considerable concern about the safety of pupils so near the busy de-restricted road which runs outside the school. However, staff do take appropriate action to counteract this hazard. The health and safety policy is of good quality and is well implemented. Four members of the school staff are qualified in first aid techniques and there is an appropriate first aid box situated in the main entrance area. All incidents are carefully recorded and well-established procedures are in place to inform parents of any injuries which their child might incur and the action taken. Good links are in place between the school and the various pre-school organisations and the links with the secondary sector are much improved and ongoing.
52. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support in their daily learning. They have access to a wide range of specialist services if needed and with whom the school has very good relationships. The outside agencies used regularly in school are the learning support and psychological services. They help assess pupils' learning needs and support staff with appropriate strategies. They also contribute to meetings if required.
52. **Partnership with parents and the community**
53. The school enjoys very good relationships with its parents and the links with the community are good and improving. Parents play a valuable and important role in the life of the school and in the education of the

pupils. The range of extra-curricular activities, field trips, visits to places of educational interest and residential activities effectively stimulates the interest of the pupils and provides them with good learning opportunities, both academic and social.

54. Communication between school and home is very good and parents expressed satisfaction with the quality and quantity of the information which they receive. They are well informed about the life of the school and the work and achievements of the pupils. Meetings were held to explain the procedures for the introduction of the literacy hour and National Numeracy Strategies and parents were advised how best they could help and support their children with these initiatives. Pupil progress reports are sent home at the end of each school year, but the school open door policy allows access to teachers at all times, so that any concerns can be effectively confronted as soon as they appear. The reports do not at present, identify information technology as a separate section, although pupils' progress in information technology is described. Two review evenings during the year add to parental opportunity to monitor the progress of the pupils. Parental support in the classroom is very good and parents play an important role in out-of-school activities and fund raising events as well as supporting social functions. The Parent Teacher Association provides additional support in these areas and gives valuable financial support to the school for the purchase of resources.
55. The induction of new children to the reception class is carefully and sensitively controlled. Staff visit the pre-school organisations to meet their prospective new children and, as a result, they start at the school in a relaxed and happy state and settle quickly to their learning programme. Sporting activities with other primary schools maintain the links with schools in the primary sector and develop the competitive instincts of the pupils. The school is a member of the local network of primary schools and headteachers meet regularly to discuss common issues to further the education of their pupils and focus on the needs of the community. Links with the secondary sector have improved since the last inspection. The school is now able to take advantage of the good facilities which the local secondary school has available and pupils from the school are able to spend some time at the secondary school in preparation for their transfer. Although parents expressed some concerns about the consistency of the homework set, there is evidence to indicate that they do support the school and their children with the work and that the work set helps to prepare the pupils for the next stage of their education.
56. Community links since the last inspection have improved and continue to be strengthened and are now good. The arrival of new leaders in both the school and local church have provided an opportunity to further the links and the school has taken advantage of this. The pupils visit the church to celebrate various festivals and to support the school curriculum and members of the church visit the school to take part in and lead assemblies. Visits to local farms extend the opportunities which the pupils have to integrate with the community and members of the community make use of the school facilities for their functions. The school supports several charitable organisations.
57. The parents of children with special educational needs are involved in the process of identification and are kept fully informed about their child's progress at all stages. All parents are invited to review meetings and most attend. Many parents help their children with homework. The school is very anxious to maintain open, positive and regular contacts with parents and work in partnership with them.

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

### 57. **Leadership and management**

58. Leadership and management is good overall. The school benefits from very good leadership by the headteacher. He is ably supported by the deputy headteacher, the curriculum co-ordinators and the chair of the governing body. The headteacher has provided a clear vision and a distinct educational direction for the school since his appointment two years ago. With the help of his deputy, who was appointed at the same time, he has fostered a strong team spirit, where all members of the teaching and support staff are valued and supported. A number of improvements have been introduced and standards are rising in a number of important areas. The curriculum co-ordinators provide positive leadership and all teachers are encouraged to introduce and develop initiatives of their own.

59. The governing body is supportive in many ways but some aspects of their roles are underdeveloped. For instance, only a few governors have curriculum links and some important posts are unfilled at present. The chair of the governing body is, however, fully committed to the school. She is very involved in school affairs, is a regular visitor and is often involved in professional dialogue with the headteacher. She is aware of all school developments and is very supportive. She is working hard to extend and encourage a stronger role for the governing body and to fill the vacant positions.
60. The headteacher monitors and supports both the planning and the teaching well. Although he has a considerable teaching commitment, he visits classrooms regularly. Teachers are observed in lessons from time to time and given useful feedback. The planning is examined by the headteacher on a regular basis. The leadership role of the subject co-ordinators has developed well. This was a weakness pointed out in the last inspection. They study teachers' planning and offer suggestions for improvement. They have developed or reviewed schemes of work and policies for almost all subjects.
61. The school's aims, values and policies are implemented well. However, the school's assessment policy is in need of further development. All statutory requirements are met. Development planning, monitoring and evaluation is good. The school development plan gives a clear framework for action. It is costed carefully. The staff and the governing body are involved in its preparation. Funding is linked to priorities and there are clear implementation strategies. Those responsible for carrying out development are identified. One weakness is the layout of the development plan. It is bulky and often too detailed and cannot be used well as a quick reference document. The headteacher is aware of this weakness and is intending to change the format shortly. He is also intending to give the pupils' School Council opportunities to contribute to the school development plan in the future. There is at present, no long-term strategic three-year plan for the school.
62. There is an excellent ethos in the school. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, staff and chair of governing body are committed to producing a happy, secure and positive learning environment where individuals are supported and respected. They have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and are committed to raising education standards and to school improvement. All these aims are applied sensitively and successfully. There is a strong commitment to equal opportunities for all.
63. The management and organisation of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The administration of procedures is satisfactory but no non-contact time is allocated to the special needs co-ordinator to carry out her duties or to monitor provision. However, through the regular review of individual education programmes with the special educational needs co-ordinator, progress is being monitored adequately. There is an identified governor for special needs. She meets regularly with the co-ordinator and has been successful in gaining a good knowledge and understanding of the work being carried out in the school. The governors' annual report and handbook for parents provides very brief information on special educational needs. Provision meets statutory requirements.
64. The school's leadership has been effective in moving forward in relation to all the issues identified in the previous inspection, as well as in a number of other areas. With regard to the key issues identified in the inspection, the school has extended its mission statement, revised its long-term curriculum plans to fit in with the requirements of the National Curriculum and revised or provided schemes of work for most subjects. Teachers have been involved in a good range of in-service training and the monitoring role of the subject co-ordinator has been strengthened and all key issues in the last report have been tackled successfully.
65. In addition, the leadership has introduced other improvements. For example, the curriculum has been enhanced for many pupils, as all years from Year 2 upwards now have the opportunity to have a residential experience away from school. The internal environment has been developed in a number of new ways. For instance, pleasant sitting areas and quiet corners next to books and computers stimulate learning. Children's work is displayed in a manner that encourages pride, as well as providing information for others. An elected 'School Council' has been set up and this is developing a sense of responsibility in many pupils. The provision for the under-fives has been strengthened as these children now receive their education based on the areas for

learning specified in the national guidance. All staff are encouraged to work closely as a team and to suggest and implement initiatives of their own. A good example of this has been a successful home/school link for the under-fives. There have been improvements in the information technology resources. The school has successfully introduced new strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy. The management systems now in place, including the effective leadership of the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the dedicated team of teachers and the chair of the governing body are successfully ensuring that all school improvements are sustainable. The leadership has a good capacity for initiating further improvement throughout the school.

