

INSPECTION REPORT

DEE POINT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Chester

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111218

Headteacher: Paul Ryan

Reporting inspector: Brian Espiner
30600

Dates of inspection: 31st January – 4th February 2000

Inspection number: 188119

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Blacon Point Rd Blacon Chester
Postcode:	CH1 5NF
Telephone number:	01244 373072
Fax number:	01244 373057
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs T Coathupe
Date of previous inspection:	8 th – 11 th July 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Brian Espiner	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
Peter Dannheisser	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development (lead) How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Elaine Brittan	Team inspector	Science History Equal opportunities English as an additional language	How well is the school led and managed?
Trevor Clarke	Team inspector	Religious education Physical education Special educational needs	The work of the moderate learning difficulties units
Alan Fullwood	Team inspector	Information technology	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development (support) The curriculum (lead)
Donald Kimber	Team inspector	Art Geography Design and technology	The curriculum (support)
Margaret Leah	Team inspector	English Music Under-fives	Assessment and academic monitoring

The inspection contractor was:

Full Circle
35 Trewartha Park
Weston-Super-Mare
North Somerset
BS23 2RT

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school has 431 pupils who attend full time from reception to Year 6. Of the children in reception, at the time of the inspection, 38 of 51 were not yet five years old. Almost all pupils are white. The economic background of pupils is generally well below average; 186 pupils (44 per cent) are entitled to free school meals, which is very high. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above the national average (24 per cent) in the main school. There are also two units for pupils of junior age (one lower juniors, one upper) with moderate learning difficulties, containing 21 pupils, 18 of whom have Statements of Special Educational Needs. All pupils follow the National Curriculum. Attainment on entry is well below average, and in some cases very low, especially in relation to language development and children's vocabulary; in early knowledge of number, shape and space; and in social development.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Dee Point Primary is an effective school. It is a well-organised and happy community, where children enjoy coming to school. The school is a safe and secure environment. Although attainment has improved since the last inspection, it is still well below national averages in English, mathematics and science. By the time they leave the school, pupils have achieved satisfactory standards in the other subjects in the primary curriculum. Teaching is satisfactory overall, and only a few unsatisfactory lessons were seen. A third of teaching in Key Stage 1, and a half in Key Stage 2, is good or better. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory, the present headteacher having inherited some difficult problems. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management provided by the headteacher are good, thereby ensuring a clear educational direction for the school
- The school has clear, and appropriate, priorities for development
- Governors and staff share a commitment to continuous school improvement, and have the ability to succeed.
- Teaching is good in Years 4, 5 and 6. Overall, little teaching is less than satisfactory.
- Provision for pupils in the MLD units is good, and pupils make good progress in relation to their individual learning plans.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs in Key Stages 1 and 2 is very good, and they make good progress throughout the school.
- The school has good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour.
- The school has good procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour.
- There is a high number of well-qualified support staff, who help to raise standards.

What could be improved

- Attainment at both key stages in English, especially writing, and in mathematics and science.
- Attainment and progress in Key Stage 1 information technology.
- The effectiveness of the governing body.
- The organisation and effectiveness of subject co-ordinators.
- Parents' involvement with the school, and their children's learning.
- The behaviour of pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3.
- The provision of a central junior library, to encourage independent learning.
- Schemes of work in art, design and technology, geography and physical education.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When it was last inspected in July 1996, Dee Point Primary School was described as having a stable and supportive environment in which pupils get a solid basic education. It could still be described as such. Since that inspection, standards have risen dramatically in mathematics and science, and steadily in English. This was one of the five areas for improvement in 1996, especially standards in science. In the second area, where the school was required to implement developments of more advanced learning skills, this has been done with higher attainers in mathematics, and to a certain extent in Key Stage 2 science, but otherwise the issue remains to be developed. The third area, where the school was advised to review its approach to health, safety and pupils' security, and to satisfy statutory requirements on the keeping of registers, has been tackled well, and there are now no problems. The fourth area was to complete schemes of work in all subjects. This has been done, thus ensuring continuity and progression in most subjects, although there is still some weakness. The fifth area was to develop the involvement of governors in planning, monitoring and evaluation. Little was done about this until the present headteacher was appointed, and governors are now becoming more involved. In fact, movement on responding to the recommendations of the last inspection was very slow in general until 1998, except in the area of safety and security, which was tackled very quickly. Although there is still a great deal to do in ensuring the full participation of the governing body in the life of the school, a good start has been made. Overall, the response to the last inspection recommendations has been satisfactory.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	E	E	E	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	E	E	E	C	
science	E	E	D	B	

