

INSPECTION REPORT

Leigh Central Primary School

Leigh, Wigan

LEA area: Wigan

Unique Reference Number: 106418

Inspection Number: 187882

Headteacher: Mrs H Spragg

Reporting inspector: Mr E Jackson

Dates of inspection: 29th November - 2nd December 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706814

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
Type of control:	LEA
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Boys and girls
School address:	Windermere Road Leigh Wigan WN7 1YU
Telephone number:	01942 673810
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of Chair of Governors:	Mrs M Lowton
Date of previous inspection:	April, 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr E Jackson, RgI	Science; information technology; design and technology; physical education; equality of opportunity.	Attainment and progress; teaching; management and leadership.
Mrs M Roscoe, Lay Inspector		Attendance; spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; support guidance and pupils' welfare; partnership with parents and the community.
Mrs M Entwistle	Mathematics; art; geography; history.	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; curriculum and assessment; staffing, accommodation and learning resources.
Mrs M Haddock	English; under-fives; music; religious education; special educational needs.	Efficiency.

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REPORT CONTENTS

Paragraph

MAIN FINDINGS

- What the school does well**
- Where the school has weaknesses**
- How the school has improved since the last inspection**
- Standards in subjects**
- Quality of teaching**
- Other aspects of the school**
- The parents' views of the school**

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

INTRODUCTION

- Characteristics of the school** 1-4
- Key indicators**

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

- Attainment and progress** 5-19
- Attitudes, behaviour and personal development** 20-23
- Attendance** 24

Quality of education provided

- Teaching** 25-30
- The curriculum and assessment** 31-36
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development** 37-44
- Support, guidance and pupils' welfare** 45-50
- Partnership with parents and the community** 51-56

The management and efficiency of the school

- Leadership and management** 57-61
- Staffing, accommodation and learning resources** 62-67
- The efficiency of the school** 68-75

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

Areas of learning for children under five	76-85
English, mathematics and science	86-119
Other subjects or courses	120-159

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence

Data and indicators

MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Pupils' attainment in the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in mathematics and science was above the national average, representing very good progress from attainment at entry.
- More pupils than the average nationally attained at higher than expected levels in English, mathematics and science in the 1999 Key Stage 2 national tests.
- The headteacher, supported well by the rest of the staff and the governors, provides very clear and effective leadership.
- The financial management and planning of the school are very good.
- The quality of teaching for the under-fives is very good; it is also good, often very good, at Key Stage 2.
- The subject coverage in the curriculum is very good, and the information gained by teachers from their assessment of pupils' attainment is used very well in planning further work for them.
- Educational provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, and social development is very good.
- Partnership with parents and the community is very good.

Where the school has weaknesses

- Attainment at Key Stage 1 is below the national average in English, mathematics and science, and slightly more than one in ten lessons seen at the key stage had unsatisfactory features.

This is a good school, whose many strengths far outweigh its weaknesses. The weaknesses identified have already been recognised by the school, and prioritised by the governing body for improvement in the school development plan. The planned improvements at Key Stage 1, which are already under way, will form part of the governor's action plan.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made remarkable improvements since the last inspection, and has also successfully maintained the strengths identified. All the key issues have been tackled in depth, and significant progress has been made in almost all the areas identified for development in the previous report, and in other priority areas that have been identified in the school or initiated nationally since then. For instance, the pupils' good behaviour and attitudes to learning have been maintained, and continuous review is included in the school's plans. Provision for spiritual development has also become richer, and pupils are given very good opportunities to reflect on their own and other's lives, customs and beliefs. The governing body, working closely with the headteacher, has become much more closely involved in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, and the implementation of development plans.

Amongst the issues from the previous inspection were to improve the teaching of the youngest pupils, and the teaching of writing across the curriculum, information technology and physical education. The teaching of the youngest pupils in the reception class is very good now, and the quality of education provided is also very good, leading to good, and often very good, progress for the children. The link with the pre-school Starter Group, which meets in the school, is also contributing well here. Writing across the curriculum, although still below average at Key Stage 1, has been improved, and is a continuing focus in the current development plan. The teaching and learning of information technology, particularly in communicating and handling information, has also been improved

considerably. There has been major staff and resource development in aspects of physical education, although the range and quality of small apparatus for gymnastics is still unsatisfactory.

There have been very good improvements in overall curriculum design, and in teachers' planning for learning, from long term overall plans to individual lessons. This planning is now closely monitored by subject coordinators, and the senior management team. There have also been very good developments in the way teachers use the information they gain from their assessment of pupils' progress and attainment in planning further work for them. This has led to improved standards of attainment by age 11. The school has also responded well to national initiatives in literacy and numeracy, and to the development of target setting for individual pupils, and different cohorts of pupils.

The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 has been improved, and there has been targeted and astute staff recruitment to consolidate this. Older pupils are expected to act responsibly, both around the school and in taking more responsibility for aspects of their own learning than at the time of the last inspection. The school's own analysis has highlighted areas for development at Key Stage 1, which are detailed in its current development plan.

Significant improvements have been made to the internal and external learning environments, and rooms not used as class bases have been well adapted to other uses, such as to support pupils with special educational needs, or as a science and design and technology room. The playgrounds have been planted with tubs of flowering shrubs, and a beautiful "Secret Garden" has been created in a narrow space between two buildings, which is used well to improve the pupils' environmental awareness, and to enhance their spiritual development.

Given the overall high quality of leadership provided by the headteacher and senior staff, coupled with the very clear vision for the school's development described succinctly and purposefully in the school development plan, the school is very well placed to continue to make further progress in improving pupils' standards of attainment, and in the overall quality of education provided.

Standards in subjects

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

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

The results show, for instance, that attainment in the tests in mathematics is above the national average, and well above the average in similar schools.

Overall, the Key Stage 2 school test results for 11 year olds in 1999 compared to the national average are above average, and they are well above average in comparison to similar schools. These results reflect good, often very good, progress across the key stage. Inspection evidence shows that the pupils are on track to achieve similar results in 2000.

Key Stage 1 results in 1999 in the national tests for seven year olds in reading are below average compared to the national average, but in line with those in similar schools: in writing they are well below average compared to both the national average, and results in similar schools. In mathematics,

they are in line with the national average, and above average compared to results in similar schools. In science, teacher assessment results are below the national average, but in line with those in similar schools. Overall, attainment in the tests is below the national average, although it is in line with attainment in similar schools, and represents satisfactory progress from attainment at entry overall. Inspection evidence shows that the pupils are on track to achieve closer to the national average in 2000 than this year in English, mathematics and science, maintaining the rising trend in attainment since 1998.

Pupils' competence is about average in information technology, improved since the last inspection. The work seen in religious education, art, and design and technology is of a good standard. By five years of age, almost all children attain as expected across the range of their work.

Quality of teaching

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

*During the inspection, the Year 1 class was taught by a temporary teacher.

The quality of teaching overall is at least sound in 94 per cent of lessons across the school. It has unsatisfactory features in only six per cent of lessons. In the reception class for the youngest pupils, teaching ranges from being sound to being occasionally excellent; it is always at least sound, and it is very good or better in 66 per cent of lessons. At Key Stage 1, teaching ranges from having unsatisfactory features to being very good, but it is sound or better in 87 per cent of lessons, being good or better in 25 per cent of them. At Key Stage 2, teaching ranges from very occasionally having unsatisfactory features to being excellent; it is at least sound in 97 per cent of lessons, and it is good or better in 70 per cent, being very good or better in 40 per cent of them.

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good overall.
Attendance	Satisfactory; just below the national average.
Ethos*	Very good; high expectations and very good working relationships, combined with pupils' good attitudes to their work, lead to very good atmosphere for teaching and learning overall.
Leadership and management	Very clear educational direction from the headteacher, supported well by staff and governors; school priorities for development are very well targeted to relevant areas for improvement.
Curriculum	Broad and balanced; very good subject coverage; procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are very good; teachers know the pupils and their progress well, and use this information very well in their lesson planning.
Pupils with special educational needs	Very good provision; skilled teaching based on thorough assessment and planning helps pupils make good progress.

Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Very good provision overall; values well taught; pupils taught right from wrong; expected to work well together in a variety of social groups.
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Number of teachers to pupils above average; staff development very good; accommodation very good; resources good overall, although insufficient computers.
Value for money	Very good, and improved considerably since the last inspection.

**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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they are encouraged to play an active part in the school's life • the staff are very approachable • they are given a clear understanding of what is taught • it achieves a good standard of work for their children • there are good opportunities for children outside lessons • homework is good • the school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on their children 	<p>There were no significant areas of concern for parents through the analysis of the questionnaire</p>

Four parents attended a meeting held to sample their views, and were very supportive of the school. The inspection confirms and reinforces the parents' very positive views of the school.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to further improve pupils' attainment and progress, and the quality of education provided, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

Raise levels of attainment by the end of Key Stage 1, particularly in writing, by implementing the relevant initiatives detailed in the school development plan. (Paragraphs 8,10,14, 26, 34, 35, 59, 87,92)

The governors may also wish to include the further minor points for improvement in their action plan:

review the behaviour management policy and its use, in order to regularise the way that teachers interpret and apply it in dealing with and helping the pupils; (paras 21,28,29,110,130,151,157)

remove promptly worn and outdated books from the reading stock; (paras 90,102)

include procedures to be followed in child protection matters in published documents; (para 56)

when possible, increase the number of computers and pupils access to them. (paras 73,125)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. The school is in the centre of Leigh, close to two other primary schools. It is on the edge of a large estate of terraced houses, and socio-economic circumstances locally are below average for the borough, and nationally. Thirty-one per cent of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. The school is growing in popularity and has a rising roll: there are currently 233 pupils in the school, 119 girls and 114 boys, up from 209 at the time of the last inspection. There is significant movement in and out of the school during the year, and some year groups of pupils have as many as half the registration group different to that which was enrolled in the reception class.

2. The admission arrangements are as agreed for the borough, but include the offer of a place in the Starter Group four afternoons per week. Over the past years the pupils' attainment on entry has varied considerably from year to year, but typically the children coming into school overall have below average knowledge and understanding. The headteacher has been rigorous in examining the pupils' skills when they enter the reception class, which includes all the under-fives, confirming that the pupils' attainment varies year-on-year, but is higher this year. The school accounts for this by the fact that most of the pupils attend the pre-school Starter Group. Although not included in the inspection, this group is acknowledged by the school as having an increasingly marked effect on the pupils' knowledge and understanding by the time they enter the reception class. However, the effect of changes to cohorts as they move through the school is also tracked by the school, indicating that a significant number of those who join the school after the reception year have special educational needs, or below average attainment for their age. Many of those who leave the school before 11 are from the higher attaining group.

3. There are 11 pupils from ethnic minority groups, which is above the national average. There are 25 per cent of the pupils on the school's register of those with special educational needs, above the national average, and there are three per cent of the pupils with statements of their special educational needs, which is above the average nationally, and for the borough.

4. The aims of the school are typical of those in primary schools, and cover providing an attractive, stimulating, safe and secure environment, promoting self-esteem and mutual respect, supported by a strong behaviour policy. Current priorities in the development plan include to continue improving teaching and learning standards in literacy and numeracy, with demanding but realistic targets, and to develop the quality of education at Key Stage 1. Another important focus is preparation for the school's involvement in the local Education Action Zone, where it anticipates leading the development of good practice in the early years of education. There are also projects planned to work with the local authority's art centre at Drumcroon using computer technology, to strengthen the already good community links, further development with Groundwork Trust of outdoor play facilities for the Starter Group, and to trial revised local authority curriculum plans in art, the early years, and religious education.

Key indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	25	24	49

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	19	16	22
	Girls	16	16	19
	Total	35	32	41
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	71(64)	65(56)	84(72)
	National	82(80)	83(81)	87(84)

Teacher Assessments		Reading	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	19	21	20
	Girls	18	15	17
	Total	37	36	37
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	75(64)	73(64)	75(75)
	National	82(81)	86(85)	87(86)

1

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

Attainment at Key Stage 2²

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	16	17	33

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	10	13	13
	Girls	14	15	14
	Total	24	28	27
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	72(55)	85(48)	81(39)
	National	70(65)	68(59)	78(69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	8	13	12
	Girls	13	14	14
	Total	21	27	26
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	63(42)	82(45)	79(48)
	National	68(65)	69(65)	75(72)

Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	7.9
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.2
	National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	36
Satisfactory or better	94
Less than satisfactory	6

²

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

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

5. Overall, the end-of-key-stage results in the 1999 national tests at Key Stage 2 compared to the national average are above average, and they are well above average in comparison to similar schools. These results reflect good, often very good, progress across the key stage, and from attainment at entry, as a result of carefully focused teaching.