**65. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

66. Staff are suitably qualified for teaching in a primary school and for teaching the under-fives. The pupil:teacher ratio is better than the national average. Teachers have a good range of experience and are able to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. Although three of the five teachers are relatively new to the school, the staff have formed an effective teaching team. Staff are well deployed and the range of specialist expertise is used appropriately. Staffing levels allow one mixed age class to be divided into year groups for literacy three days a week. All staff share curriculum responsibilities. Teaching staff in Key Stage 1 are well supported by the classroom assistant. All staff have very clear and specific job descriptions. The special needs co-ordinator is appropriately qualified and provides adequate support for staff in supporting pupils with special educational needs and in writing the individual education plans. There is only one part-time support teacher but she is sufficiently experienced and qualified to assist in the teaching of the small number of pupils with special educational needs and she is used well.
67. The arrangements for staff development are very good. Staff development needs are identified through discussion with the senior management and through formal audit of training needs. The school has sought specialist help in identifying training needs and matching them with school development aims. Recent in-service training has been extensive and has been provided in a range of ways, including attendance at external courses and visits from specialists to the school. Staff have received adequate training for the numeracy and literacy initiatives. The current school development plan includes several targets designed to improve staff development for instance the creation of individual development profiles for each staff member by summer 2000. Arrangements for induction and appraisal of staff are sound. Staff development provision includes the non-teaching staff and also the management roles of the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
68. There are sufficient classrooms for the delivery of the curriculum to the number of pupils on the school roll. The classrooms are clean, bright and attractively decorated with examples of pupils' work and other displays of high quality. However, with the exception of the mobile classroom, space within these rooms is limited. The school hall functions as a support room for reading and for dining at lunchtime and is used for the teaching of aspects of physical education. However, it is not suitable for activities which involve the use of larger pieces of equipment and the floor is not suitable for bare foot activities. There is not enough room for many aspects of gymnastics and dance. The school compensates for this by using the playground for these activities in the summer term but these aspects of physical education are underdeveloped. Outside, there is a good playing field facility and pond life area, but hard play area is limited and the surface is uneven. Part of a disused toilet block has been converted into a technology work area and the remainder into a bird observation unit. The school is situated in a wooded area and pupils make use of the excellent opportunities this presents to support and extend several areas of the curriculum. Despite the obvious limitations of space, it is very well managed by the staff. The caretaker maintains the school in a clean and tidy condition.
69. The quality, range and sufficiency of books, materials and equipment is satisfactory overall for the teaching of pupils at both key stages in all subjects and for pupils with special educational needs, apart from physical education, where it is unsatisfactory. The use made of these resources is good. Information technology resources have improved since the last inspection and are soundly used to support most areas of the curriculum. For the children under five, there is a shortage of large equipment for outdoor play. The quality of books in the reference library has improved since the last inspection but more are still needed in religious education, music and design and technology. There is also a shortage of non-fiction books. Teachers make very good use of visitors and the visits outside school support current topics and add richness and relevance to pupils' learning.

69. **The efficiency of the school**

70. The efficiency of financial control and school administration is very good. This is an improvement on the last inspection, where it was deemed to be satisfactory. The school secretary ensures the smooth running of routine administration and financial procedures. Spending is very carefully monitored by the headteacher, the chair of governors and a representative from the local education authority. The most recent financial audit raised no significant issues and the minor recommendations have all been addressed.
71. Financial planning is good. All major and most minor aspects of the school's development are planned for one year ahead in good detail. However, there are limited arrangements for longer-term strategic planning. Financial allocations for pupils with special educational needs are effectively targeted and fully used to promote the school's provision for special educational needs. Some of the carryover budget is used wisely to employ a classroom assistant. This gives extra support to the under-fives. The planning of teachers' in-service training is efficient and well linked to the identified needs of the school. The school development plan identifies all future plans but it is not laid out in a pattern which makes it easy to use. It is bulky and not suitable as a quick reference document. The headteacher is aware of this weakness and has plans to improve the layout shortly. Although the governors do not formally discuss the effects of the previous year's school development plan, nevertheless, they are aware of the consequences of their spending. For instance, they know that spending on computers has produced good progress throughout the school in information technology. They know that spending on books has helped to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy. Funds raised by the Parents Association and any other grants the school may get are used wisely.
72. There is a very good deployment of teachers and other staff. Subject and an early-years co-ordinator have been appointed and linked, where possible, to their particular interest, expertise and training. The caretaker is effective and efficient and keeps the building and surrounds clean and tidy. The school secretary also makes a major contribution to the efficient running of many aspects of school life. Staff make very good use of the accommodation and resources available to them.
73. Taking into consideration the amount of money the school has at its disposal, the good quality of education provided, the progress and high standards pupils achieve by the time they leave the school, the effectiveness of the headteacher to sustain and develop recent improvements, the school provides very good value for money.



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

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

74. Children are admitted to the mixed Reception and Year 1 class in the September of the year of their fifth birthday and attend full-time after a short staggered entry. At the time of the inspection there were eleven children under five in this class. Some of these children have benefited from a range of pre-school experiences. Good care is taken to ensure that children make a smooth transition to reception.
75. The attainment of children on entry to school this year is below average in all the areas of learning. This is confirmed by the baseline assessment results. However, attainment varies from year to year. Often it is average, but this year's intake contains a higher number of lower attaining children and one child with special educational needs. By the age of five, many reach the expected standards in all the desirable outcomes for children's learning. They make good progress in all these areas, apart from physical development, where progress is satisfactory. Provision is good. A few children are already working on the early stages of the National Curriculum in English and mathematics.
76. By the age of five, most children reach the expected standards in their personal and social development and progress is good. At the beginning of the year, there is a high emphasis on helping the few less confident children adapt to their new environment. They are now happy in school and settle quickly to their work. They display good levels of concentration and interest and work hard to complete an activity. This was very well demonstrated by a group of children making fairy cakes with a parent helper and carefully measuring and mixing the ingredients. Although they seek help when needed, many children display good levels of independence and initiative. They are very well behaved but, occasionally, become rather restless if asked to sit on the carpet for a long teaching session. Attitudes to learning are very positive. The children are considerate towards each other in activities, sharing equipment and tidying up afterwards. There is an accepted code of conduct which most happily accept and practice and which staff carefully reinforce. Children's spiritual and cultural development is developed well through celebrating festivals and visiting the local church, where they watched the vicar carry out an imaginary christening. Afterwards the children made and sent out christening cards.
77. The children make good progress in language and literacy and by the age of five, most reach the expected standards in this area of learning. However, the few lower attaining children on entry do not speak clearly and their vocabulary is limited. Well-planned activities help the children to express themselves in imaginative play, which at the time of the inspection was 'Mrs Wishy Washy's Laundry'. They retell their news from home, their favourite stories and sequence events in stories during the shared tasks in the literacy hour. There is a very high focus on adults supporting children in these activities and developing language skills in both planned and spontaneous conversations. Many children talk confidently about what they are doing. Higher attainers are beginning to use a clearly formed handwriting with upper and lower case letters. These children already have some understanding of the elements of a sentence and write a few phrases about their news from home. Average attaining children are developing emergent writing skills, while lower attainers are copying from a script. They all enjoy sharing books and handle them carefully. Most children are progressing well on the reading scheme. The literacy hour is helping them to read simple stories with fluency and there is a high focus in teaching on learning words contained in the national guidance.
78. Good progress is made in mathematics and, by the age of five, most reach the expected standards in this area of learning. Children can write, add and subtract numbers together to ten and count objects into sets. They are aware of larger numbers when they count together. All children have good opportunities for practical work, experiencing a wide range of sorting and matching activities, as well as developing skills through number rhymes and games. Children are confident in their knowledge of two-dimensional shapes. Nearly all identify squares, rectangles, circles and triangles. They recognise the hour on clock faces and are familiar with the passing of time in morning, afternoon and night. There are good opportunities in the teaching for children to learn the correct language in measuring objects and for well-planned structured water play.