There has been an improvement in results since 1996 in all subjects. The number of pupils reaching the nationally expected Level 4 of the National Curriculum doubled in mathematics and science. Standards are still too low, and pupils' standards in writing are causing particular concern to the school. Boys are not doing as well as girls, particularly at the end of Key Stage 1. The school has adopted the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, and these are helping to raise attainment. Standards in information technology are unsatisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1, but satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards are satisfactory in all other subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are satisfactory. Many examples of pupils showing interest, concentrating, and taking pride in their work, were observed in the inspection. In general, attitudes improve as pupils progress through the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is satisfactory in general. The vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. A significant minority in Years 1, 2 and 3 do not behave well. Behaviour gets better as pupils progress through the school. Behaviour in the playground is often boisterous, and this sometimes leads to unacceptable and escalating retaliation. In general, the school deals with it well. Last year there were ten fixed period exclusions, involving eight boys and one girl.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is satisfactory by the end of Key Stage 2, although there is some immaturity at the end of Key Stage 1, and pupils' understanding of our multicultural society needs developing further.
Attendance	Attendance in general is not a problem, although unauthorised absence, by a relatively small number of pupils, is above average. Punctuality procedures need to be improved.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

Teaching is predominantly satisfactory, and good in the Moderate Learning Difficulties unit for older children. In Key Stage 1 a third of teaching is good. In Key Stage 2, half of all teaching is good or better, and a quarter of this is very good. Teachers of under-fives do not expect enough of the children, and their planning needs improvement. The main weakness in Key Stages 1 and 2 is the use of marking and other assessment. This is conscientious and encouraging, but is not used consistently by all teachers in all subjects to shape future lessons. The management of pupils is good in Years 4, 5 and 6. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is never less than satisfactory, and often good, with special sets in English and mathematics in Key Stage 2. Learning is hindered by pupils' generally poor skills in writing and, especially, in speaking and listening. The quality of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad, balanced, and relevant to the needs of the pupils. Due attention is paid to the importance of English and mathematics. All statutory requirements are met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is very good. Careful organisation of classes, and effective use of the special educational needs co-ordinator and support staff, helps these pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The language needs of the very small number of pupils learning English as an additional language are being adequately catered for in their classes. Their progress is satisfactory.
Provision for pupils' personal (including spiritual, moral, social and cultural) development	The school effectively supports pupils' personal development in a number of ways, but the personal, social and health education lesson provision is not consistent or well planned. Provision for social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a caring school, which effectively meets the personal needs of its pupils. The introduction of positive discipline methods is a step in the right direction, although this is not always understood by all parents. Procedures for the assessment and monitoring of pupils' academic attainment are satisfactory.

With the new demands of the curriculum, and new staff and policies, there have been changes in the school over the last two years. The new management decided that too much time was spent on rehearsing for the Christmas production, so the scale of this was reduced. The obsolete science laboratory was abandoned to make space for the new nursery. The reasons for these changes were not successfully communicated to all parents, and so there has been some misunderstanding, and parental concern. This unsatisfactory communication needs to be addressed. Most parents agree that the school works closely with parents and actively encourages them to contribute to their children's achievement. Some parents do come into the infant school to help with reading, and parents attend assemblies and concerts. The low number of parents able to help in class means that there is little impact on progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher took over from a long-established predecessor. He has a clear vision of where the school should go. The roles of co-ordinators are unclear and they do not monitor the quality of teaching in their subjects.

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	This is a new governing body, which has had some training. However, they need to become more aware of their roles and responsibilities. They are not familiar with all the new requirements of school financial management.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The monitoring of teaching has been started by the headteacher, but has not yet been delegated to subject co-ordinators. Planning is checked in most subjects, but this is not consistent. Pupils' progress is monitored in English and mathematics, and this information is used to set targets.
The strategic use of resources	Educational priorities are supported well. There has been a recent large injection of money to set up the new computer suite, and this is beginning to increase progress, particularly at Key Stage 2. Resources have been used satisfactorily for the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. Human resources are used well to provide support for pupils with special educational needs.