6. Progress for the under-fives in the reception class is good. The high quality of teaching for the under-fives results in their making good progress across all areas of learning, and in particular in speaking and listening, understanding of early number, and personal development. Progress is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 1, and good, sometimes very good, at Key Stage 2. The rate of progress at both key stages largely reflects the quality of teaching seen.

7. In English at the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils' attainment in the national tests in 1999 is in line with the national average at the expected Level 4, and above average at the higher Level 5. However, there are more pupils attaining below Level 3 than the national average. In comparison to similar schools the pupils' attainment is above average at expected levels, and well above at higher levels, but there are more pupils attaining at lower than Level 3 than in similar schools. In mathematics, the results of national testing at Key Stage 2 show a well-above-average number of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 or above in 1999, which significantly exceeds the figure for schools in similar circumstances. This is a big improvement on the previous year's results, especially when the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs is taken into account, and is part of a rising trend in attainment in mathematics since 1996. Apart from last year, when results at Key Stage 2 dipped, the rise in results shadows the national rise in mathematical attainment, and exceeds it this year. In science, test results improved remarkably in 1999, and were well above the national average at the expected and at higher levels, and very high when compared with those in similar schools. However, using an average points score for the 1999 test results, the school's results are below the national average overall in English, but in line with those in similar schools; above the national average in mathematics, and well above those in similar schools; and above the national average in science, and well above those in similar schools.

8. Key Stage 1 results in 1999 in the national tests in reading are below average compared to the national average, but in line with those in similar schools. In writing, they are well below the national and similar school average. The picture in mathematics is less clear cut. Fewer than average numbers of pupils meet national standards by achieving Level 2 or above in 1999 tests, and many of those attaining the expected Level 2 do so at the lowest grade. However, the proportion of pupils achieving above the levels expected for their age exceeds national figures, and is above average when compared to similar schools. This means that overall attainment as measured by statutory testing is below what is generally achieved by seven year olds nationally. These levels of attainment have risen this year, however, from observations during the inspection. Teacher assessment at Key Stage 1 in science in 1999 shows pupils' attainment overall to be below the national average at the expected Level 2, but in line with the average at the higher Level 3. These assessment results are in line with those in schools in similar circumstances. New teaching arrangements are in place for this year in science, and from the scrutiny of pupils' work, attainment is higher overall than last year, with more pupils working at the higher than expected Level 3.

9. Children's attainment aged under five in the reception class averaged over the last three years is below average. However, it was judged at the time of inspection, from observing the children in class and considering the school's current data collection, that attainment on entry is higher this year than in previous years. Inspection would support the school's view that the Starter Group, which has a very

close relationship to the reception class, has had a positive effect on children's learning. Children make good progress overall in the reception class, and meet all the Desirable Learning Outcomes. The teacher plans the environment and activities very carefully to promote this good learning.

10. During an assembly to share good work, a group of older pupils requiring extra support in English presented their combined story written in response to a set of mysterious objects from a box. They explained, with their teachers' support, how they had tackled the task, and expressed themselves confidently and clearly in front of the whole school. In Year 2, a group of pupils read a Big Book together, and most of them were skilled in predicting how the story might develop, and possible endings. However, a higher than average number of Year 2 pupils still have difficulty in writing sentences using the appropriate punctuation. Higher attaining pupils in the reception class, however, already recognise when a capital letter or full stop is needed when writing, and the correct use of the terms "author" and "illustrator" when looking at books.

11. In mathematics, older pupils handle number with confidence, use a range of calculation strategies, and explain them using correct mathematical language. Pupils in Year 2 show secure understanding of the value of the digits in a two-digit number, and higher attaining pupils apply this to three and even four-digit numbers. Almost all the children in the reception class have secure knowledge of number to five, and many up to ten, some counting confidently to 34.

12. In science, most pupils in Year 6 have good understanding of the principles of fair testing, and make sensible predictions of the likely outcome of their experiments. They compare their results critically with their original thoughts, for instance in measuring how water affects the effect of gravitational pull on a suspended object. Pupils in Year 2 also predict what might happen in an experiment, for instance that stirring or shaking may encourage chocolate to melt in water. They compare their predictions well with the result of the test, that warming the water has the most effect. Children in the reception class correctly match pictures of baby animals with pictures of the adult animal. They also know that flowing and wet sand have different properties.

13. Results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 over the last four years have fluctuated dramatically in English, mathematics and science. Overall, however, they have improved at a greater rate than the national results have improved in all subjects, despite the constant changes in the composition of cohorts of pupils. Boys outperformed girls by a significant margin in the three years up to 1998, but girls' attainment has improved more than boys' in 1999, when it was above that of boys across all tested subjects.

14. Results in statutory testing at the end of Key Stage 1 have shadowed the national results since 1996, although always below average. Results in 1999 improved more than the national rise in results in reading, writing and mathematics, matched by further improvement currently, from inspection evidence. Writing stubbornly remains well below average, but the school has put in place new teaching arrangements this year to try to raise pupils' attainment. These are currently more effective for average and higher attainers than for the lower attainers. Overall, girls slightly outperform boys in reading and writing, but girls' and boys' attainment is similar in mathematics.

15. Pupils with special educational needs generally attain at lower levels than other pupils by 11, but in the past two years some pupils with statements of special educational need have attained the higher than expected Level 5 in mathematics and science. Towards the end of Key Stage 2, many pupils with special educational needs attain levels in reading and mathematics as might be expected, but some attain lower levels in writing than they should. Their progress generally matches that of other pupils at the respective key stage, and at Key Stage 2 is often good, sometimes very good.

16. Attainment in information technology is as expected by the end of both key stages, with some good work seen in communicating and handling information, which has been a recent focus for staff development. For instance, older pupils designed announcements for a Parents' Evening and a Toy

Day, organising and refining their presentation with increasing rigour. Pupils make good progress, particularly as many of them do not have access to computers at home.

17. In religious education, pupils attain as expected in the agreed syllabus by seven. In one lesson, for instance, working on one of Jesus' parables, they reflected sensitively on how it might feel to be blind. By 11, pupils work at high levels for their age. For instance, after studying a video about Islam, pupils took turns in taking the "hot seat" to answer questions about aspects of the faith. They make good progress across the school in the subject.

18. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been adopted by the school, and all staff have been trained to implement them. The Numeracy Hour is now in its third year in the school, and it is having a good effect on the pupils' learning, particularly at Key Stage 2. The Literacy Hour has been adopted since last year, and almost all staff apply its principles effectively. It is having a positive effect on pupils' progress and standards of attainment across the school, but particularly at Key Stage 2.

19. Pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1 in art, geography, history, music and physical education, but they make good progress in design and technology. Pupils also make satisfactory progress in geography, history and music at Key Stage 2, but they make good progress in art, design and technology, and physical education.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

20. As found in the last inspection, pupils' attitudes to learning are good. By the end of their time in the school, pupils take their learning very seriously, show an intense concentration in lessons, and have a strong sense of personal responsibility for their own progress. Pupils are generally respectful of staff and very considerate of each other, showing a genuine concern for and tolerance of the needs or difficulties of their peers. There are pupils in the school who need to be coaxed by their teachers and other staff to take a full part in lessons, but this sensitive intervention is usually successful.

21. Behaviour in the school is good overall. Pupils move quietly and maturely round the large two-storey school, and play together well on the playground. They know what is expected of them, and live up to these expectations as they move up the school. Indeed, pupils at Key Stage 2 often show remarkable levels of concentration, and application to their work, allowing them to make good, and often very good progress. Occasionally, amongst the younger pupils, the restlessness noted in the previous inspection report shows itself during the whole class phase of lessons, reducing concentration levels and slowing progress. The school is aware of this issue, and addresses it in its current development plan. This should now allow it to take a more formalised approach to behaviour management to ensure consistency across the school.

22. Whole school gatherings epitomise the school's attention to personal development within a structured framework, as pupils learn to make personal contributions and listen respectfully to each other. Self-esteem is promoted within and out of lessons through a positive approach to teacher and pupil evaluation and feedback, which is a strength of the school. There is a preparedness on the part of the teachers to allow pupils to take the initiative and hold responsibility - paired reading amongst the younger pupils being a telling example of this.

23. Pupils from each class take responsibility for the maintenance of the outdoor landscaping, and Year 6 pupils have a good range of school-wide duties which they carry out with an appropriately sensitive attitude towards those for whom they are responsible. Many of the lessons observed during this inspection involved pupils in collaborative group work, for example in science, art, physical education and dance, which they respond to very well, often confidently working in mixed gender groups. Resources are shared well, there is a healthy respect for property, and also a shared pride in

the appearance of the school, so that corridor displays remain undamaged, and corridors clean and tidy, even in the busiest of areas.

Attendance

24. Attendance levels are satisfactory but have fallen slightly from the good levels reported at the time of the last inspection. Attendance is just below the national average for primary schools. Unauthorised absences are firmly below the national average. However, authorised absences are higher than those found nationally. Punctuality is satisfactory, and most pupils arrive on time for school. Lessons begin promptly, but a minority of pupils arriving late misses important introductions to lessons. In general, levels of attendance and punctuality have a positive effect on pupils' standards of attainment.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

25. A key issue from the previous inspection was to improve the quality of teaching in the early years. This has been successfully achieved, as have other requirements to improve the teaching of writing across the curriculum, and the teaching of most aspects physical education, and information technology. There is still work to do, however, to improve the teaching of gymnastics at Key Stage 1. During the inspection, the Year 1 class was taught by a temporary teacher as their regular teacher was ill.

26. The quality of teaching overall is good in 94 per cent of lessons across the school. It has unsatisfactory features in six per cent of lessons, mainly in English lessons seen in a Year 2 class. However, it is good in 26 per cent, and very good or better in a further 36 per cent of lessons seen. In the reception class for the youngest pupils, teaching ranges from being satisfactory to being occasionally excellent; it is always at least satisfactory, and it is very good or better in 66 per cent of lessons. At Key Stage 1, teaching ranges from having unsatisfactory features to being very good, but it is satisfactory or better in 87 per cent of lessons, being good or better in 25 per cent of them. At Key Stage 2, teaching ranges from very occasionally having unsatisfactory features to being excellent: it is at least satisfactory in 97 per cent of lessons, and it is good or better in 70 per cent, being very good or better in 40 per cent of them.

27. The quality of teaching in the reception class is very good, and there are examples of outstanding teaching. The teacher and support staff's knowledge of the learning needs of young children has a very positive effect on their learning. The early years' environment, in particular planning and structure for role-play, is exemplary. The teacher provides detailed and very effective planning to outline the activities for the children. The provision of many first hand experiences widens the children's experience and imagination. The role-play, which often accompanies these activities, is a jewel in the reception class, emphasising literacy and numeracy development. Children are encouraged to express their own ideas very well by the staff. Assessment of the children's attainment and progress is very good, leading to carefully structured learning. These are evaluated, and more challenging experiences provided. The tasks within the reception class make provision for all abilities, allowing children who have special educational needs to make good progress, and also those children of higher ability.

28. Teachers' overall knowledge and understanding of the learning needs of primary aged pupils are very good across the school, and between them they have good, and in some cases very good, knowledge of the subjects they teach. For instance, there is individual high level subject knowledge in English, mathematics, science, art, information technology, and music. Teachers' expectations of the pupils' behaviour are consistently high across the school, although occasionally some pupils fall below the high standards expected. The older pupils behave in exemplary fashion in lessons in the main, responding well to the high expectations and good routines promoted by their teachers. Expectations

of pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory overall at Key Stage 1, and very high at Key Stage 2, although there is variability between classes at Key Stage 1.