79. Children are interested in their world and progress is good and, by the age of five, most reach the expected standards in a knowledge and understanding of the world. Interests are heightened by a good range of visits, displays and stories. The experiences from visits are often linked to worthwhile activities in the classroom, such as the study of water after visiting a boat museum. The children know what happens to water when heated and cooled, they carry out experiments on floating and sinking and write about themselves on a barge, dressing in the appropriate clothing. Children develop a good sense of time by looking at artefacts of how people washed and ironed their clothes long ago and act out events. Good resources are provided for the children to use cutting and joining skills to make a waterproof coat to keep teddy dry. They also create simple road and zoo layouts and work with computers using the mouse independently to assist their learning.
80. Satisfactory progress is made in physical development and many children, by the age of five, reach the expected standards of agility and co-ordination. The children manipulate pencils, scissors, brushes and other tools with a growing competence and skill. Inside the classroom they use a satisfactory range of construction toys for problem solving activities. There is a lack of opportunity for outdoor play because of the absence of a suitable area for large equipment and vehicles. However when the weather is fine gymnastics and outdoor play is arranged on the field. The very small hall with its uneven surface is unsuitable for gymnastics and is therefore not used. This lack of facilities affects the opportunities and progress of the children in some aspects of their physical development.
81. Children have many opportunities to express themselves creatively and are making good progress and reaching expected standards by five in this area of learning. Emphasis is placed on children choosing and mixing their own paints and materials in a variety of independent and guided experiences. They show well developed observational skills in the starfish and pebbles drawn and good colour and design awareness in their patterns in the style of Jackson Pollock. Children successfully experiment with different materials to make collage designs of the sea. Most children can express themselves creatively through music making. They add actions to their songs and create sea sounds in small groups with instruments. Children are given lots of opportunities for imaginative play. Examples have included an aeroplane and rocket.
82. Good planning ensures that all children under five gain the experiences required by the nationally recommended Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. Activities which are often based around topics, are delivered very well in teaching and through structured play. Good home/school links have been established. Parents are welcome to come into school at the beginning and end of sessions and a positive and friendly atmosphere has been established.

82. **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

82. **English**

83. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds the proportion of pupils who reached the nationally expected standards in reading and writing was well above the national average in comparison to all schools and well above average when compared with schools which have pupils from similar backgrounds. In the 1999 tests for eleven year olds attainment was very high in comparison to all and similar schools. Bearing in mind the small number of pupils who take the tests and therefore the variability of scores from one year to another, the general pattern at both key stages since the last inspection is one of rising standards. The inspection findings for the current Year 2 and Year 6 indicate that pupils' performance is above national expectations. However, in Year 6, there are several pupils who show evidence of even higher attainment, especially in speaking, listening and reading. The recent concentrated initiatives within the literacy hour, improved planning and teaching and the monitoring of test results have all contributed towards improved standards of attainment and the good progress being made in the school.
84. At the end of both key stages pupils achieve above average standards in speaking and listening. Pupils at seven are articulate and fluent and use well-formed sentences and a good range of vocabulary. Their responses are considered and appropriate, reflecting the good quality of their listening skills, especially during the literacy hour. Higher attaining pupils speak clearly and during the class shared reading of 'Suddenly' they confidently

explain their understanding of the plot and the characters. The very few lower attaining pupils answer questions related to the text but lack some fluency of speech. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are very skilled at discussing and evaluating the meaning and purpose of a variety of texts they study. For example, pupils in shared reading examine closely the imagery, humour and style of the poem 'Colonel Fazackerley'. In the plenary session, using the same criteria, they discussed the quality and effectiveness of their own poems. Pupils engage in very good levels of conversation with adults in which their ideas and opinions are carefully considered, reflecting the good quality of their listening skills. They are also given more formal opportunities for speaking and listening to a wider audience at special assemblies, for example in church and drama productions.

85. Reading standards exceed national expectations at the end of both key stages and this represents an improvement since the last inspection. At the end of Key Stage 1, many pupils use good expression and read fluently. They have a good understanding of the text and are beginning to recognise the structure of stories and use the correct vocabulary to evaluate books. All pupils, including the very few lower attainers, use a wide range of strategies to read new words and to self correct more difficult ones. Additional books to support the literacy hour, and particularly the use of the big books has improved the level of enjoyment shown by the pupils in their reading. However, only a few know the names of any well-known authors. Pupils show a good understanding of alphabetical order in using dictionaries to check their spellings and the index of reference books for information. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils are able to discuss, analyse and evaluate the texts they read with clarity and understanding. They read expressively and fluently from a wide range of fiction and some non-fiction books. Many have favourite authors and discuss their preferences for the different styles of writing. The library is still being established but most pupils are proficient in finding information from books for research in other subjects, although they are not always familiar with the catalogued library system. There is a shortage of non-fiction books and particularly sets of reading guidance books.
86. Writing by the end of both key stages is above the national average. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. By the time they are seven years old, most pupils' handwriting is clear and well formed but only a few are using joins in their writing to prepare them for a cursive script. After a local visit to the canal, pupils demonstrate a very good awareness of the structure and sequencing of events. Their ideas in this extended writing are imaginative, varied and clear. Spellings are accurate and the use of punctuation, including some speech marks, is used well. Pupils also design and make their own book covers for this writing and illustrate the text with 'pop up' pictures. There are frequent opportunities during the literacy hour to practise phonics rules to improve spellings and pupils are confident in using these skills independently in their written work. There are some very good examples of different forms of writing, including letters to Cinderella, diaries of events at home and information books on bears. Some of the written work is linked well to other areas of the curriculum, such as writing out formally the result of a science experiment on waterproof materials. The very small minority of lower attaining pupils who are in Year 2 can write sentences with some adult support and spell simple words correctly. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils use good expressive language and grammatical awareness in a variety of well structured and planned work that includes letter writing, book reviews, poetry, newsletters and the results of science experiments. There are good examples of extended writing, such as the pupils' own version of the introduction to King Lear. Good links are made with art and design and technology in the way batik patterns and block printing are used for the book covers of these stories. Information technology is used to edit the script to presentation standards. Although written work is often very well presented, some of the most able pupils have the tendency to print their work, rather than use cursive joined script.
87. Progress is good at both key stages for most pupils, including those with special educational needs. This progress and improvement in attainment is very closely linked to the good quality of teaching in the literacy hour. The challenge of the focus in the shared tasks where key skills are taught and the well-planned independent work helps considerably to accelerate progress. The plenary session is used well in most cases to extend and reinforce ideas from the lesson and provide valuable feedback. Pupils in Year 1 learn to speak clearly, widen their vocabulary and listen more carefully. During Key Stage 2, discussion skills develop well, particularly in extending pupils' technical vocabulary across many areas of the curriculum. In reading during Key Stage 1, pupils move progressively through the reading scheme and staff place a high priority on hearing pupils read during guided reading sessions and at other times. Improvements have been made since the last inspection on providing guidance for parents to challenge pupils when they hear them read in school and at home. Pupils progress by using the appropriate strategies for most of them to become confident and independent readers in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, progress in writing skills develops consistently, with the