There is a satisfactory match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. There is a high number of experienced and qualified auxiliary teachers and learning support assistants, and this really helps children's learning and achievement. Accommodation is adequate, in that it supports the teaching of the National Curriculum. However, teaching time is lost in moving from one building to another for assemblies. Also, for such a lot of space generally, there is a surprising lack of storage space, so inadequately stored equipment takes up teaching space. Resources are generally adequate, except in junior mathematics, where there are some shortages. There is a need to build up a junior library, in order to extend library skills and encourage independent learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school. (99%) • Children's progress is good. (93%) • Behaviour is good. (83%) • The school sets the right amount of homework. (81%) • Teaching in the school is good. (100%) • Parents are well informed about their children's progress. (81%) • The school is approachable. (91%) • The school expects the children to work hard. (98%) • The school works closely with parents. (78%) • The school is well led and managed. (79%) • Children are helped to become mature and responsible. (88%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are insufficient activities outside lessons. (33%) • The setting of homework is not consistent enough. (18%) • Parents could be better informed of their children's progress. (18%) • The school does not work closely enough with parents. (18%)

Inspectors support parents' positive views of the school. Children do like school. They behave well in general, largely because of the selfless and untiring efforts of the headteacher and staff, and they are becoming mature and responsible in upper juniors. But the 15 per cent of parents who were less than happy with behaviour were quite right, too, as detailed in the report (paragraphs 12, 13). Children's progress is satisfactory rather than good, but children are expected to work hard. Homework is set regularly in almost all classes. Forty per cent of the teaching is good, and one lesson in 12 is very good. In some respects the school needs to improve its communications with parents. In other respects, providing information for parents is quite satisfactory. The school encourages parents to join in the life of the school, but sometimes the response is poor. For instance, 124 parents answered the inspection questionnaire, which gave a good cross-section of views, but the pre-inspection parents' meeting managed to attract only seven parents or carers out of over 450. As to parents' concerns about activities outside lessons, there has perhaps been a misunderstanding of a badly worded question. Inspectors agree that there are not enough clubs, to encourage girls into sport, for instance, but activities outside lessons are more than this. They include visits to the school by various groups and individuals, and day trips, of which the school has a satisfactory number and variety. Also, the school has far greater provision of residential visits than the vast majority of other primary schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. When pupils left the school in July 1999 at the end of Year 6, attainment was well below the national average in English and mathematics, and below the national average in science. In comparison with similar schools, results were below average in English, about average in mathematics, and above average in science. Taking all the subjects together, attainment was about average compared with similar schools. Standards in the last three years have improved at a rate slightly, but not significantly, higher than that nationally. Attainment in the current Year 6 is not quite as high as last year, but is still in the same categories when compared with national averages. Since the last inspection, standards have improved in English, and greatly improved in mathematics and science, where the numbers reaching the nationally expected Level 4 of the National Curriculum have more than doubled. In information technology, standards are now in line with national expectations, whereas at the time of the last inspection they were said to "vary enormously". Standards in all other subjects are also now in line with national expectations. The school analyses attainment in English and mathematics at the end of every year, and uses this analysis to produce realistic and challenging targets for the end of Key Stage 2.
2. In 1999, in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 or above was well below the national average in English and mathematics, and below the national average in science. Similarly, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 was well below the average in English and mathematics, and below the average in science. Levels of attainment have increased in all three subjects over the past four years, particularly in mathematics and science. This is due to generally good teaching in the top half of the school.
3. In 1999, in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 or above was well below the national average in reading, below the average in mathematics, and very low in writing. The proportion achieving the higher Level 3 was well below the national average in reading and mathematics. No pupil reached Level 3 in writing. Overall, taking account of the full range of attainment, results were well below average in reading and mathematics, and very low in writing. In comparison with similar schools, results in reading and mathematics were below the average, and well below the average in writing. Results have increased in all three areas since 1996 in line with, but not as smoothly as, national trends, with a slight dip in mathematics results in 1997 and one in writing in 1998. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in the current Year 2 are similar to those of last year. Teachers' assessments in science in 1999 indicate that 43 per cent of pupils reached the expected Level 2, a very low figure, and two per cent reached the higher Level 3, well below the national average. Inspection evidence shows that attainment in science at the end of Key Stage 1 is well below the national average.
4. On entry to the school, the children's achievements vary widely but are generally well below average for their age. This is confirmed by the results of the baseline assessment carried out in the first weeks of the reception class. Personal and

social skills, language and numeracy in particular are poorly developed. By the age of five, only a minority have attained the national standards (Desirable Learning Outcomes) in personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. Many of the children still have difficulty in sustaining concentration and in working and sharing in large and small groups. They have yet to learn to write their name and to recognise numbers. Almost all of the children achieve the national standard in physical development, and show increasing control over their bodies in a range of situations including informal play with large wheeled toys, gymnastics and dance lessons.