29. Planning for lessons, based on the very good medium-term plans, is very good overall, but better for the under-fives and for pupils at Key Stage 2. Sometimes, planning for Year 2 pupils does not take sufficient account of the learning needs of different groups of pupils, nor of their prior attainment. A good range of organisational procedures and methods is used across the school to engage the pupils' interest, and to involve them in a good variety of learning activities. For instance, the Literacy and Numeracy Hours follow the recommended format, but teachers use a variety of initial stimuli, such as Big Books, overhead projectors, and very good use of a number stick in oral mathematics sessions. There are also good setting arrangements for different subjects to create smaller groups based on prior attainment - this usually results in better focused teaching, helping the pupils to make good progress. There is also some specialist teaching in religious education, music, and science, which is very effective. Overall, the management of the pupils is good, but varies between classes. It is generally very good in the early years and at Key Stage 2, but is occasionally less effective at Key Stage 1 when the planned activities do not engage the pupils sufficiently. Pupils are given good opportunities to work in single sex and mixed pairs and groups, and teachers monitor their application, response and progress very closely.

30. Very good use is made of time and resources in the early years and at Key Stage 2, and these aspects are satisfactorily managed at Key Stage 1. Most lessons have good pace, and teachers switch appropriately between whole class, group and individual work. Extra staffing to support pupils with special educational needs is deployed very well, and makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. Good use is made of the school's improved resources, particularly in information technology and games. The quality of day-to-day assessment is high, and teachers use the information gained well in planning further work for the pupils in most lessons. Occasionally, insufficient use is made of this information at Key Stage 1. Homework arrangements are generally satisfactory, and good at Key Stage 2, where they make a good contribution to pupils' learning.

The curriculum and assessment

31. The curriculum, and the assessment of pupils' progress, are aspects of the school that show considerable improvement since the last inspection, particularly in the development of teachers' planning for learning, and related assessment procedures, and are now very good.

32. The last inspection found the curriculum to be broad, and to cover the full range of National Curriculum subjects, and additionally religious education and sex education. This still holds good, and whilst fully acknowledging government priorities for the teaching of literacy and numeracy, the school continues to offer its pupils a well-balanced curriculum. It achieves this by a careful apportioning of curriculum time, by making the most of cross-curricular opportunities such as the consistent use across the school of information technology in most lessons, and by anchoring the curriculum through a highly visible and wide-ranging arts programme in line with the local authority's policy. This leads to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils being well catered for. At the same time, the key issue from the last inspection that the curriculum in English, mathematics and information technology needed to be developed further, have been met. The school's involvement in the Numeracy Pilot Study strengthened the numeracy strand of mathematics and led to a smooth transition to the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. The complementary Literacy Strategy is also well established and is beginning to impact on standards. With the appointment of an information technology coordinator, good progress has been made in developing this subject area. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities.

33. Teachers make every effort to give all pupils access to the curriculum, particularly in the numeracy and literacy lessons. This means that pupils with special educational needs have the opportunity to make the best possible progress. Any gender differences in attainment or progress are picked up

through careful analysis of standard assessment test results, and there is evidence that some trends, such as the low attainment by girls in mathematics, have been reversed in 1999.

34. Great improvement has been made since the last inspection in curriculum planning, and in assessment of pupil learning. Planning procedures are now in place to provide effectively for continuity and progression across the school overall, and within and between year groups. There remains some inconsistency in their application, but at Key Stage 2 these have had a strong impact on the quality of education provided. In most classes at Key Stage 1 this is also the case, although the picture is less uniform. Medium and short-term planning are strengths. Good use is made of national and local authority guidelines for weekly planning for literacy and numeracy, set within a very clear system of medium term planning for the wider curriculum. Objectives for lessons are generally clear, leading to well-focused teaching sessions, and in the best planning seen during the inspection, activities were noted in detail, with appropriate activities for at least three groups of different prior attainment. Teachers and pupils benefit from the careful monitoring of this planning by the senior management team and subject coordinators, as suggestions for activities and resources are offered as well as consistency in planning being maintained. Where the planning is less effective at Key Stage 1, however, it is related to the provision of tasks and resources that do not meet pupils' needs appropriately, to challenge and stimulate the full range of pupils within the class, in order to help them make progress in their learning.

35. Assessment is also a strength of the school, and much improved since the last inspection. Very good procedures for assessment have been put in place, and the assessment record files held in each classroom, and centrally by subject coordinators, are impressive and functional. There is a whole school system of target setting at the end of each school year, ensuring that teachers have a record of levels of attainment in the core subjects linked to projections of anticipated progress for their new class. These are used to plan the work, organise setting and other group arrangements and to make judgements about the speed of progress. Again, the strongest impact of this well focused, carefully documented medium and short-term assessment is at Key Stage 2, where it is used well in every classroom to inform daily planning. At Key Stage 1, the use of assessment is sometimes less sharp, and so continuity in planning is sometimes lost. Coordinators give a strong lead in the uses of assessment. They monitor procedures regularly through discussion with individual teachers about progress within the class, based upon their assessment records, by scrutinising pupils' books, and by monitoring teaching. Self-assessment by pupils of personal strengths and target areas is being strongly promoted amongst the older pupils, and ways of extending this good practice more extensively to younger pupils should be found and implemented.

36. Reporting to parents has improved since the last inspection. The school prepares an annual report on pupils' attainment and progress for each parent or carer, and each subject section indicates what the pupil knows, understands or has learned to do. In line with local authority policy, this formal report is contained within a wider Record of Achievement, in the preparation of which pupils have a good level of involvement.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

37. In both key stages, pupils' cultural development is good and the provision for their spiritual, moral and social development is very good. The very good provision overall for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development recognised in the previous inspection report has been effectively maintained.

38. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted very well throughout the life of the school. A programme of assemblies and evocative acts of worship give all pupils daily opportunities to consider spiritual and moral issues, and these are often learning experiences of real quality, supporting the curriculum well. The school aims to "feed the spirit" through such provision, which captures pupils' attention effectively. On one whole-school occasion this was so successful that pupils gasped in awe

and wonderment at what was before them. Such moments of quiet stillness are sometimes lost, however, when pupils become restless.

39. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to acquire a growing awareness of themselves. Often this is achieved in dance, or by reflecting on particular words used when writing for particular effects, or even when pupils solve practical mathematical problems. Role-play is particularly effective in helping younger pupils develop a sense of identity through imaginative interactions with their peers. Pupils' awareness of beauty is raised in listening to music in lessons, and is enriched through art and design and technology. Sketchbooks are used well, and work on ancient Egypt in one lesson benefited from an illuminated discussion about the splendid artefacts collected by the teacher and her class. The school aims to provide an attractive and stimulating learning environment for its pupils, which it achieves very successfully. Of particular note are the impressive displays celebrating pupils' own hopes and interests.

40. There is very good provision for moral development and the school's moral code is often reinforced through the activities occurring each day. Teachers promote pupils' self-confidence and co-operative working in classes, for example. Pupils are involved in decision making, such as purchasing appropriate reading books, or in evaluating the school development plan with the headteacher during an assembly on planning life goals as part of Advent. They determine their own class rules and are helped to make good judgements through the many opportunities presented for them to exercise responsibility. During physical education lessons, for instance, pupils are taught to observe honest competition and fair play. There is a spirit of optimism pervading the school, apparent in the way that pupils are trusted and encouraged to be trustworthy. Moral issues are also explored well in science, such as in discussing the use of drugs. Healthy eating is also promoted as part of the self-awareness programme.

41. Almost all pupils behave well and are developing a sense of which actions are right and which are wrong. All the staff play their part in consistently reinforcing these principles.

42. Provision for social development is very good, and central to the school's ethos of teaching pupils about the connections between people and ideas in the world around them. A weekly "Showing Day" assembly is a valuable contribution to social development, for instance. Here, pupils respectfully acknowledge each other's efforts and achievements. Focused discussions within trusting and purposeful relationships are also a feature of school life. Sometimes these occur in 'circle time', times set aside for quiet reflective discussion on important personal and social issues, relevant to pupils' lives or their development. Self esteem and respect for others is strongly encouraged, where pupils work well in pairs supporting each other's reading, for instance. Work in design and technology focuses on the needs of the consumer or user at the start and end of a piece of work together. The quality of relationships is also good. Pupils are expected to share and work harmoniously together, act on their own initiative, and work well with teachers and other adults.

43. Social conventions of politeness and praise are a strong feature of school life. Pupils are respected by staff and thanked, for example, for the courtesy they show to others when lining up prior to entering school, or for being ready to accept the teacher's next instruction.

44. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils learn about the local and national cultural heritage through aspects of the curriculum, notably in art, literature, science and physical education. Dance is used well to provide excellent enrichment opportunities, which contribute well to pupils' cultural and spiritual development. Pupils have worked with a local artist, learning to appreciate the natural world through comparing and contrasting their locality with a region in the Indian sub-continent. The content of assemblies in both key stages makes a good contribution to cultural development. Here, pupils have very good opportunities to sing and pray together as a community. Acts of worship are meaningful to pupils' lives. Good progress has been made in developing pupils' appreciation of differing cultures in the world. Some good work on modern

religious celebrations and their roots, and ancient Egyptians in history, for instance, is making an impact on pupils' knowledge of belief systems apart from their own.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

45. The quality of pupil support, guidance and welfare is good, and has been maintained well since the previous inspection, keeping this a safe, secure and happy school. Caring, committed staff constantly consider pupils' personal and intellectual needs, so that support is available for every child: parents appreciate the pastoral work done on their children's behalf. Good routines for hygiene support pupils' welfare provision, and good provision is made for promoting pupils' well-being, health and safety.

46. Pupils are warmly welcomed each day at registration and staff show sincere concern and interest in their pupils. For instance, when a new pupil undertook an errand away from the classroom, the staff checked that he coped with the task, in case he was anxious in the new environment.

47. Procedures for monitoring academic progress and personal development are now very good. This aspect was noted at the previous inspection as an area of weakness, but now it is a considerable strength. Individual assessment folders and reading records are kept up to date and very detailed profiles are kept for every pupil. Monitoring and promoting attendance is also good, in that registers are very well kept: entries are clear, and all requirements are met. The attendance rate is, however, below the national average for primary schools. Procedures for monitoring behaviour are good and most staff follow the school's guidelines. There are differences in practice, however, when inappropriate behaviour is not always immediately checked. The headteacher is aware that the staff's application of measures to promote discipline should be monitored.

48. The school has created a climate for good behaviour, best seen in the good, trusting relationships pupils have with staff and each other. Pupils approach the headteacher readily, and she notes with pride that she can rely on pupils' help as 'good ambassadors' to inform her of concerns as they arise. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and their progress is monitored through their individual plans. There is a strongly positive attitude towards all pupils regardless of their ability or need. Limitations are never focused on unnecessarily, and support teachers and other support staff have very good, positive relationships with the pupils. This approach is reflected in the 'have a go' principle and 'do your very best' comments made to pupils by staff, who work hard to make learning effective, but light-hearted and great fun.

49. Procedures for child protection are good, and the school is well placed to meet all locally agreed procedures. The headteacher is experienced and sensitive to such matters, and is aware of the need to publish information to parents about the school's required response should concerns ever arise. All forms of bullying are dealt with appropriately and parents are agreed that standards of behaviour are good.

50. Induction into school is achieved very well as many pupils transfer from the Starter Group based in the school. New pupils are already very familiar with the accommodation as they use it regularly. The reception teacher, and headteacher and deputy headteachers are welcome visitors to the group, becoming well known to prospective pupils. There are also many pupils who join the school later than the reception intake, and the school equally helps them to settle quickly.

Partnership with parents and the community

51. The school enjoys a very good partnership with its parents and the community, similar in many ways to the findings of the previous inspection report. Parents' responses to a questionnaire and positive comments at the meeting with inspectors note that parents find it easy to approach the staff with questions. Strong links are forged with parents as their children begin school and the school builds on these good beginnings by holding workshops where curricular details, such as the literacy and numeracy strategies, are explained to parents. Most parents are happy with the homework provided for their children, and report that their children like school, enjoying what is provided for them.