emphasis on sentence construction, spelling and punctuation and writing for a range of purposes. Very good extended writing in Year 2 builds on this progress as pupils learn to plan their stories. Handwriting skills are slower to develop as pupils are not prepared early enough for the transition from printing to cursive script. Pupils in Key Stage 2 improve the structure, content, grammar and punctuation and continue to make good progress in writing for many different purposes. Collaborative writing is less evident and not as strong. Pupils in Year 3 write their own glossary for castles, while pupils in Year 4 translate the story of the 'Ballen Whales' into a poem. Pupils in Year 5 build on these skills to sequence the main headlines for the story of 'Macbeth.' Recently, more opportunities have been found for pupils to use information technology to extend editing skills but there is still further scope for development. Although older pupils make better use of the improved central reference library since the last inspection, there is still a shortage of books in some areas, which limits the opportunities pupils have to develop their study skills further. There is a very stimulating environment within the school where literacy has a high focus and where resources and displays help pupils improve the quality of their work and the motivation to succeed.

88. All pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and work with high levels of concentration and enthusiasm to complete their work successfully. They also take considerable pride in the presentation of their work. Years 5 and 6 pupils display maturity and dedication in their approach to work and are often completely absorbed in the very challenging tasks that are set for them. Relationships are excellent, with pupils and staff giving help and encouragement to anyone who has a problem. Behaviour is very good and enables productive learning to occur, especially in the tasks where pupils have the initiative and self-control to work independently.
89. The quality of teaching in both key stages is mainly good or better with no unsatisfactory teaching. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. Staff have a secure and confident subject knowledge and share a common understanding of literacy and how best to promote it. In the most successful lessons planning is detailed and focused on practising and improving key skills, matched correctly to the stage of pupils' learning. Teachers have high but realistic expectations of their pupils and challenge them very well through effective levels of questioning and discussion and the good use of resources. Very good classroom practices and management of time are established, enabling brisk and productive learning to occur without distractions. Staff have a positive and consistent approach in their outstanding relationships with the pupils, who are always encouraged to do their best. There is, very occasionally, some lack of consistency in the quality of this good teaching. Planning is not always sufficiently detailed, particularly when similar work is given to all the groups in the independent tasks without considering the range of ability and whether the task is appropriate. The pace of the lesson is slower and time is not managed efficiently to ensure that the plenary is used productively. Although there are some systems in place to assess the progress pupils make and teachers mark work constructively, the day-to-day recording of assessment to help staff plan more effectively is in the early stages of development.
90. The subject is well managed and the co-ordinator has very successfully prepared the staff for the literacy hour. She is experienced and committed to continue the improvements needed in implementing an effective recording system of assessment for the literacy hour and further resources. The monitoring of planning and teaching has been successfully carried out by the headteacher, the local education authority, school adviser and the co-ordinator.

90. **Mathematics**

91. Pupils' attainments are higher than the nationally expected levels at the end of both key stages. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection. By the end of Year 2, a significant number of pupils attain standards which are well above the national expectation. The statutory test results for 1999 showed that the proportion of pupils who attained at least the national target of Level 2 was well above average. The proportion who attained the higher Level 3 standards was also well above average. Pupils' performance in the tests was well above average when compared with all schools and compared with schools which have pupils from similar backgrounds. By the end of Key Stage 2, a significant number of pupils are above the average levels. The statutory test results for 1999 were very high in comparison with the national expectation. Pupils' performance was very high in comparison with schools from similar backgrounds. These results show an improvement on the results for the previous year. The small size of the cohort however, means that comparison with national

averages and with similar schools is more difficult as there can be wide variations from year to year.

92. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils count, write and recognise numbers up to 100 and have a sound understanding of place value including zero. They find numbers matching complex criteria such as a multiple of two and greater than 20. They add a series of two digit numbers. They know the tables to five and use their knowledge to multiply and divide numbers. Pupils identify patterns in number squares and complete patterns in sequences. They recognise halves and quarters and know a variety of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. Pupils use correct terminology for shapes and refer to faces, edges and corners. They sort out objects well. Pupils tally information and record it in simple charts. They know there are standard and non-standard measures. Higher attaining pupils make deductions from their observations such as realising that even numbers can be divided by two and recognise different patterns on a hundred square.
93. By the end of Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils have a very secure understanding of addition, subtraction, division and multiplication. They have good mental recall of tables up to 12 and know place value up to five digits. They add and simplify fractions and can use percentages. Their mental arithmetic skills are good. Pupils are familiar with the properties of a range of shapes and solids and have investigated symmetry. They construct graphs to represent data obtained through their investigations and are familiar with a range of other graphs and charts. They measure distances and angles accurately and make sensible estimates. They understand the terminology of range, mean, median and average and give examples when working with data. Pupils are flexible in their approach to calculations and have undertaken a range of investigations, for instance by devising and conducting surveys. They understand the need for systematic approach to investigations and organise their work well.
94. Within Key Stage 1 progress is good. Pupils are developing their knowledge of mathematical language and symbols and can choose the appropriate terms when ordering and sorting. Progress was very good in some lessons on shape when younger pupils were able to distinguish between cube and cuboid accurately. Pupils are beginning to use their understanding of addition and subtraction to solve problems, such as taking £1 off a price. The use of information technology is reinforcing knowledge and understanding of mathematical operations. Within Key Stage 2 progress is good. Pupils demonstrate an increasing confidence in mental and written calculations, drawing upon the multiplication tables and number bonds they have learnt by heart. Good progress was evident in lessons on time as pupils gained confidence in the use of the language associated with telling the time in different forms. After the good start in Key Stage 1, progress in handling data is enhanced by increased use of databases and opportunities for pupils to conduct their own surveys, for example comparing environments in the school grounds.
95. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has had a beneficial impact on standards in numeracy. Pupils in both key stages have competence and confidence with numbers and operations. They are developing a repertoire of computational skills and apply them to a range of problems in mathematics and in other areas, for example information technology and science. There is good provision for pupils of differing abilities who are provided with work which matches their learning needs.
95. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. They persevere in their tasks showing interest and enthusiasm. They talk about their tasks constructively and explain the purpose to others. Pupils demonstrate flexibility in their approach and can call on different strategies to solve problems. They behave well in lessons and settle quickly to tasks with a suitable increase in pace in Key Stage 2. Pupils in both key stages use resources appropriately and treat them with care and respect.
96. The quality of teaching in both key stages is good and often very good and promotes effective learning. A good example of this is where the teaching encourages pupils to explain their mathematical thinking. Subject expertise is very secure throughout the school. Teachers manage the numeracy format of lessons well and maintain a good pace particularly in mental arithmetic sessions. Teachers in both key stages are able to set work that is appropriately challenging. They devise approaches which intrigue pupils and create genuine interest in problems. Homework is used regularly for extension and reinforcement.