5. Pupils in Year 2 are achieving standards that are well below average in English, mathematics and science, and below average in information technology. Attainment in religious education reflects the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Most pupils read satisfactorily and about a sixth are good. Only just over a third of pupils are writing satisfactorily, and none are writing well. This affects progress in the recording of knowledge and understanding in other subjects. For instance, progress in word processing is unsatisfactory in information technology at Key Stage 1. An even greater problem, which affects progress in all subjects, is that, throughout Key Stage 1, speaking and listening skills are generally poor. By the end of Key Stage 1, over 50 per cent of pupils still do not have satisfactory speaking and listening skills, despite satisfactory progress since entering the school. Only one in ten pupils have good skills in this vital area. This directly affects their progress in using and applying mathematics and in experimental and investigative science, where attainment is well below average at the end of Key Stage 1. There is a knock-on effect into Key Stage 2, which many pupils are entering without a good understanding of anything more than simple instructions, and with an inability to marshal thoughts quickly to give correct and succinct answers or express opinions. The school is aware of this low attainment in writing, speaking and listening, and a large proportion of the timetable is given over to English. Literacy development is supported appropriately in all other academic subjects of the curriculum. Skills in using and applying mathematics are being enhanced by following the National Numeracy Strategy, which also ensures that enough emphasis is placed on progress in arithmetic. Pupils' numeracy skills are not used and enhanced consistently across the curriculum. Few pupils attain high standards in mathematics, although the majority accurately add and subtract numbers to 100 and know a range of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. In science at Key Stage 1, progress in physical processes is not nearly as good as it is in life and living processes, and less than a quarter of pupils reach the expected level in physical processes at the end of Year 2. In religious education, pupils know about Christmas and Easter as Christian festivals, and about marriage and baptism within Christianity.
6. Pupils in Year 6 attain levels that are well below average in English and mathematics, below average in science, and average in information technology and religious education. Most pupils are reading independently, but a high percentage are still not reading well enough to support effective learning in other subjects. These pupils have a limited ability to find information in textbooks and discuss it in any depth. They lack imaginative vocabulary. The majority of pupils write in simple sentences using basic punctuation correctly. Handwriting is satisfactory, and sometimes good, in handwriting lessons, but this skill is not always transferred to other lessons. Most of the pupils are aware of basic spelling patterns and are able to build up common polysyllabic words accurately when developing their ideas.

Achievement in mathematics varies in the different areas of the subject. Achievement is better in number, especially mental arithmetic, and not as good in data handling, especially probability. Using and applying mathematics is still a weaker area because of continuing weakness in literacy, although the National Numeracy Strategy is beginning to help here, with lists of technical terms for pupils to acquire and use. Investigation is used as a device for challenging higher attainers, so only these pupils make satisfactory progress in this aspect. The development of research, investigation and problem-solving skills was a key issue of the last inspection, and not enough progress has been made here. Pupils are developing skills of scientific investigation, but a significant minority are held back by a lack of appropriate vocabulary. There is more emphasis on physical processes than in Key Stage 1, so progress is more even throughout the subject. Achievement in information technology has improved considerably since the last inspection. Pupils achieve appropriately in desktop publishing, although skills in data handling and computer control are underdeveloped. In religious education pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of Christianity, Judaism and Islam, although the school's focus on the factual aspects gives pupils too little consideration of living in a multi-religious society. The school analyses attainment in English and mathematics and uses this analysis to produce realistic and challenging targets.