52. Most parents are also pleased with the progress their children make, and play their part by supporting reading at home. They write comments in children's reading diaries, helpfully monitoring their enjoyment of the texts. Information for parents is of a good quality and most parents are satisfied with what they receive. The school has plans to improve communications between home and school even further. Induction procedures are good and maintained well through the pre-school Starter Group programme and provision. The school is justifiably proud to accommodate this group within the school and feels rightly that it enriches pupils socially, and also provides good links with the wider community.

53. Reports on pupils' progress are of a good quality, meet all requirements and state clearly where pupils have strengths, or where improvements are necessary. Additionally, parents have access to the Records of Achievement compiled by their children. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to join in the reviews of progress and to contribute opinions where appropriate. Parents have access to teachers and feel confident to approach them for help. Direct contacts with parents are good.

54. The school welcomes many visitors, such as police officers and a local artist, and uses them well to provide good enrichment opportunities for the pupils. Links with Groundwork Trust and other organisations brought financial support for developing the playground and school precincts as a design and technology project, led by the deputy headteacher. This is in line with the school's principle of 'nothing but the best' for our pupils. Links with a good range of organisations add greatly to pupils' personal development. Visits to local galleries and exhibitions occur, for example, which enrich pupils' cultural development. Specialists aid the school in its pastoral care, and governors support pupils' social development by visiting regularly and chatting to them about their work. Theatre groups provide good learning opportunities, and a local sports centre is used well. This is enrichment at its best!

55. Adult volunteers support the quality of education in the school. For instance, parents have a rota for making toast for the pupils at morning break. Pupils in Year 6 distribute this to others, and in doing this service for others are learning at first hand how to make a valued contribution to their own community as good citizens and be role models for younger pupils. Parents are welcomed to help in school at every opportunity and many do so on a regular basis. Trips out to the swimming baths, for instance, could not be as successful as they are without valuable assistance here. Parents also initiate activities such as discos and visits out for the pupils.

56. The prospectus and governors' annual report are well written, and reflect well the friendly tone promoted by all staff. The prospectus is not, however, clear about the policy followed should pupils' behaviour fall below the high standards expected. The procedures to be followed in child protection matters are also omitted from published documents.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

57. Leadership and management in the school are very good. Whole school development planning has improved since the last inspection, and is now very good. Very effective decision-making and communication strategies have been developed, which help the senior management team and the governing body to be clear about appropriate priorities for inclusion in the school development plan. These also allow the school to respond efficiently to initiatives from outside the school, such as to the recent national literacy and numeracy developments. The school is pro-active, and the headteacher keeps the governors well informed about likely projects that might benefit the pupils, such as being involved in the pilot stage of the numeracy strategy, and bidding to lead the early years focus for the Education Action Zone.

58. The headteacher provides very clear educational vision and direction, supported well by staff and governors. She has a strong presence in the school with staff, pupils and parents, and is universally acknowledged as its inspirational pastoral and managerial, leader. Her deep understanding of primary education, allied to a forward-looking and creative approach to the work of the school and its pupils, commands respect from the whole community. She keeps the governors, who are themselves very interested and involved in the school's work, up-to-date about important issues, and works with them skilfully to deploy the school's resources effectively. For instance, recent staff appointments have been of high quality, adding needed teaching skills and subject knowledge in areas of relative weakness, so that the quality of education and pupils' standards of attainment have been considerably improved, particularly in the early years and at Key Stage 2.

59. The deputy headteacher is fairly recently appointed, and has already made a big impact on the school, both in the high quality of her work in the classroom, and in her involvement in school-wide initiatives. She works closely with and is very supportive of the headteacher, which strengthens the overall management of the school. A strong senior management team has been formed from across the school, which discusses key initiatives, and helps the headteacher and governing body in the detailed monitoring and evaluation of the school's work, much improved since the last inspection. For example, the school has already put in place plans to improve the quality of education and pupils' standards of attainment at Key Stage 1, confirmed by the inspection findings as an important priority. Subject coordinators are also much more involved in monitoring, evaluating and developing their subjects than previously. Recently appointed science and information technology coordinators have already begun to have a powerful influence on the work in their subjects, and on the subject confidence and competence of their colleagues. Staff development is rightly seen as a key priority in delivering the school's priorities, and the senior management team ensures that high quality staff training is provided, often from the local authority, to maintain and improve staff skills and competence.

60. There have been very good developments in curriculum planning and assessment procedures in recent years, both in response to the last inspection, and to other local and national developments. The staff have worked very hard to stay up-to-date, and to both react to and predict important areas for improvement in their planning for lessons and overall curriculum coverage, and to ensure that they track pupils' progress, keep effective records, and set appropriate but demanding targets for improvement. Current procedures are very thorough, and having developed a very effective but demanding schedule for planning and assessment, it would be helpful if the school could now refine its systems in line with new national curricular guidance, both to consolidate the good work achieved, and to lessen the demands on staff time outside school. Alongside these, very effective monitoring and evaluation procedures have been put in place. These cover pupils' work, teaching, long and short-term planning, subject policies and schemes of work, and also sampling parents' opinions through questionnaires and discussion. Governors visit the school regularly, and those with specific responsibilities such as literacy, numeracy and special educational needs observe work in classrooms, and report back to full meetings of the governing body.

61. The school's ethos for learning is very good, and is particularly strong in the early years and at Key Stage 2. The school's aims and values are very clearly evident in its practice. There is an atmosphere of shared endeavour pervading the school, which all involved in it recognise and promote. This includes striving to improve standards of attainment in national tests at the end of both key stages, and maintaining, and seeking to improve further, other aspects of the curriculum, including art, design and technology, information technology and the humanities. There is a strong awareness alongside this of the importance of a primary education that is wider than a curriculum described only in subjects, so that projects which develop skills and abilities useful in all learning activities are planned and taught. For instance, in the reception class, the theme inspiring the classroom role-play area, based on the story of the "Three Little Pigs", was carried through into a physical development session in the hall. Here, the teacher became a play participant, encouraging and prompting the children to create an imaginative temporary play environment, where they explored various movement activities, and made good progress in language and cooperative skills. This approach is a thread woven skilfully and deliberately through the school environment, where classroom and corridor displays reinforce the purposive school-wide search for excellence.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

62. There is a good match between the number, qualifications and experience of the teaching staff and the demands of the curriculum. Appointments since the last inspection have strengthened subject expertise in the core areas and enhanced the school's ability to meet current government initiatives in numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology, and to improve the teaching of science.

63. Staffing arrangements provide for good levels of in-class and withdrawal support at Key Stage 2, including quality provision for pupils with special educational needs. As noted in the last report, class support also allows some specialist teaching and coordinator time for monitoring of subjects and effective setting arrangements between upper primary classes in mathematics. At Key Stage 1, the provision of support is carefully timetabled across the smaller-sized classes to provide continuity through Additional Literacy Support, for statemented pupils and general class support, but remains low in relation to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. There is also some rearrangement of pupils at Key Stage 1 into smaller groups for aspects of English and science, in order to raise pupils' standards of attainment.

64. Staff development is given a high priority, with a current appropriate focus upon extending both teaching and support staff confidence and competence in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. There is an effective combination of in-house training, attendance at and feedback from local authority courses such as in Mathematics Recovery at Key Stage 1, and audits of staff professional needs, for example in information technology.

65. The accommodation is very good and shows improvement since the last inspection, as a result of continuous, thoughtful attention to all aspects of the site in development planning. Extra facilities have been provided for reception pupils, and more is planned under Education Action Zone funding. Recent reorganisation of the first floor has resulted in classrooms and dedicated rooms being used to better effect. The room designated for special educational needs work is very appropriately furnished, well equipped and creates a welcoming, industrious atmosphere; two small group rooms are now used extensively for additional support teaching and independent working. Both halls are used for physical education. The high standard of display in corridors, entrance area and corners of the school has been fully maintained since the last inspection, and adds to the pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. The building is exceptionally well cared for, being clean and well maintained.

66. Exciting landscaping work on the grounds has continued since the last inspection, in collaboration with Groundwork Trust, Railtrack, the Leigh Journal, and a local firm, Mackays. Further help was provided by the Tidy Britain Group, so that borders, raised beds and a pergola enhance the outdoor

environment. An outstanding feature is the creation by pupils, staff and parents working with a local artist of a magical 'indoor/outdoor Secret Garden' between two wings of the building which contributes to pupils' spiritual, social and personal development as well to the taught curriculum. The school is rightly seeking Green Flag Award status for its environmental work, and amongst other awards, it has been designated a "Beacon of Excellence" for environmental education. The next project, recently begun, involves creating outdoor play facilities for the pre-school Starter Group.

67. Resources for learning have been improved in most areas since the last inspection, and are now good overall. Each classroom contains pupil resources for the teaching of numeracy and literacy, and incorporates nominated subject areas for accessible storage and interactive display. Teacher collections of resources relating to the whole curriculum are stored centrally, mostly accessible from the staff room area, but also from dedicated rooms such as the music room, and the science and design and technology room. The infant library presents a bright, inviting setting for reading and book choosing, with a newly established Listening Area close by that is used well. The junior library adjacent to the Year 6 classroom has widened its range of books since the last inspection, so that provision meets present curricular requirements, assisted as it is by local authority library loans to supplement the number of information books available on any one topic. Audio-visual resources are used well to support teaching, and in whole-school gatherings such as assemblies.

The efficiency of the school

68. The financial planning of the school is very good. Although the unpredictable nature of school admissions can make long-term planning difficult, the headteacher wisely takes a very pragmatic view of financial planning. The spending decisions are closely linked to the school's aims, strongly influenced by the school's desire to undertake considerable improvements, many of which have been based on the issues raised at the last inspection.

69. These strategies are detailed in the school development plan, which are costed appropriately. The school development plan is comprehensive and well designed to include appropriate monitoring strategies to evaluate school developments. Although the school carries a good surplus within its budget plan, and has done for several years, the judicious management of this surplus has been directed at maintaining and improving staffing levels. The school's recent inclusion in the local Educational Action Zone will bring separate funding, particularly for the development of high quality early years education. This funding is not delegated to the school, and will be monitored closely by the Educational Action Zone. However, these funds will give the school further opportunities for improvement. The headteacher has drawn up very detailed plans for this expenditure.

70. Since the last inspection, the governing body has become more involved in financial planning and the monitoring of decisions. Budget monitoring sheets are regularly presented and discussed with the governors. There is now a Finance Committee, which meets regularly to discuss and monitor financial planning and expenditure. Decisions are fully discussed at full governing body meetings.

71. Staff are very well deployed within the school, especially to support the significant number of pupils with special educational needs. The support staff are well trained, and their deployment is targeted carefully to meet the needs of the children. The headteacher, supported well by the governing body, makes careful, and well-considered decisions about school appointments. They have recently made very successful appointments to the school teaching staff and this has had a positive impact on the quality of education provided for the pupils.

72. Accommodation in the school is used very well. The school building and site are difficult to manage, but the governing body and headteacher have made very good use of rooms and areas, providing a bright, purposeful and attractive learning environment for staff and pupils. The recent remodelling of an outside corridor into a secret garden learning area, provides an example of the way in which the management of the school takes every opportunity to turn a disadvantage of the building

into a positive learning opportunity. The school is housed in a large building with a relatively small number of pupils, but all rooms are well used for music, special educational needs groups and libraries, all of which are extremely well kept, beautifully clean and safe for the children.

73. With the exception of information technology equipment, the school is well resourced and this aspect of the school budget is managed very efficiently. Financial administration and control are very good. The school benefits from a very efficient, well-trained administrative officer. There are very good procedures for monitoring the school budget, which is managed very well by the administrative officer using a computerised system for which she has been fully trained. All the recommendations from the last financial audit have been implemented, and just prior to inspection the school received a very successful monitoring visit from the local authority Financial Services Team Officer.

74. Supporting the needs of pupils with special educational needs is a challenge for the school, and although it is not well funded to support the range of very complex needs that some pupils have, all these funds are very well used. This has a very positive effect on their progress. The school also receives funding via the Standards Fund, and this is very well managed by the deputy headteacher, who has been trained by the headteacher in managing the fund appropriately, and is also currently attending a local authority financial management course.