97. The subject is managed effectively. The quality of long-, medium- and short-term planning is good and matches the requirements of the numeracy strategy. The school is providing a structured programme, which ensures coverage of the numeracy framework and emphasises mental arithmetic. Short-term planning includes assessment opportunities. The school has invested in an updated version of the commercial scheme of work for Key Stage 1. Until the Key Stage 2 version is available, teachers are selecting appropriately from the old scheme to match the numeracy targets and are providing good challenge and progression. The school is making full use of the assessment resources incorporated in the mathematics scheme of work. This provides regular testing and systematic records for individual pupils. Teachers have detailed information about pupils' progress and use it to match work to the needs of pupils and to reorganise groupings when necessary. A school portfolio shows a range of work from different abilities throughout the school. Because of the variations in the size and composition of year groups, the school recognises the need for tracking and forecasting the performance of pupils. The quality of resources for mathematics is good. Resources and materials are of good quality and sufficient in quantity.

98. **Science**

98. In the National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds in 1999 the pupils attained standards which were below the national average. In comparison to schools with pupils with similar backgrounds, the performance of pupils, at the end of Key Stage 2, was also below average. However, meaningful comparisons with the national picture and similar schools is difficult because of the small numbers of pupils involved in the tests. The inspection findings indicate that for this year's pupils there is an improvement in standards in all aspects of science. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in science matches the level expected for their ages. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment exceeds the national expectation. These levels are similar to the findings of the last inspection. These improvements are not only related to differing abilities in the year groups but also to the introduction of a revised scheme of work and improved teaching strategies. The improvements coming from the literacy hour have also helped to raise standards in science by developing reading and writing skills.

99. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of all the components of science. For instance, they know that different materials are suitable for different purposes. Some are waterproof and others are not. They can identify some objects that are magnetic and some that are not. They investigate simple changes to materials, such as water freezing or melting. Pupils investigate a range of leaves and explain their characteristics. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above average in a knowledge of life processes and living things, materials and their properties and in physical processes. For instance, they explain how a liquid perfume gives off its smell by changing its state, or what happens to the water in a puddle as it shrinks in dry weather. Work in their books indicates that the pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of astronomy and understand eclipses. Pupils' standards in experimental and investigational science at the end of Key Stage 1 is sound and at the end of Key Stage 2 is good. For example, Year 6 pupils investigate a range of concepts to do with condensation and evaporation and work together to achieve good results and explain their discoveries clearly. They understand the importance of trying to predict the results of their investigations and the importance of setting up a fair test. Speaking and listening skills are well developed in science. Pupils' ability to use information technology is developing well. Pupils' skills to record work in their books is satisfactory.

100. Within Key Stage 1, the progress of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory. In Key Stage 2, progress is good for all pupils. In Year 2, sound progress was seen in a lesson where the teacher challenged the pupils to investigate a range of materials, such as plastic, cloth and paper. Pupils had to determine which would be more suitable for making into a raincoat. They had to set up a fair test and analyse the results of their investigations. By the end of the lesson they could explain to others what they had found out. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 have progressed well in their knowledge of a range of scientific concepts. Many are able to make a series of observations and measurements with precision and can offer explanations for any differences they have observed. For instance, descriptions of the differences between gases and liquids are well advanced and demonstrate a good depth of knowledge. Progress in the use of an appropriate scientific vocabulary throughout the school is generally good. Progress is slower at times when work matched to the individual learning needs of pupils is not always planned.

101. In all lessons, pupils' attitudes to science are very good. They listen carefully and work conscientiously and willingly. They enjoy science and work both independently and, when required, in co-operation with others to achieve results. They respond well to question and answer sessions, as in the lesson on human teeth and healthy eating in Year 4. Most pupils sustain concentration and, when given the opportunity, respond appropriately to challenges.
102. In a majority of lessons, the quality of teaching in both key stages is good, with some very good teaching on occasions. In the more effective lessons, teachers' knowledge is good and their questioning techniques challenging. Teachers usually explain the scientific concept or lesson objective clearly. On occasions, this is not so and then a few in the class are unclear of what they are trying to find out. In experimental work, teachers stress the importance of predicting results and setting up a fair test. Teachers use a variety of strategies and well thought out activities to motivate their pupils. Teachers plan well for lessons to ensure the progressive development of skills, knowledge and understanding throughout the lesson. Day-to-day assessment in science is satisfactory but there are no arrangements for keeping regular assessment records. Consequently, there is no clear picture of the levels of attainment of each pupil and appropriate work matched to the learning needs of different pupils is not always provided. A start has been made by the co-ordinator to produce a portfolio of children's work and assessment procedures are planned for. Homework is given to pupils and this helps their progress and attainment. The quality of marking in pupils' books is variable. On occasions, it is good when pupils are given helpful comments so that it is clear to them what they have to do to improve.
103. The quality of leadership to support the teaching is good. The new scheme of work is good and is being adapted to the individual needs of the school. The school grounds are used well as a resource for learning. A new area is being developed at present, which will enable pupils to be more closely involved in practical growing and investigation work. The subject is enhanced by a number of out of school day visits to such places as the Blue Planet Aquarium. Residential visits often include a scientific aspect, such as those to Foxhowl and Grasmere, where pond dipping and other nature study activities occur.

104. **OTHER SUBJECTS**

104. **Information technology**

104. Pupils' attainment in information technology is below national expectations at the end of both key stages. In the last inspection, nearly four years ago, attainment matched the national expectation. Pupils' attainment in the communicating and handling aspect of the subject is in line with national expectations but attainment in the control and monitoring aspect falls below expectations in both key stages. Some individual pupils are attaining above national expectations in communicating information in Key Stage 2.
105. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils enter simple text to convey information. For example, in Year 2 pupils used word processing to recount the story of the Titanic. They know that data can be stored and retrieved and used a tape recorder effectively to record what they had found out about the sinking. They use painting programs to produce pictures for their stories and for topics such as portraits of 'Ourselves'. The regular use of information technology to support other areas of the curriculum enables pupils to become familiar with the use of the keyboard and the mouse. Pupils' experience of controlling a robot model or giving instructions to a computer program is limited and attainment is below expectations.
106. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are developing expertise in communicating information. They use desktop publishing packages to combine text, graphics and borders effectively. They have produced posters for their own events such as the Blue Peter sale. They understand how to conduct simple searches and retrieve information from encyclopaedia on CD-Rom. Pupils in Year 6 enter information into databases and select data for presentation in graph form. They know how to refine graphs with labels on the axis and explanatory text and they are aware of the range of graph types. They have little experience of control technology or of monitoring with sensors and attainment is below expectations in these areas.