7. Throughout the school, pupils generally achieve satisfactory standards in the non-core subjects. In art, sketchbooks are used to improve skills in observational drawing, and artists such as Monet and Warhol are studied and copied, or used as inspiration. Progress in three-dimensional art is less developed than in two-dimensions. In design and technology, pupils learn the design process and acquire appropriate skills in making objects and models in a variety of materials, including self-propelled wooden models with elastic bands. Geography and history take full advantage of the wealth of Chester and its surroundings, and pupils revisit the locality as they progress through the school. In music, pupils' knowledge of the range of composers and the variety of different kinds of music is underdeveloped, but the standards of playing of brass instruments by those who learn them is above what would normally be expected of pupils in a primary school. Standards in physical education are as would be expected in pupils of this age, and good in swimming, which is a strength of the subject.
8. In both key stages and in under-fives, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Attainment on entry is well below average, and in some cases very low, particularly in knowledge and understanding of, and skills in, English and mathematics. This lack of basic skills affects progress in almost everything the school does. Lack of social skills in a significant minority of pupils also has an effect on progress. It slows down lessons, particularly in the lower half of the school, and it takes up adults' time, which can then not be spent on other things. The school staff are aware of this, and respond well. A large part of teaching time is devoted to English and mathematics, and the introduction of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy is helping to improve standards. The school's procedures for dealing with disruptive and unacceptable behaviour ensure that, by the time pupils are in the top half of the school, progress is more secure for all pupils. Having the instability of four different class teachers has hindered progress this year in one Year 2 class. The situation in this class is now stable.
9. Girls achieve higher levels than boys in every subject, although the school is taking appropriate steps to address the issue. The gap is narrowed in Key Stage 2, even

though girls occupy most of the places in the higher sets. One reason for this is that boys generally are more badly behaved than girls, and concentrate less in lessons. The language needs of the very small number of pupils learning English as an additional language are being adequately catered for in their classes, and their progress is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with reference to their individual educational plans.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. The majority of pupils enjoy coming to school, have satisfactory attitudes to learning and behave appropriately in lessons. Many examples of pupils showing interest in their work, concentrating for suitable lengths of time and taking pride in their finished work, were observed during the inspection, especially in Years 4, 5 and 6. Pupils are particularly happy to engage in practical activities, such as in design and technology and physical education. They listen to each other's views and often help and show kindness to one another. A significant minority of pupils have poorer attitudes to learning but when suitably challenged by the activities provided, they show interest and apply themselves to their work. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour improve as they progress through the school, particularly towards the end of Key Stage 2.
11. As they grow older pupils take on responsibility; for example, operating the overhead projector and music centre during assemblies and holding doors open as pupils enter and leave the hall. In most classrooms pupils help with the putting out and clearing away of books and equipment needed for the lesson. In Year 4, pupils were observed acting as computer monitors, making sure that the computer suite was ready for use by their class and that all machines switched on and working before the lesson began.
12. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall. The majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Early on in Key Stage 1, pupils adjust to school routines, settle to their work and have satisfactory attitudes to their learning. However, a significant number of pupils in some classes at Key Stage 1, and in Year 3, need to be constantly reminded not to call out in whole-class discussions, to follow the instructions they have been given by their teacher and to apply themselves to their work. In some instances at Key Stage 1, the pace of lessons is slowed by the restlessness of pupils and their poor listening skills. In a few lessons noise levels are too high and affect the concentration of all pupils, and teachers do not always make appropriate use of the assertive discipline behaviour policy which has been introduced. In one in four lessons observed during the inspection, the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils at this key stage was judged to be unsatisfactory, and this is an unacceptably high level. At Key Stage 2, especially in Years 4, 5 and 6, the behaviour policy is being more successfully applied and teachers' classroom management is generally good. Instances of disruption are far fewer and pupils generally behave sensibly and show greater responsibility for their own actions. Examples of more challenging behaviour from pupils on the school's special educational needs register who have emotional and behavioural problems were observed during the inspection. The sanctions of the behaviour policy were correctly followed and in one instance the child was removed from the classroom and reprimanded by the headteacher. The child's parents were informed and involved in the resulting action taken by the school. The number of fixed term pupil exclusions is higher than at the time of the last inspection and reflects the determination of the school to stamp out unacceptable behaviour in lessons and around the school. School and class rules are displayed in each classroom. These are effective for a large majority of pupils at Key Stage 1, and generally become more effective as pupils mature.
13. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and teachers, are generally satisfactory. On the playground and around the school, pupils generally play together appropriately and are well supervised by staff. Play, particularly amongst