75. The unit cost per pupil overall is close to the average for similar schools nationally. Pupils towards the end of Key Stage 2 are attaining standards in mathematics and science currently which are above the national average, and in English about the national average. These standards are well above those in similar schools overall. Taking into account the good progress pupils make, including those pupils with special educational needs, and the very good quality of education provided, the school provides very good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

76. Children under five entering the reception class currently attain just below the national expectation, but averaged over the last three years from entry level tests administered by the school, attainment is below average. Children make good progress during their time in reception, however. Inspection would support the school view that the pre-school Starter Group, which has a very close relationship to the rest of the school, fostered well by the nursery nurse who works in the reception class, and also runs the Starter Group, has had a positive effect on children's learning. They meet all the nationally recommended Desirable Learning Outcomes, and the teacher plans the environment and activities very carefully with these outcomes in mind.

Personal and social development

77. Pupils enjoy coming to the reception class. They come into the class beaming at the staff, and immediately fall into the routines of the day. They are enthusiastic and attentive, and respond very well to the teacher, who makes their learning fun. They are lively pupils who are keen to engage in the activities provided. During number games in the hall, for instance, their attitude to the teacher and support staff was excellent. Children behave well, cooperate and show respect to one another. They are already able to work in teams, individually and in pairs. The teaching staff set high expectations of behaviour and the pupils respond appropriately: this is one of the strengths of the early years. Relationships between the pupils and staff are very good, encouraging a very positive response from pupils and consequently having a direct and positive effect on their learning.

Language and literacy

78. Attainment in reading and writing for the under-fives is as expected for their age. They make good progress in developing language skills in early reading and writing skills, and listen well to adults. Some recognise capital letters and use the expression "lower case" appropriately, and sound out letters. All of them enjoy sharing books with the teacher, with whom they have a wonderful relationship. Their knowledge of books is good and some know what 'title, author and illustrator' mean. They have a good level of book awareness. When sharing books the pupils listen intently, and offer suggestions, showing a growing love of stories and text.

79. In writing, their attainment is slightly lower than in reading, although they enjoy drawing illustrative pictures, and many make well-formed pictures of people. Some have very good control of the pencil and write their names accurately and neatly, although there are others who struggle. They enjoy the writing area, which offers a range of writing implements. The teacher encourages pupils to make their own books and during the inspection they were making books about their farm visit. The use of photographs by teachers and other staff to maintain interest, and help the pupils remember events, is very good. The pupils make books of their own, and the teacher, who is skilled in modelling writing behaviour, supports them very well.

Mathematics

80. Children's mathematical skills are around the national expectation, and they make good progress in counting, and ordering numbers. The teacher is particularly skilled at making learning meaningful, thus helping them to enjoy learning and relate it to their everyday life. During a particularly good session in the hall, the pupils played number games and used and developed their mathematical skills whilst enjoying the games. Almost all pupils are secure in numbers one to five, and many count beyond ten. They play number games and learn about comparative sizes using words like "bigger than" and "biggest". During the plenary, children showed that they are developing number skills well.

The teacher plans activities within the reception class in which children thread beads, learn about two-dimensional shapes and use mathematics in play situations. Many children name colours accurately, and explore shape and space through matching games, construction activities and some of their creative work.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

81. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world are good. The teacher makes an excellent contribution to their learning by very carefully planned and structured role-play. This is reinforced by trips to farms, to parks and to woods, all of which relate to class activities which build and draw on these first hand experiences. Role-play areas in the class are very good. Children play in these areas very well, cooperate well, and use the wealth of role-play props to foster their imagination and language. This is extremely creative and imaginative planning by the teacher and support staff to foster language development and encourage wider concepts. At the time of inspection the class was exploring the story of the three little pigs. The children had been to a farm and had created three 'houses' of brick, straw, and twigs within the class. In addition there was a collection of pig models and a workshop with some of the materials for the pupils to explore. Many describe events in their own lives well, and the teacher encourages them to share birthdays and events with the whole class.

Physical development

82. Children's physical development is satisfactory and they make good progress in developing their skills. There is no designated outdoor play area, but the reception teacher and support staff are very creative in the way in which they structure opportunities and direct children's play. Children use space well in the hall in which they run, tiptoe, stop quickly to the teacher's signal, and move to music. They have a good awareness of space and move round crowded areas well. They are sensible in lining up and handle pencils, scissors, glue sticks and painting equipment with skill. Some have poor fine coordination, however, and their drawing and colouring skills are underdeveloped. When playing with playdough, they are able to shape small and large cakes and to use baking cutters to make imaginative shapes.

Creative development

83. There is a variety of creative activities from which the children can choose. For example, the pig workshop, painting, dry and wet sand, water and playdough. The reception environment encourages a range of self-selection activities, such as a marvellous pig workshop where children choose from straw, twigs and natural materials to make pictures and collages themselves. Their creative and physical skills are developed well as the staff set out a wide range of implements: for painting they can use a whole array of brushes, of different sizes and breadths. In sand and water play, they have a huge selection of pouring, building, sifting, and floating equipment. Some of the art-work in the early years is outstanding. For example, the banners outside the reception room where children have used mixed media to make bright, colourful works of art.

84. The quality of teaching in the reception class is very good, and there are examples of outstanding teaching. The teacher and support staff's knowledge of the needs of young children has a very positive effect on their learning. There is a very close relationship between the pre-school Starter Group and the reception class. The very positive experiences the children enjoy in this group provide a good foundation on which the reception staff build well, allowing the children to make good progress. The structured environment and high quality role-play have a significant effect on the children's learning. The teacher provides exemplary planning to underpin the activities to engage the children. The provision of so many firsthand experiences widens their imagination. This role-play is a jewel in the reception class, emphasising literacy and numeracy development. Children's own ideas are encouraged in 'brainstorming' sessions, where pupils give their own ideas freely. This validation of pupils' own thoughts by the staff is very good. The teacher's and support staff's own subject knowledge of the early

years curriculum is very good. Assessment in the under-fives is very good. Children's learning is structured carefully, evaluated, and as a result more challenging experiences are provided. This is a very good model for further development. The tasks within the reception class make provision for all abilities, allowing not only children who have special educational needs to make good progress, but also those children of higher ability.

85. Much of the early years' environment, in particular planning and structure for role-play, is exemplary. Some of the other activities lack this high quality and some of the necessary resources, however. The literacy area in particular needs to be further developed, so that children can explore more books and experience a wider range of literacy. However, the teacher's high quality teaching, together with her close attention to detail and high expectations of the children, has led to good progress.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

86. At Key Stage 2, the pupils' attainment in the national tests in 1999 is approximately in line with the national average at the expected Level 4 and above. However, there are more pupils reaching higher levels than the national average, and more achieving below Level 3 than average, giving an average attainment level using the average points score which is below the national average. In comparison to similar schools the pupils' attainment is above average at expected levels, and well above at higher levels, although it is average in comparison overall, as more pupils attain below Level 3 than in similar schools.

87. The results of the 1999 national tests show that the pupils at Key Stage 1 reached standards of attainment well below the national average. In reading, results are below the national average, but the number of pupils attaining at higher levels is in line with the national average. However, in writing the results are well below the national average. In comparison with similar schools reading results are below that expected and well below in writing. However, again, when compared to schools with similar characteristics, more pupils achieve higher standards in reading and writing at Key Stage 1.

88. Standards over the last four years have been below the national average at Key Stage 2, but improving since the last inspection. This year's results show particularly good progress and reflect the hard work of staff and pupils as well as the focus on monitoring and evaluating the teaching and learning of English. The results at Key Stage 1 now need to be addressed with the same tenacity. Attainment at Key Stage 1 judged at the time of inspection was below average, although the pupils clearly make satisfactory progress from attainment at entry. The school has implemented the literacy strategy successfully, and staff training has been effective in almost all cases in helping the teachers to deliver the sessions competently, and in some cases very well. There has been good improvement overall since the last inspection, particularly at Key Stage 2.

89. In speaking and listening, pupils' skills range from poor to very good. Towards the end of Key Stage 2 currently, they are about average, but they are below average towards the end of Key Stage 1. They are not afraid to speak up in lessons and will make inventive, imaginative responses. Some pupils find it difficult to express themselves, however, and teachers support them well in finding the right words, and to make satisfactory progress. They are encouraged through assemblies, through paired reading and through circle time to practise their skills. Occasionally, some pupils find it difficult to listen to the views of other pupils, but when high standards are demanded of them they will listen intently and with respect for other pupils. The teachers are aware of the pupils' need to practise their speaking skills in different situations, but this is an area that needs continual development.

90. Towards the end of Key Stage 1, pupils sound out words, and recognise initial and medial sounds. By the end of the key stage they recognise phonemes, vowels and high frequency words. Parents support the school well in listening to their children read, and conscientiously completing the reading record. However, progress is inconsistent at Key Stage 1, as some young pupils, whose regular teacher was absent during the inspection, are not heard to read regularly enough in school, some have shabby books to read, and the teacher is not sufficiently aware of how to support reading in class or how to assess the pupils' progress. Good quality books have been bought to support the literacy strategy, but the quality of reading books which the pupils read at home generally needs to be improved. More emphasis also needs to be placed on the consistent assessment of the pupils' reading.

91. Towards the end of Key Stage 2, pupils read well, and their attainment is in line with national expectations. Higher attaining pupils read texts of their own choice, completing book reviews to analyse what they like and dislike about their own reading. However, their choice of books needs to be enriched by introducing them to a wider range of authors. Pupils who find reading difficult use their phonic skills: they try to predict the story by using pictures and employ many methods to support themselves. They also benefit from a very good aspect of the school's approach to reading, which is paired reading. All Year 6 pupils partner a younger pupil to support and encourage reading, which helps the Year 6 pupils to become secure in their own work. The pupils do this with enthusiasm and determination, and the relationships between pupils is excellent. The room is quiet with the atmosphere of focused learning, where older pupils model the good reading habits they have been taught as they share a book. In addition, they chart the younger child's progress. This is an impressive attempt to support reading development and makes a significant and valuable contribution to the positive relationships between pupils in the school. Pupils generally have underdeveloped skills in using and locating information from text, however.

92. The school has focused its activities on improving writing, and has initiated many strategies to support pupils in both key stages, as part of its response to a key issue from the last inspection. This has resulted in pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 attaining levels currently in line with those expected nationally, improved since last year. Pupils are beginning to write extended stories, and talk about story structure, characters, plot and more sophisticated ideas, such as complication resolution. At Key Stage 1, although currently some pupils attain at higher than expected levels, overall their attainment is below the national average. The majority write in sentences, and use capital letters and full stops correctly, although much of their work lacks imagination.

93. At both key stages, pupils have focused writing sessions in small groups to work with pupils of the same ability. Overall, progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 1, including for those with special educational needs, but pupils of the same age in different classes make different progress. Early writing skills are not built on sufficiently, and pupils sometimes lack confidence in their own ability. Some pupils make good progress in these groups, whilst for others progress is unsatisfactory. Pupils who make good progress write short interesting stories, which they later share in assemblies. Younger pupils write short pieces of news, spell three letter words accurately, and use some high frequency words. Progress throughout the school is encouraged by continuity of practice. For example, teachers encourage pupils to make flow charts of pupils' ideas to help them with stories. The attainment of the younger pupils is slower than it could be, as they are not always taught appropriate strategies to support their writing development.

94. By the end of Key Stage 2, the strategies employed have been very successful, and progress is good. Teachers have high expectations for pupils, and in one lesson the class was working on difficult Hunter poems in translation from the African Yoruba tradition. They understood the poems, talking about the structure and reflecting on the imagery employed. The way in which pupils responded and engaged with these poems was very good. Pupils with special educational needs in the class were helped to take part in the lesson through the skill of the special educational needs teacher, who sits close to a group of pupils to help them interpret the lesson. This is highly skilled intervention, and allows pupils who have a range of complex learning difficulties to take a full part in the lessons with their peers. At the beginning of the key stage, two pupils worked on play scripts, and they too

received challenging work. They understand the convention of the narrator, and when working on sentence construction they recognise punctuation marks.

95. Due to the school's close evaluation of pupils' attainment, which is good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2, teachers have now focused attention on the spelling skills of pupils. There is a strategy to improve spelling which permeates the school, for example all pupils have "have-a-go-books", and are trained in using dictionaries, thesauri and methods of helping them to work on spelling strategies. Although the use of the cursive style of handwriting does not start until Year 3, it progresses well and pupils at the end of the key stage produce neat, well-formed joined writing. Pupils receive handwriting practice as part of their literacy development.