107. Pupils are now making good progress in both key stages. Recent growth in resources and improved management has increased pupils' access to information technology and the rate of progress has improved significantly. In Key Stage 1, pupils are attempting combinations of pictures and writing. The younger pupils Key Stage 2, use word processing well and combine text and graphics at levels above the national expectations. Access to the dedicated portable word processors has enabled pupils to develop their individual skills. Some pupils in Year 4 can transfer the image from a digital camera to a desktop publishing package unaided, for example to record their art work. Pupils of all ages are showing increasing confidence and awareness of information technology particularly in the broader aspects of communicating information such as email, internet, CD Rom and digitised images. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in the targets set for them. Pupils have positive attitudes to their work. They sustain concentration and persevere with tasks. They co-operate well and share computers amicably. They treat equipment sensibly and follow proper procedures, for example in logging on and recording their tasks.
108. The quality of teaching is sound in both key stages but has not yet had time to raise standards in certain aspects. Teachers make a good choice of programs to support other subjects using information technology. They identify appropriate contexts for the development of information technology skills for example in the numeracy hour when good use is made of the set of portable word processors. Teachers plan to use information technology in their lessons and make good use of support staff.
109. The management of the subject is now very effective. The co-ordinator has a good overview of the subject and has made an accurate assessment of the overall standards. This provides appropriate targeting of work based on knowledge of previous attainment. The curriculum is based on the nationally recommended scheme, which is broad and balanced and provides good guidance for teachers. Assessment of individual progress is in the early stages of organisation. Consequently, at times work is not always planned to meet individual needs. There is a forward looking subject policy and satisfactory provision for in-service training. There are very good plans in hand for the development of the subject, which include assessment, use of the Internet, co-operation with the local schools network and improvement in pupil attainment in the control aspect.
110. The quantity and quality of resources are good. The ratio of computers to pupils is better than the national average. There is a good range of software, CD-Rom titles and peripheral equipment.
111. **Religious Education**
111. Standards of attainment for pupils at the end of both key stages meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. It was a similar picture in the last inspection. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good knowledge of some of the events in the Old and New Testament and can retell stories from the Bible and particularly the events leading up to the birth and death of Jesus. After a visit to the local church, pupils can describe in some detail the various parts of the building and what happens in each area. They understand that the Jewish faith has a different place in which to worship than Christians and know some of the special events celebrated in places of worship. They write their own prayers, expressing their concerns for others and know why famous people like St Francis and Mother Theresa were special. They understand clearly what it is to belong to a community and how peoples' views should be respected. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils gain many insights into Christianity and spend some time considering Judaism. Although a study of Hinduism is also planned, the pupils' knowledge and understanding of this is very limited. In studying Christianity pupils examine parables, miracles and symbols. They consider the relevance of the 'Ten Commandments' to issues of today and show a high moral awareness. They have a clear perception and understanding of the ceremonies associated with joining and belonging to a faith community and particularly the importance of holy days and festivals. In Judaism they consider the role of the Rabbi in the synagogue and Jewish artefacts are studied to consider their purpose and understand their influence.
112. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Throughout the school progress in understanding is accelerated by teacher's good questioning skills and the opportunities for pupils to discuss and reflect on their values and beliefs and those of other faiths. It was particularly well done in the lower Key Stage 2 class when exploring the symbolism behind the Passover Festival and the tasting of a Jewish meal. This focus on reflection helps the pupils to develop a better understanding of the faiths of others as well as personal



qualities such as tolerance, respect and sharing. Christianity is studied in depth and an increasing awareness of Christian values are clearly demonstrated in the very caring ethos in the school and the close partnership with the local church. Opportunities are made to visit a nearby synagogue and cathedral and clergy visit the school to raise awareness of different customs and traditions. The pupils deepened their knowledge through the experience of sharing a shabbat meal in the synagogue. Artefacts are used well to extend pupils' thinking of the distinctive features and traditions of other religions and the similarities and differences between practices. The detailed planning as a response to the locally agreed syllabus ensures that pupils build effectively on knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. However, there has been less focus on Hinduism and the limited number of books in the library limits the opportunities pupils have to progress in this aspect. Progress is slower at times, when work is not planned for the differing abilities in the class.

113. For many of the pupils, religious education lessons are a very special time where they show a strong spiritual and moral awareness. They are keen to make their own personal contributions, ask thoughtful questions and respect the views of other people. Pupils understand the importance of showing kindness to each other and handle artefacts with sensitivity. The presentation of their work is good and often well illustrated.
114. Teaching is good with some very good teaching observed at Key Stage 2. Teachers are knowledgeable and interested in the subject and provide a stimulating focus for the lesson and the opportunity to handle artefacts. Good opportunities are also provided for pupils to share in discussions and listen to well chosen literature linked to moral issues. Learning is further promoted by role play activities and visits and visitors. There are no assessment procedures in place at present and consequently, a knowledge of pupils' attainment and progress is not always clear.
115. The school has made a very good response to the new locally agreed syllabus and the subject is well led and managed by the co-ordinator. She is currently considering a suitable system to assess pupils' attainment and progress in order to be able to plan work specifically matched to the individual needs of pupils. Religious education makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
116. **Art**
116. Pupils' attainment in art is above the national expectations in both key stages. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection. Art has a high profile in the school and although no lessons were seen, sufficient evidence was available from displays, portfolios and sketchbooks to allow judgements to be made. Pupils in both key stages make good progress.
117. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils record with confidence what they observe, experience and imagine. For example, in Year 2 pupils produced colourful artwork and artefacts in the style of traditional canal art after seeing the narrowboats at the Boat Museum. They work practically and imaginatively with a range of media. Pupils review and develop their work in stages, for instance by preparing clay tiles for making press print book covers. They are developing appreciation of different artists and have made collages of in the style of Matisse. Pupils are using a good range of skills and techniques. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils express their ideas and feelings fluently using a variety of media. They record with accuracy and attention to detail, for instance in creating images of the Witches' heath in charcoal. They use sketchbooks effectively to select and record information, to practise skills and to experiment with ideas such as extending Escher prints. Pupils identify ways in which themes can be developed and evaluate their work. Year 6 pupils have modelled Tudor Roses in clay. They are familiar with the work of well-known artists and express opinions confidently about Van Gogh and Monet. They are competent in a range of skills and techniques such as observational drawing, pastels, watercolours, collage and three-dimensional modelling.
118. Pupils make good progress in both key stages in all aspects of the curriculum. The youngest pupils are familiar with the work of Jackson Pollock and have successfully imitated the style. They have also considered specific paintings such as Monets' 'Gare St. Lazare' and produced their own versions, tackling the background and foreground in separate stages. As they move through the school pupils deepen their knowledge and

understanding while increasing their competence in skills. In lower Key Stage 2 pupils make observational drawings in considerable detail and have successfully produced collages in the style of Mondrian and Hunderwasser. Pupils have produced a number of striking half-size sculptures made of natural materials, such as willow and painted bowls made of paper pulp in African colours. Pupils show more autonomy in the use of their sketchbook and use different means of recording ideas such as the digital camera. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in the targets set for them.

119. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work. They are prepared to persevere and to review and refine their work. The quality of the final products indicates considerable pride and effort on the part of pupils throughout the school.

120. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. Teachers plan their lessons well. Pupils are encouraged to use sketchbooks throughout the school. Teachers provide a wide range of high quality experiences for pupils and make very good use of visiting specialists. Pupils in Key Stage 2 met a sculptor who brought examples of his work and provided them with the opportunity to work with him. School visits often include an element of art. Year 2 pupils worked with the artist in residence at Foxhowl to make sculptures of natural materials and pupils in Years 3/4 worked with the artist in residence at Llandudno Art Gallery.

121. The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides good progression in all aspects. The scheme of work provides clear guidelines for teachers' planning. The subject is effectively managed and the co-ordinator has realistic plans for the development of the subject. The quantity and quality of resources is good. The quality of artwork on display contributes to the ethos of the school and to the attractive and stimulating environment.

122.

122. **Design and technology**

122. No lessons were observed during the week of the inspection, apart from a small group of pupils working on bread making with a parent. Evidence is based on pupils' work on display, photographs of previous work, teachers' planning and discussions with staff and pupils. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress in the acquisition of skills and knowledge of the design and technology process at both key stages but evaluation skills are weak. It was a similar picture in the last inspection.

123. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils use a range of tools to cut and shape materials such as paper, card and plaster to make a house for the 'Three Little Pigs'. Most pupils draw pictures of what they intend to make, which closely resembles the finished article. In only a few cases do they list the materials needed or evaluate the success of their design. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils make books of their own extended stories using batik and block print designs for the covers. They demonstrate great care and detail in the use of paint and decoration to enhance the quality of their finished work. The design briefs are often linked to other subject topics, which gives good opportunities for pupils to draw upon their knowledge from this subject to inform their design. For example, the upper junior pupils use their understanding of the Tudor rose from the current history topic to design and make a clay tile with their own rose design. They also draw and then make Tudor houses from card and paper but there is little detail or precision in the finished article and pupils' skill in joining and combining materials is weak. There is insufficient emphasis placed upon the evaluation of completed models against the original design brief, which is usually a picture without much detail and no measurements.

124. Progress overall is satisfactory but in some classes at Key Stage 2 pupils are not receiving a balanced programme in the subject to enable design, make and evaluation skills to be developed progressively into the production of a successful product. In only a few classes do pupils produce detailed diagrams to support their work or discuss and modifications to the finished product. However, within this work there are many tasks set by the teachers that are often linked to the pupil's own interests, enabling them to see the relevance of what they are doing and motivate them to work productively. At Key Stage 1, these include pop-up pictures to compliment their stories and at Key Stage 2 using the computer, pupils design a pattern on paper and then make it into a patchwork quilt. The recent visit of a sculptor to the school enabled the pupils to build up a repertoire of skills in planning, forming and modelling clay.

125. The pupils display pride in their completed work and enjoy discussing how it was made. They are especially pleased when it is displayed in class or around the school.

126. It is not possible to judge the quality of teaching but from the displays around the school it is clear that teachers generally set appropriate expectations to challenge the pupils in their work. However, there is no scheme of work and planning by some staff is a weaker element of the provision. As design and technology is not usually taught as a separate subject insufficient attention is given by some staff in providing a balanced coverage of design making and evaluating skills during the year. For example, in some of the work produced there is more of a focus on art and craft than design and technology and although the attention to the quality of the art is often good, the focus of the lesson doesn't explore sufficiently the design and technology potential. The school has plans to produce a new scheme of work shortly.

127.

### 127. **Geography**

127. No lessons were seen during the inspection. However, the examination of pupils' work, displays around the school, teachers' planning and discussions with pupils and the co-ordinator, indicates that progress is satisfactory at both key stages. It was a similar picture in the last inspection.

128. Pupils in Year 2 are able to name most of the principle places in Great Britain on a map, as well as a number of counties. They understand that environments differ from their home area and that some are much dryer or wetter. They are also beginning to make judgements about what they like in the world around them and what they dislike. For instance, they know that sometimes places are too noisy and this can affect the quality of life. Pupils make further progress in Key Stage 2 when they look at the way people live in different parts of the world. They can explain the differences between simple landforms, such as the grassland, savanna or desert areas. Older pupils carry out an in depth study of living in towns and cities and extend their knowledge to comparing living in Paris with life in Cheshire.

129. Pupils' work in their books demonstrates that they take some pride in their work in geography and many produce some good maps.

130. Teaching was not observed but teachers' planning indicates that most areas of the curriculum are covered and teachers plan a variety of interesting activities to motivate pupils. This indicates that the teaching is at least satisfactory. The scheme of work and policy is adequate and resources are broadly satisfactory, although there is a shortage of globes. The subject is enhanced by a number of visits out of school, including residential visits and the use of the extensive school grounds. For instance, the city of Chester has been used to study transport and employment patterns. The Liverpool museum has been visited to look at a display of life in the savanna and during the three day residential visit in the Lake District, many landforms and contrasting environments are visited.

### 131. **History**

131. Few history lessons were seen during the inspection. However, an examination of pupils' work in their books, on wall displays and in teachers' records, together with discussions with pupils and an interview with the co-ordinator, indicates that pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress in Key Stage 2. Pupils' attainment is in line with that expected for their ages at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2. In the last inspection, standards were average.

132. In Key Stage 1, pupils develop an awareness of the past through activities, such as comparing old cars with new and old ways of producing light compared to modern lighting systems. Younger pupils can describe past events, such as the Gunpowder Plot involving Guy Fawkes. Older pupils in Year 2 can tell the story of the sinking of the Titanic and can ask appropriate questions such as "Is this aspect true?" Pupils' investigation skills develop well in Key Stage 2 as they are able to use books and computers to research history for themselves. This was seen in a Year 5 lesson, where pupils were studying aspects of Tudor history. They

understand the family tree of Henry VIII and can compare their clothes and building of that period with those of today. Some pupils have progressed to writing good accounts of other periods of history, such as that in Ancient Egypt. They are able to describe how people lived, where they lived, how they wrote and what their attitude to death was.

133. Pupils' attitudes to their learning in history are very good. They listen well as the teacher explains the task. They enjoy talking about the difference between present day and times long ago. They concentrate on their work and sustain effort throughout each lesson, which results in a better understanding of life in past times.
134. The quality of teaching in the two lessons seen was good. Teachers have a good subject knowledge and are enthusiastic. The lessons seen and pupils' work in their books, indicate that the teaching encourages the pupils to do their own research into books and documents. Teachers also encourage the use of CD-Rom history programs for further research. Pupils are encouraged to use their imagination well and to express their feelings about past times. This was seen in a Year 2 lesson when pupils were asked to describe how the Titanic must have looked on the bottom of the Atlantic. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator, who is adapting a new scheme of work. The subject is enhanced by visits out of school to such places as the Ellesmere Port Boat Museum and Roman Chester. During residential visits to Wales, the Edwardian house in Conway is studied and during the Lake District visit, the house of William Wordsworth. There are no assessment records kept for history. Resources are adequate and used well.

135.