96. It is a credit to the school that many pupils with special educational needs make good progress in English at Key Stage 2. Their progress is monitored closely by the conscientious special educational needs teacher and headteacher, and through the use of carefully planned and focused work, most of them progress well towards the targets in their individual education plans. The school has had staff trained to support pupils through the Additional Literacy Support initiative, where small groups of pupils receive focused and well-planned language support. Support staff work well with pupils in these groups and this initiative is helping pupils to make good progress.

97. Pupil's attitudes at Key Stage 1 are satisfactory overall, and at Key Stage 2 they are very good. Pupils generally behave well and show high levels of concentration and interest in their work. However, in one Year 2 class, there are examples of unsatisfactory teaching: pupils respond poorly, do not concentrate, and are unsure of what they have to do, being unsure how to help themselves to learn. In general, however, pupils enjoy the Literacy Hour, particularly the discussion with teachers. They work well in pairs and groups, and they particularly enjoy `brainstorming` when they share ideas. At the beginning of Key Stage 2, teachers encourage independent learning and pupils respond well to the challenge. Pupils at this key stage are particularly good at settling down to their work and show good learning habits. Boys and girls work well together.

98. Overall, the quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, although in one Year 2 class the teaching seen had unsatisfactory features. In these lessons, the teacher's knowledge of the structure of language was not sufficiently secure. Learning objectives for the lessons were not clear and tasks were not matched to the pupils' prior attainment. Where teaching is satisfactory, however, lessons are well planned and prepared, and the teacher sets a good role model and interacts well with the pupils. Good questioning skills are employed which help the pupils to understand what they are being asked to learn and to do. Exemplification often helps younger pupils and is used to good effect. In these lessons the literacy strategy has been well understood, and is used successfully to promote appropriate progress. At Key Stage 2 teaching is almost always good, with many examples of very good teaching. Teachers have very good subject knowledge including those who teach pupils with special educational needs. They are well prepared, their lessons are well structured and they have high expectations for the pupils' learning and behaviour. They use the Literacy Hour with flair, and they experiment and make their lessons enjoyable. Teachers use a variety of different strategies, asking pupils to work in groups, in pairs, in cooperative teams helping each other with their learning. In the home school reading diaries, teachers make very useful comments to the parents on the pupils' reading progress.

99. The teachers plan using the national literacy framework and in addition they plan for extra support for spelling and writing. This is a good feature of the teachers' work and is having a positive impact on the pupils' learning. Planning for English is very good in almost every class. It is thorough, focused and has clear learning objectives.

100. Teachers use resources well, using white boards, overhead projectors, and desk-top white boards for small group work. The organisation of classrooms throughout the whole school has a very positive impact on the pupil's learning. Each teacher employs strategies to support literacy development, writing areas, library areas, word lists, word trees and organisational charts. Teachers are very creative

also in their use of artwork to support the development of language. There are very well displayed examples of pupils' work on poetry throughout the school, showing that pupils have learnt to write with skill and can employ quite high level conventions such as metaphor, and simile when specifically coached. Information technology is also used successfully to support pupils' literacy development.

101. The coordinator has had a strong impact on the quality of work in the subject, particularly at Key Stage 2. She monitors the subject very well, and analyses the results of the national tests in some detail to establish what the pupils are doing well and where they need more help. In addition, the school has developed a variety of approaches to help readers, for example using parent helpers, home school reading diaries and involvement in the local authority's "Better Readers" project.

102. Resources for English are overall good, but there are areas where old-fashioned, shabby books are in classrooms and the junior library, and these should be thrown away. The school has benefited from extra funding for new books, and although they still need more this has had a positive effect.

Mathematics

103. There has been a significant improvement in the standards reached in mathematics since the last inspection, and attainment is now above average by the end of Key Stage 2, although this judgement masks an inconsistency between the key stages.

104. The results of national testing at Key Stage 2 show a well-above-average number of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 or above in 1999, which significantly exceeds the figure for schools in similar circumstances. This is a big improvement on the previous year's results, especially when the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs is taken into account, and is part of a rising trend in attainment in mathematics since 1996. Apart from last year, when results at Key Stage 2 dipped, the rise in results shadows the national rise in mathematical attainment, and exceeds it this year.

105. The picture at Key Stage 1 is less clear cut. Although results in statutory testing at the end of the key stage have risen in the school each year since 1996, the rise has not kept pace with the rising national trend, so that fewer than average numbers of pupils met national standards by achieving Level 2 or above in the 1999 end-of-key-stage tests. However, the proportion of pupils achieving above the levels expected for their age exceeds national figures, and is above average when compared to similar schools. This means that attainment as measured by statutory testing overall is below what is generally achieved by pupils of this age. These levels of attainment have risen currently to be broadly in line with the national average by age seven, from inspection evidence.

106. As a result of the school's involvement in the local authority pilot project of the National Numeracy Project, the numeracy strand within mathematics is a particular strength, and overall pupils make satisfactory progress, including those with special educational needs. Key Stage 1 pupils develop a good sense of place value, and by the end of the key stage show secure knowledge and understanding of what each digit in a two-digit number represents; higher attaining pupils apply this understanding to three and even four digit numbers. A further strength is the ability of higher achieving pupils to explain and discuss their calculation strategies, which shows marked improvement since the 1996 inspection. However, although most pupils in Year 2 add and subtract accurately up to 20, many are less clear about the relationship between addition and subtraction, and only the minority of higher attaining pupils understand the operation of multiplication as repeated addition. These significant differences in levels of attainment are linked to progress within and across classes. Higher attaining pupils towards the end of the key stage in a mixed Year 2/3 class make good progress, developing a facility with numbers and an understanding of mathematical operations that suggests they will exceed national expectations in the end of key stage testing. However, the majority of pupils are not challenged appropriately to maintain a good enough work rate, which limits their rate of progress in consolidating newly learnt skills and applying them to new situations. However, the

school's involvement in a mathematics recovery programme, used with Year 1 pupils, is having a positive impact on these pupils' progress.

107. Evidence from the inspection shows that towards the end of Key Stage 2, pupils of all mathematical abilities have made good progress. With the continued use of the existing setting arrangements, and booster classes, progress is such that attainment in tests in 2000 will be maintained above the national average. Numeracy skills are again a strength, so that by the later years pupils handle numbers with confidence, and in contrast to the last inspection findings, use a range of calculation strategies and are able to explain these using appropriate mathematical language. They make judicious use of calculators, as for instance, in a lesson with the lowest attaining pupils when they used a calculator to check answers for accuracy after finding a variety of ways to calculate two digit numbers up to a hundred. The speed of learning is good overall, and very good with certain groups. In one observed lesson, higher attaining pupils learned to use a protractor to measure acute and obtuse angles, increasing their accuracy from the previous day's lesson whilst also learning how to use a circular protractor to measure reflex angles.

108. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall at Key Stage 1, particularly in handling number, but at Key Stage 2 they often make good progress, as there is a good focus on helping them develop simple but memorable mental strategies.

109. Pupils throughout the school enjoy mathematics. In both key stages they are responsive to working with numbers, and most pupils in each class like to join in the mental mathematics activities, and try to contribute to the questions asked during the main teaching activity. At times pupils in Key Stage 1 become restless during the introductory phase, which affects the speed of learning, and occasionally they take time to settle to tasks. At Key Stage 2, they concentrate well throughout all phases of a mathematics lesson, often with an absorbed interest.

110. The quality of teaching has improved at Key Stage 2 since the last inspection, where it was judged to be good or better in all lessons seen. It is now very good in almost half of lessons seen. Teaching remains sound at Key Stage 1, with some good features. Planning for mathematics throughout the school is good, as teachers have a secure understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy framework and its objectives, from having been involved in the pilot stages of its implementation. They share a common format for medium and short-term planning that ensures consistency, clarity of objectives and on-going assessment. Questioning is used regularly in all classes to encourage fluency with numbers and in the most effective lessons, to challenge pupils' thinking. The work rate in all lessons observed was good, encouraged by careful marking and monitoring of outcomes. The over-reliance upon text-books noted in the previous report has been dealt with, although in some Key Stage 1 classes the use of the chosen commercial scheme for consolidation and practice does not always match the levels of attainment within the class. Lessons across the school have a high proportion of direct teaching, although this is less effective in some lessons with Year 2 pupils, because some pupils become inattentive and slow down the pace, blunting the focus of the lesson.

111. Resources are used well in mathematics lessons with older pupils to enhance explanations, check calculations and provide first hand experience, for example, of measurement. In Key Stage 1, teachers sometimes expect pupils in group and independent work to work without sufficient practical materials at the early stages of mathematical development. Each classroom has a designated mathematics area, frequently used to remind pupils of mathematical vocabulary and in the best instances, to encourage reflection and interaction. Assessment procedures are good. Assessment indicators are included as a key element of medium-term planning, and each class teacher maintains a mathematics assessment file containing short, medium and long term assessment. A particular strength is in the use of individual targets for pupils, set at the end of each year and updated termly. A recent development that results in even sharper use of assessment in daily planning is the noting of individual and group achievements as set against weekly planning objectives. In Key Stage 2, this collection of data directly informs the daily planning of all teachers. At Key Stage 1, there is variation between classes in the noting and use

of assessment information, so that it does not always help with the correct matching of task to pupil abilities.

112. The coordinator gives a strong steer to the development of the subject, keeps well to the fore of local and national initiatives, monitors assiduously, updates resources and checks and advises on medium-term planning. The challenge now is to strengthen coordinator influence at Key Stage 1.

Science

113. In science, the school's results at the end of Key Stage 2 improved remarkably in the national tests in 1999, and were above the national average at the expected level, and well above at higher levels, and well above average when compared with results in similar schools. Teacher assessment at Key Stage 1 in science in 1999 shows pupils' attainment overall to be below the national average at the expected Level 2, below average overall, but in line with the average at the higher Level 3. These assessment results are in line with those in schools in similar circumstances. The trend in results over the last four years at Key Stage 2 has been variable, but improving, particularly in 1999. At Key Stage 1 similarly, results have varied in line with the prior attainment of cohorts of pupils in the past four years, but have improved to their current levels from well below the national average, and below the average in similar schools. New teaching arrangements for Year 2 pupils has resulted in higher demands being made on higher attaining pupils, who are now consistently working at higher than expected levels.

114. Towards the end of Key Stage 2, pupils demonstrate good knowledge of the uses of electricity, and good understanding of the earth's position in the solar system. One high attaining pupil writes, "The earth turning moves us away from or closer to the sun." Current work on forces indicates that almost all pupils have a good grasp of the action of forces such as magnetism, gravity, air resistance, and upthrust in water. During an observed lesson, pupils demonstrated in practice and in discussion that they have very secure understanding of the principles of fair testing. No lessons were observed at the end of Key Stage 1, but from scrutiny of pupils' books they cover the whole subject requirements. Most of them know how to classify objects as man-made or natural from practical experience, how to be safe with electricity in the home, and how to create a simple electrical circuit. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to use appropriate symbols to record their circuit diagrams, and to classify and order their results in their books in an organised and systematic way.

115. A good range of lessons was seen at Key Stage 2, but only one at Key Stage 1. Progress at Key Stage 2 is good, often very good, and it is satisfactory at Key Stage 1. The pupils make very good progress, as the high quality teaching and well-planned activities are sharply focused on developing their knowledge and skills. Pupils with special educational needs are often the first to receive the teacher's focused attention, and benefit well from this, often making good, and sometimes very good, progress.

116. Pupils in Year 3 have conducted a very good survey of the changes in use of electrical appliances since their teachers were children, with surprising results! They learn from such activities about science in everyday life, and how to gather evidence, assess it, and begin to draw conclusions from it. They also develop their understanding of fair testing well in working out whose hand has the largest grasp, as part of their work on the human body. Pupils in Year 4 are developing a good understanding of forces through their study the effects of gravity and air resistance on falling sheets of paper. One boy explains confidently that the larger the sheet, the greater the resistance, as it has a larger surface area, and the gravitational pull is counteracted more than for a smaller sheet. In Years 5 and 6, pupils make rapid progress in all aspects of the subject, and are challenged to think carefully about their experimental work, to extend their ideas, and to discuss and compare their results for accuracy, and reliability. Pupils in Year 5 devised and conducted experiments to test the varying rates of evaporation of different liquids, for instance. In the lesson seen in Year 1, the lower attaining group, working with the teacher, made good progress in using direct observation to compare different facial characteristics,

and recording their findings in diagrammatic drawings. All pupils made satisfactory progress in the whole class session, when they observed each other's faces closely, and made comparisons between them.