### **Music**

135. Standards in music at both key stages are similar to those found in most schools and progress is satisfactory. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils sing with enthusiasm from a good range of hymns and songs. The diction is good but the pitch is not always secure. In lessons pupils clap accurately the rhythms of their names and recognise simple notation in rhythmic patterns. They name and play the instruments correctly and keep to the beat when accompanying songs. Good opportunities are used to develop music across other areas of the curriculum, such as performing a composition for Noah and the flood. Pupils listen carefully to the music in assemblies. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils in assembly sing with a good tone and a generally secure pitch and rhythm. The choir are beginning to sing in two parts for their Christmas concert and learning to maintain their own melody. Their singing is very tuneful and phrasing is good. Pupils in the upper juniors practise the rhythmic patterns of a Tudor pavane and make up their own musical pictures for compositions using percussion instruments. Attainment in this aspect of music is satisfactory. Musical notation is not used; tuned percussion instruments are only used for effect not as an accompaniment and the rhythmic patterns produced are very simple. In lessons and assemblies pupils hear a satisfactory range of music and there are some opportunities to hear live music from different times and cultures by visiting musicians. This helps pupils to develop an understanding of the structure of music.
136. Progress is satisfactory at both key stages for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pupils increase the repertoire of songs they learn from memory and the choir practise to improve the quality and complexity of their singing. Some pupils at Key Stage 2 develop their musical skills further through learning to play the guitar. Pupils occasionally perform in the church at special festivals but there is little opportunity to perform in school to a wider audience because of the inadequate space in the hall. Personal study and research into aspects of music is underdeveloped because of the shortage of reference materials in the library.
137. Pupils are interested in music and respond well to challenging tasks and the opportunity to play and sing together. The choir is very well motivated and attendance levels are high. They are working very hard to prepare for the Christmas performance in church.
138. Teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. Staff generally have a secure musical knowledge and are usually confident in teaching the subject. There is less focus however on improving the quality of singing across the school, apart from with the pupils in the choir. The recent introduction of an appropriate published scheme of work is helping staff with ideas for their teaching. However, skills are not being taught progressively through the school at the correct level. Consequently, the older pupils are not being sufficiently challenged in their

composition and instrumental work. Planning is weak and there is no system in place for the co-ordinator to check the coverage or progression through the school. Music makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social and cultural development.

139. **Physical education**

139. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of pupils' attainment in physical education from the limited number of lessons seen during the inspection. Pupils' attainment in those elements seen during the inspection was in line with national expectations. The school is not able to deliver in depth all the elements of the physical education curriculum because of the lack of indoor space and associated equipment.
140. At the time of the inspection in the autumn term the provision for physical education consisted of basic movement in Key Stage 1, games and swimming in lower Key Stage 2 and games in upper Key Stage 2. The school has seasonalised the curriculum by providing more physical education in the summer term. The school lacks an indoor area large enough or safe enough for gymnastics or dance in Key Stage 2. Consequently, physical education for Key Stage 2 pupils has to be held outside and is dependent on weather conditions.
141. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils perform simple skills such as running and stopping on the spot. They show control by linking actions together such as rolling and rocking. They talk about what they and others have done and make judgements. Pupils observed that interesting body shapes are made using size, levels and balance. They work with partners to improve performance. Pupils in Year 2 successfully built up sequences of four movements on a theme of transferring body weight from one part to another. Space did not allow for the safe extension of the theme into movements such as forward rolls.
142. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are achieving appropriately in swimming and play a variety of team games such as netball, football and hockey. They undertake athletic activities of running, jumping and throwing in the summer term. In competitive games pupils show awareness of strategy and observe the rules. They practise and refine their performance, achieving greater control and accuracy for instance in tackling in hockey. Pupils work well as members of a team and recognise each other's roles, as when passing in netball. In other areas of the physical education curriculum pupils have little opportunity to develop appropriate skills because of the lack of indoor accommodation.
143. Pupils in both key stages make satisfactory progress in those elements available to them. Progress in gymnastics and in dance is unsatisfactory. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is in line with that of other pupils.
144. Pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject. They behave well in lessons and listen to instructions. They watch demonstrations closely, for example in football skills and are happy to evaluate their own and other pupils' performance. They move about with consideration for others and treat sports equipment with respect. They co-operate well in mixed gender teams and also in mixed age teams.
145. The quality of teaching is sound in both key stages. Teachers are aware of the restrictions and plan lessons well to maximise the opportunities for pupils. Outdoor sessions cover elements of gymnastics and athletics and include proper warming up and cooling down sections. Teachers set high standards despite the obvious inadequacies in accommodation and manage their classes well. Residential visits are provided for all year groups from Year 2 upwards and include opportunities for outdoor and adventurous activities. There is a good range of extra-curricular sporting activities for Key Stage 2 pupils.
146. Effective guidelines are given to teachers through the scheme of work and the co-ordinator has a good overview of the subject. Although good use is made of the school grounds, the limited indoor accommodation severely restricts continuity and progression. The quantity of small apparatus is satisfactory for those elements covered but in other respects resources are unsatisfactory. In particular there is a lack of gymnastics equipment and floor mats. Pupils have raised their concern about facilities for physical education with their School Council

pointing out that 'PE is very hard for us in wet weather'. The last inspection report also referred to lack of appropriate space for dance and gymnastics.

147.

147. **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

147. **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

147. Four inspectors spent the equivalent of 10 days in school. The number of lessons or parts of lessons seen was 41 and over 53 hours of observation, listening to pupils read and scrutiny of their work were undertaken. Pupils across the age range were questioned about their work and some were asked about their school. A sample of all the work of at least three pupils from each year was scrutinised for standards, progress, marking and quality of presentation. Scrutiny and assessment of all work on display was undertaken. Many pupils had work scrutinised during lessons. A sample of pupils, at least three from each year group, was heard to read and attainment was assessed against national expectations and for interest, enjoyment, fluency, accuracy and understanding. All teachers were observed working in the Literacy Hour and teaching numeracy. Most lunch-times and breaks were observed in whole or in part.
148. The chair and other governors were interviewed; the headteacher was interviewed several times. The deputy headteacher and other teachers were interviewed at least once. The secretary and support staff were engaged in formal discussions about their work and responsibilities. Most assemblies were attended. Points raised at the parents' meeting and in written comments on the questionnaires were taken into account. Documentation provided during and prior to the inspection was read and a sample of pupils' reports and records and all teachers' planning were scrutinised.

149. **DATA AND INDICATORS**

149. **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	94	0	8	8

149. **Teachers and classes**

149. **Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	4.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	20.4

149. **Education support staff (YR – Y6)**

Total number of education support staff:	1
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	15

149. **Primary**

Average class size:	23.5
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149. **Financial data**

Financial year:	1998/99
	<b>£</b>
Total Income	181,031
Total Expenditure	181,933
Expenditure per pupil	1,915
Balance brought forward from previous year	12,375
Balance carried forward to next year	11,473



149. **PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out: 95  
 Number of questionnaires returned: 23

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	30	61	0	9	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	39	57	0	4	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	18	45	18	9	9
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	13	70	9	9	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	23	64	5	5	5
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	23	59	14	5	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	32	68	0	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	27	50	9	14	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	23	50	18	5	5
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	27	41	18	5	9
My child(ren) like(s) school	39	52	9	0	0