117. Pupils' response is good at Key Stage 1, and very good at Key Stage 2. The younger pupils are keen to answer questions, and listen to one another sensibly in the main. When the teacher works with one group, they concentrate very well, and the rest of the class keeps working without close supervision. At Key Stage 2, the pupils' response is generally very good, and occasionally outstanding. They work with enthusiasm, bubbling with ideas and suggestions, and cooperate, often in mixed gender groups, with skill and understanding. They develop their skills in independent learning well, often wrestling with challenging problems without immediate recourse to the teacher. Year 6 pupils are expected to work responsibly and rise to the challenge well.

118. Teaching is good overall, and very good, occasionally outstanding, in upper Key Stage 2. In the one lesson seen at Key Stage 1, the teaching was satisfactory. Teachers generally have good knowledge of the aspects of the subject they teach, and use this well to challenge the pupils' thinking and to set them demanding but interesting tasks. Their classroom organisation and management of the pupils is very good overall, leading to concentrated and appropriate activities which promote good progress, although a whole class session with the Year 1 pupils lasted too long, resulting in some loss of concentration. At Key Stage 2, the relationship which the teachers have developed with their pupils allows them to discuss ideas and new concepts in depth, often with good humour and a good interactive style. Teachers also trust the pupils to work on their own initiative, as there are good routines and general acceptance of class rules for behaviour. Very good assessment is a key feature, allowing staff to pinpoint accurately when to move forward or when further consolidation is required. The quality of marking is very good, and often poses further questions for pupils to consider.

119. The recently appointed coordinator is having a strong impact on the development of the subject, and on the rising standards of attainment, by being closely involved in the work of classes at both key stages.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Information technology

120. Attainment at both key stages is in line with that expected in primary schools, and is much improved since the last inspection. Particularly good work is achieved in communicating information using word processing and data-handling programs. Good links with the local high school are instrumental in providing six week courses for different classes at Key Stage 2, using the high school's specialist facilities. No direct teaching was observed at Key Stage 1, and loss of electricity from power cuts during the inspection disrupted many planned activities, leaving some staff unable to use their computers. The profile and development of the subject has accelerated considerably since the appointment last year of the subject coordinator, who is working sensitively but constructively with those staff whose own skills in the subject are weak in certain areas.

121. Pupils in Year 2 have developed control of the mouse, and select the action they wish to perform from the task bar, and choice menus. They use a paint program to create their own pictures, choosing the colours, and adding figures and text. They use data-handling programs in mathematics and science, creating bar charts from information they have collected as a class. By Year 6, pupils know how to cut and paste between applications to combine information from different sources, and use a variety of fonts and text sizes for different visual effects. For instance, high attaining pupils have used the inspiration of images of a toucan in a tree to make acrostic poems using the words branch, tree and leaves, with the text interwoven in the image. They have also created announcements for Parents' Evening, where they have organised and refined their work to present the required information accurately and with eye-catching appeal. They use data-handling packages well, for instance to

illustrate the length of shadows at different times of the day, and have begun to use spreadsheets in mathematics.

122. Progress is good overall in handling and communicating information, which has been the school focus this term; it is satisfactory at Key Stage 1, and good at Key Stage 2. However, notwithstanding the power cut during the inspection, a group of lower-attaining pupils in Year 5 learned to use a clip art file, choosing the image and transferring it by using the mouse into another file, where they manipulated it on screen, changing its size and position. Good use is made of a program with Egyptian hieroglyphics by pupils in Year 3 to translate their own names, and pupils also investigate for their study using a program sent from Cairo. These pupils have also used the computer well to describe their planning for a design and technology task with wheeled vehicles, and have been involved in using video and digital cameras to record their work. Pupils in Year 2 have learned to transfer data from a tally chart to the computer, and produced graphs to illustrate the information they have collected about electrical appliances. Pupils also have opportunities to develop their understanding of technology to control events and process information, such as using cameras in Year 3, listening centres using tape recorders in various classrooms, and handling equipment such as overhead projectors and music centre in assembly. Further work for the pupils across the school in control technology is planned for the spring term, when it will also be the focus for staff development.

123. Pupils respond well to work in the subject, and older pupils show responsibility and initiative in working without direct teacher supervision. One girl in Year 3, a recent admission, persevered in trying various ways to complete a task on screen, although her computer skills were very limited. A group of Year 5 pupils accessed and searched an information database about wildlife successfully, although their language skills were not sufficiently developed for them to understand the abbreviated text.

124. No teaching was seen at Key Stage 1, although from scrutiny of work and discussion with pupils, it appears to be at least satisfactory. The teaching seen at Key Stage 2 was good, as teachers have good subject skills. They are confident in the use of a number of different programs and applications, and both teach computer skills well directly, and encourage the pupils to apply their skills in pairs and groups. The coordinator uses her own knowledge and understanding to encourage other members of staff well, and to allow her own class of Year 4 pupils to improve through practice. The youngest juniors experience a wide variety of activities across the subject, and their teacher is confident and competent in her planning and delivery of the activities. Older juniors also experience a good range of activities, as their teachers are both skilled in the subject, and expect the pupils to be self-reliant once they have been taught a new skill. Assessment is developing, and most teachers expect pupils to record their sessions on the computer, in order to monitor their access. Many of the pupils do not yet have access to computers at home, as only one third of them have their own home system from the results of a survey conducted by the school. This restricts many pupils' opportunities to practise their skills, and as the school still does not have more than one computer workstation per class, their access is clearly limited.

125. Good improvements have been made to staff skills through careful appointments and staff training. There have also been improvements since the last inspection in the quality of the hardware and software used. However, there are currently insufficient computers for the number of pupils. It is intended to bid for more funds from the local authority, and to use the Education Action Zone to develop the subject further.

Religious education

126. Pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve appropriately for their age in religious education. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in both key stages and by Year 6 their attainment is above that expected in the Agreed Syllabus.

127. By the age of seven, pupils in Key Stage 1 understand and reflect on religious issues well for their age. Pupils during a lesson reflected on what it would be like to be blind. This activity was related to a parable from the Bible. Pupils were attentive, acted with sensitivity, and were reflective and able to express empathy. They played a blindfold game and described different objects, thus helping them to relate to blindness.

128. By the end of Key Stage 2, they reflect on comparative religions and show a good knowledge and understanding of the Islamic faith. They watch a video and ask sensible questions to explore the faith. The teacher, followed by volunteers, takes over the 'hot seat' and allows pupils to ask them questions about what it is like to be a Muslim. Teachers are inventive and trust the pupils to act with sensitivity. Their questions and answers show that they understand the importance of symbols and practices to believers.

129. Pupils with special educational needs join in discussion with other pupils. They ask questions and are able to take full part. As a consequence they make good progress.

130. Only a few lessons could be observed during the week of inspection. Teaching at Key Stage 1 was good. At Key Stage 2 there were examples of very good teaching, particularly at the end of the key stage, but at the beginning of the key stage the lesson observed was unsatisfactory. However, by examining planning, talking to the children and looking at the small selection of books available, it was judged overall that the teaching at Key Stage 2 was good. When teaching is good or very good, teachers show a high degree of subject knowledge. The teachers take a great deal of trouble to develop the quality of the subject. They have interesting ideas and are not afraid to use them with the children. They are sensitive to the issues and use skilful, open-ended questions. They encourage the children to think carefully and develop their skills of empathy. Lessons engender a sense of spirituality: they are quiet and calm, and pupils are encouraged to show respect for the views of others. Teachers' expectations of pupils in their attitude to the subject matter and their own behaviour are both high. When teaching is unsatisfactory, however, pupils' behaviour is not controlled. They do not pay attention to the story, are noisy and disruptive and do not understand the task in hand.

131. The school follows the locally Agreed Syllabus, and the coordinator is part of the working party which is devising the new syllabus. She regularly takes the classes of other colleagues. There is a growing enthusiasm for teaching the subject, which is reflected in the good quality planning.

132. Assemblies contribute well to the pupils' understanding and knowledge in the subject. The school encourages visitors into assemblies, for example to talk about the meaning of Christmas or to talk about being blind. Through assemblies, pupils learn about other faiths such as Judaism, and the celebration of Hanukkah. Teachers use resources well, for instance using lights and candles to make connections between faiths. Pupils make visits to churches, and the art work which follows from these visits is of a very high standard. The school has a good, developing collection of artefacts covering comparative religions, but could increase the number and quality of books on religious education in both libraries.

Art

133. Standards of attainment are good across both key stages, as was found by the 1996 inspection team. Pupils make good progress in skill development from starting school, although there are some inconsistencies within and between stages.

134. A strength of the school's art curriculum is that pupils at Key Stage 1 learn to recognise key features of the work of great artists, and to respond boldly to their influence. In one lesson, Year 2 pupils transferred pencil sketches onto colour washes in the style of Klimt. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils recognise how works of art and design are affected by their purpose, such as in a lesson on the

contrasting architectural designs of Goudi and Hunderwasser. They are also prepared to reflect on their own work in the light of what was intended. Pupil self-evaluation is a strength at Key Stage 2, and has its beginnings in the sketch book work of younger pupils. Its use progresses from the immediate recording of what has been observed or attempted, such as telling comments on the use of jointed fasteners by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, to experimentation with techniques for drawing and painting such as shading or colour mixing. Pupils at Key Stage 2 use sketch books well to record personal responses to the work of artists and to evaluate their personal ideas, work and progress. However, progress in some classes is hindered at times by either insufficient direct skill teaching or, in the case of younger pupils, insufficiently challenging tasks.

135. Pupils develop very positive attitudes towards the subject, and generally enjoy expressing their creativity and developing their technique. Standards of display in classrooms and throughout the school are evidence of their enthusiasm and involvement.

136. Teaching remains satisfactory or better, as judged by the previous inspection team. It is generally well planned and exceptionally well-integrated into the whole curriculum of the school. Art lessons are frequently related to other subject themes, such as the study of the ancient Egyptians at Key Stage 2, exemplified in a lesson in experimentation with figure forms in the style of Picasso, but motivated by an exploration of Egyptian art forms. The Year 3 classroom was a treasure trove of work in art and design celebrating the pupils' work in this topic, and recognising the work of artist and craftspersons using a variety of media and styles. Good subject knowledge and skilful coordinator influence ensures that there is a progression in skill development across the school, and a regular transfer of knowledge gained in one activity to another, such as in the application of shading techniques to the creation of projection in architectural plans. In the most effective lessons, these objectives are made clear to the pupils, leading to good levels of concentration and effort. Teaching is at its most effective with the oldest pupils, who make rapid progress because of high expectations, the consistent use of an appropriate art vocabulary, well-paced lessons, and effective direct teaching followed by opportunity for more independent work. In all art lessons observed, there was a confident introduction to the session and teachers monitored pupils' work carefully, intervening with individuals and groups to improve the standards of on-going work. More direct intervention with the whole class at various points during a lesson would further improve this aspect and increase progress within a lesson.

137. The subject is well managed, as is the high quality display of its outcomes around the school. Overall, art continues to make a very significant contribution to pupils' personal and spiritual development and to the ethos of the school.

Design and technology

138. Very good links are made between the subject and art, information technology, history and science, leading to the pupils developing and using their skills and techniques in a variety of contexts. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by teachers to make progress at the same rate as their peers.

139. Pupils' attainment overall is improved since the last inspection, and is much more consistent across the school. They make good, and often very good, progress, particularly at Key Stage 2, where work in history by younger pupils illustrates very good progress in linked work in art and design, linked to technology. Year 2 and 3 pupils have made animated figures, incorporating their own choice of joint-fastening, showing good proportion and finish. They have also made good impressionistic collage faces and figures from collections of leaves, twigs bark, and acorns. Pupils in Year 3 have already completed an impressive array of design projects this year, many of high quality for their age. These include a wheeled vehicle, with a moving axle, and a life-size mummy in plaster-of-paris. During the inspection, these pupils made a geometric box, learning to measure and cut accurately, and had to design the most appropriate way to construct it, using flaps. Good planning and evaluation is built into these activities, so that the pupils learn the full design process. Year 4 pupils have designed

and made jewellery well in the style of Egyptian artefacts, and have skilfully designed a robot which will have controllable electrical circuitry, making good links with science and information technology. Pupils in Year 6 have made fabric letters, stuffed and mounted elegantly on card, and there are saved examples of work from previous years using a variety of media and techniques which show good progress across the subject, and a high level of attainment.

140. Pupils respond very well to their work, being enthusiastic, and concentrating well on producing designs, prototypes, and finished work. They have good concern for the finish, and use tools and materials carefully and efficiently. For instance, pupils in Year 5 worked sensibly on their designs and prototypes for a fastening folder whilst the teacher concentrated at the computer with one group.

141. The quality of teaching is good overall, and very good at Key Stage 2. The subject is closely linked to art, but retains its key elements of design, tested in prototype, evaluated and modified, and made to suit its purpose. Teachers plan well, using their own good subject knowledge, and in the best instances, ensure that pupils experience a full range of materials, including hard and resistant ones. They also build well on pupils' prior knowledge and experience, and have high expectations of their safe behaviour, and development of subject specific skills. For instance, the Year 3 teacher expects pupils to apply skills and knowledge from across the curriculum in their design, drawing and construction of a box from a net. Teachers assess pupils' skills as they work, and offer consistent and useful advice, leaving room for pupils to add their own ideas.

142. Resources have improved greatly since the last inspection, and now support the subject well. The coordinator takes a good overview of the subject, and offers advice to colleagues in their planning.

Geography and History

143. Attainment and progress in both history and geography were judged to be sound at the last inspection, and progress is satisfactory now, including for those pupils with special educational needs, leading to levels of attainment typical in primary schools at the end of both key stages.

144. In history, pupils at Key Stage 1 begin to understand the concept of change over time, for example through examination of pictures and photographs of the local environment in the past and making comparisons with features of the environment today. Through stories such as that of Florence Nightingale, they gain knowledge and understanding about aspects of the past, and can sequence events in simple sentences. Progress is slowed when tasks involve too complex a level of writing skill for the age of pupils, or when the tasks are not sufficiently matched to levels of attainment within a class.

145. At Key Stage 2, pupils make progress in developing historical lines of enquiry, so that by the end of the key stage, they raise questions about the Egyptian way of life, for instance, and work in groups to research this and present their findings to others. Pupils towards the end of the key stage recall factual information such as the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamen, and are beginning to place the events studied within a chronological framework, although this element is not yet secure. Higher and average attaining pupils learn to supplement their recall of fact with reference to secondary sources. They make good progress when these skills are reinforced in literacy lessons, such as a lesson teaching the use of indexes and contents lists using history texts. Towards the end of the key stage, pupils make satisfactory progress in linking events to changes over time and in appraising and selecting from a limited range of historical sources.

146. In geography at Key Stage 1, pupils locate roads and buildings on a map of the area, and recognise that pupils take different routes from home to school. They undertake fieldwork in the immediate locality, and from the first term in Year 1, begin to use appropriate vocabulary to describe building types and their use. They gradually develop awareness that other localities may be different

form their own. Pupils at the end of the key stage study the weather, and make good progress in reading and interpreting thermometers at plus and minus degrees centigrade in a series of lessons that is well linked to learning in mathematics. At Key Stage 2, pupils make gains in knowledge of the places they study and the themes investigated. They learn to use and make maps and plans in a variety of classes and use an appropriate range of geographical evidence to inform their studies.

147. Pupils continue to have positive attitudes, and show interest in the content, and response within the majority of lessons observed was sound. At Key Stage 1, pupils respond best when the tasks set provide for a variety of outcomes, rather than straightforward written accounts or the re-telling of events. At Key Stage 2, a lack of introductory stimulus material or an interactive approach in the introductions to certain lessons mutes the pupils' response and leads to some inattentive behaviour. However, as noted in 1996, pupils continue to work well in groups and to share resources sensibly, and had been well motivated prior to this inspection by a visit to Bolton museum and by an 'Egyptian Week'.

148. Teaching is sound. Long-term planning is appropriately organised on a year-group basis by topics or themes where possible, with monitoring of progression in key skills and historical aspects regularly undertaken by the coordinator. Medium-term planning shows good levels of subject knowledge and in geography in particular, effective use is made of new national curricular guidance, leading to some stimulating planning. Resources for geography have improved since the last inspection, with the recent purchase, for example, of new sets of atlases for each key stage. History texts are adequately supplemented by loans from the local authority Library Education Service. Teaching is consistently well informed, but in a number of lessons at Key Stage 2 in particular, there was an over-emphasis upon giving pupils information rather than helping them to become active enquirers. Inspection evidence shows less reliance upon the use of photocopied worksheets than was reported previously, but there is still too little learning through the exploration of a range of secondary sources of evidence or through handling historical artefacts.

Music

149. Overall pupils make satisfactory progress in music at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Their attainment is in line with that expected at seven and 11 in primary schools.

150. Pupils at Key Stage 1 learn to identify sounds made by instruments and are able to distinguish between tuned and untuned instruments. They follow a beat, and accompany a melody with a beat using instruments. They make good progress in understanding how composition is achieved and these activities provide for development of their listening skills. Clear progress is made as children get older, and they continue to learn more about composition and the structure of music while working in groups to compose short pieces. They experiment with putting breaks into short compositions. All children, including those with special educational needs, are able to join in and take part in lessons. Sometimes progress is limited when pupils become restless, tired, or become over-excited when using instruments.

151. Pupils' attitude to music is generally satisfactory. Mostly they are enthusiastic, attentive, and they are interested in music. They enjoy experimenting with instruments and, although on occasion they can be over-excited, they enjoy their involvement. Sadly, some poor behaviour during lessons leads to inattention and this has a negative effect on other pupils' learning. Mostly, pupils do try to listen to others and their contributions can be reflective and interesting.

152. It was only possible to see a few lessons in music during the period of inspection and, at Key Stage 1, it was only possible to see one lesson taken by the headteacher. The teaching in this lesson was very good, but by examination of planning and discussion with pupils, it was judged that overall teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1. Based on a very small example of lessons, teaching at Key Stage 2 was satisfactory. Teachers have satisfactory knowledge of music and try hard to make lessons

interesting and involve the pupils in activities. Pupils are encouraged to handle instruments and explore a variety of musical forms. The coordinator for music was absent during the inspection, but despite this the subject is generally managed satisfactorily. Planning for music is good, and the music room, although bare at the moment due to redecoration, provides a bright, self contained room in which pupils can experiment with sound and instruments. Resources are good and there is a good range of instruments including a few world music instruments. They are stored adequately. Some classes encourage musical knowledge through displays, and in early years pupils have a small classroom musical area.

153. Assemblies make a good contribution to pupils' musical appreciation when pupils sit quietly and listen to different composers. During the week of inspection they heard Elgar, Mozart and more modern music by Enya. Pupils sing well when accompanied by tapes in assemblies, and listen quietly to the music.

Physical education

154. Pupils have opportunities to develop all aspects of the subject, and have regular blocked sessions in gymnastics, dance and games. Swimming is arranged for them at Key Stage 2, where they also take part in athletics during the summer, and outdoor and adventurous activity during a residential visit.

156. Almost all pupils attain the national expectation in swimming, and some attain at higher levels. Following staff training in games, using an increased variety of small games equipment as part of the training scheme, pupils have good opportunities to practise and improve their skills. They also learn to respond well to musical and other stimuli in dance, and in one lesson at Key Stage 2, the response and attainment of the Year 6 pupils was outstanding. Gymnastics was only observed at Key Stage 1, and varied with the teacher's skills in organising the lesson. Pupils' skills here are as expected when they have the opportunity to demonstrate them, but their progress is sometimes restricted by having to wait too long between activities, although across the school progress is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs progress at the same rate as their peers in class, and are included in all activities.

157. Pupils generally respond well to these lessons, although this varies from occasionally being outstanding to occasionally being unsatisfactory. In a games lesson outside, younger pupils at Key Stage 2 were very enthusiastic, and persevered very well in improving their throwing and catching skills, despite the weather turning cold and windy. Here, some pupils were given responsibility for the activities of the group, and for assessing their competence, which they discharged very well for their age. In a dance lesson for older juniors, the pupils' response was outstanding: they took the musical stimulus to heart, as they had used "Mars" from the Planet Suite previously in science. They created a dramatic and rhythmically powerful dance which required them to cooperate in mixed gender groups, culminating in an unrehearsed but spontaneously concerted explosion of deep emotional and physical reality. In Year 2, however, some pupils become a little silly during gymnastics sessions, particularly when the lesson slows and they have to wait a long time between activities.

158. Teaching varies across the school from being very good across the subject, to being unsatisfactory in one aspect of it. Swimming is well taught, and the whole session is well organised. Games and dance are also well organised and taught in the main. Floorwork in gymnastics is better organised than the use of apparatus at Key Stage 1. This is partly because, as at the time of the last inspection, there is insufficient small gymnastics apparatus. However, the good range of fixed equipment was not used to its best advantage in the sessions seen, and the teacher did not instruct the pupils in the correct way to carry and place the equipment. The teaching of games is much improved since the last inspection, as the school has been involved with the local authority TOPS training scheme, which also guaranteed good quality equipment in return for this staff commitment. However, staff confidence at Key Stage 1 in teaching gymnastics has not improved since the last inspection.

159. The school has links with the local rugby league club, who work with pupils at Key Stage 2, and there are team games arranged against other local schools in football and netball. There are extra-curricular clubs for boys and girls at Key Stage 2 run by staff and parents in netball, football, and roller hockey, and there is a Keep Fit club for Year 2 pupils run by a member of staff. From video evidence, pupils in Key Stage 2 consolidated and extended their work on an Egyptian theme by learning contemporary Egyptian dance movements, and its links to ancient techniques from historical evidence. There are good resources for teaching games, two halls, one of which is equipped with fixed gymnastic equipment, and a good playground for outdoor work. However, whilst there is a patch of grass at the front of the school, there are no playing fields. Small apparatus and mats for gymnastics are inadequate, particularly for young pupils at Key Stage 1.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- a team of four inspectors spent 14 inspector days in the school
- 118 observations were made, of which 56 were of lessons or parts of lessons
- all staff were interviewed about their roles and responsibilities
- discussions were held with governors, parents and visitors to the school
- individual and group discussions were held with pupils about their work
- a representative sample of pupils' work was scrutinised, and over ten per cent of pupils heard to read
- records and reports of pupils' attainment and progress were examined, as were teachers' planning and other school files and documentation
- minutes of staff meetings, and of the governing body's meetings, were examined
- video, photographic and other evidence was consulted
- a meeting was held for parents, attended by four parents, and the results of parental questionnaires were analysed

DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR - Y6	233	5	59	72

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR - Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):

10.6

Number of pupils per qualified teacher:

22

Education support staff (YR - Y6)

Total number of education support staff:

4

Total aggregate hours worked each week:

77

Average class size

Average class size:

29

Financial data

Financial year:

98/9

	£
Total income	412121
Total expenditure	418386
Expenditure per pupil	1773
Balance brought forward from previous year	42359
Balance carried forward to next year	36274*

*The surplus has been carefully managed, and is projected to be down to £17536 by April 2000

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	233
Number of questionnaires returned:	28

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	36	46	11	7	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	39	54	0	7	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	14	58	14	14	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	33	54	7	3	3
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	18	58	11	11	3
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	36	43	14	3	3
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	25	65	7	0	3
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	33	54	11	3	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	25	61	11	0	3
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	25	50	18	3	3
My child(ren) like(s) school	61	29	7	3	0

Other issues raised by parents

Only a teacher governor, who has a child in school, two parent governors, and a new parent with a child in reception attended the meeting held by inspectors to seek parents' views of the school. They were overwhelmingly supportive of the school.