the boys, is frequently boisterous and the school is working hard to alter the prevailing culture of the area of pupils quickly retaliating if they feel that they have been wronged. Such behaviour is often bubbling just below the surface and the headteacher and staff give a great deal of time in order to deal fairly with any incidents of physical aggression. All such incidents are recorded and used to monitor the behaviour of pupils frequently involved. There have been examples of bullying in the past and these have been noted and dealt with. No examples were observed during the inspection. Pupils understand that bullying is not acceptable in the school. They generally have confidence that staff will investigate incidents and support them where appropriate, but know that this does not always stop bullying continuing out of school. Some pupils expressed well their understanding that racism and sexism were wrong but also indicated stereotyped views. Incidents of a racial and sexist nature occur occasionally. Pupils said that these are not always reported to staff but when they are, such incidents are recorded and taken seriously. They say that sometimes pupils, including black and ethnic minority ones, are afraid to "grass" or tell staff because of fear of retaliation from other pupils. There has been no comprehensive audit of practice in relation to gender or race, and no staff development on the subject to help them make further progress. Pupils said that they found the discussions about relationships and feelings during 'circle time' useful, and they would welcome more opportunities to discuss such matters.

14. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory by the time they leave the school. However, at Key Stage 1, progress is unsatisfactory and, even in Year 2, a significant minority of pupils are immature in their behaviour and attention seeking. They are restless in class and need constant reminders not to shout or call out, and to complete their work. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils show far greater responsibility for their own actions, involve themselves in the planning and organisation of their work and, when needed, can help each other. The development of independent learning is hampered by not having a central Key Stage 2 library.
15. Pupils enjoy coming to school, and this is confirmed by almost all the parents who answered the questionnaire before the inspection. Whilst attendance levels are a little below average, analysis of the 1999 autumn term figures suggests they are improving and are not a serious concern. However, there is a high percentage of unauthorised absences, and procedures for monitoring punctuality need to be improved.
16. The attitudes to learning of pupils with special educational needs are generally good - both in whole-class and particularly in the small withdrawn group situations. The behaviour of those pupils without specific behavioural difficulties is always at least satisfactory, with pupils showing good responses to their teachers and learning support assistants. The response of other pupils towards pupils with special educational needs is good - when giving support in shared reading, in lessons where pupils from the MLD units are integrated, in physical education lessons and in design and technology lessons. Special educational needs status appears to have no negative effect on relationships.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. Teaching is generally satisfactory throughout the school. Fifteen out of every 16 lessons seen were judged to be satisfactory or better, and this helps to raise pupils'

- achievement and enhance learning. A third of teaching in Key Stage 1 is good. Half the teaching in Key Stage 2 is at least good, and a quarter of that is very good. There is some unsatisfactory teaching in early years and in both key stages. The quality of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection. The few unsatisfactory lessons seen in the inspection were categorised by low expectations of pupils' achievement, unsatisfactory pace, or inefficient dealing with unacceptable behaviour. Good practice is not always shared effectively.
18. For children under the age of five the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The teachers establish good relationships and encourage the pupils to respond positively to school routines. Support staff play an important and valuable part in establishing a welcoming and friendly environment. Whilst there is a structured approach to teaching language and usually to mathematical development, there are shortcomings in the teachers' planning across other curriculum areas. Planning does not focus sharply enough on exactly what the children are to learn from an activity, or provide sufficient structure for good progress over time. Expectations of the pupils' performance are sometimes too low.
 19. At Key Stages 1 and 2, teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are satisfactory overall, and good in English, science, and design and technology. Training has started on the National Numeracy Strategy, but teachers have not yet had complete training here, and there is some lack of confidence, especially in Key Stage 1. In information technology, knowledge and understanding are satisfactory overall, but vary with teachers' experience, and little training has been given so far, especially in how to manage classes in the new computer suite.
 20. The teaching of basic skills is satisfactory at both key stages, although there is insufficient thought given to the inclusion of numeracy in the rest of the Key Stage 1 curriculum. Literacy, on the other hand, is built into most other lessons, by the very nature of the subjects, in both key stages. Teaching methods are generally effective throughout the school, and good in science and in design and technology. However, methods in the teaching of English have some shortcomings, particularly in group work, largely because teachers are not expecting enough from pupils, and organisation is sometimes weak. Expectations are satisfactory in other subjects, but most other subjects are dependent on pupils' skills in English for success. In mathematics, because of the adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy, literacy is given a high profile, with every lesson having a list of technical mathematical vocabulary, and teachers insisting on its correct use. Even here, there are inconsistencies in some lessons. For instance, in one Year 6 mathematics lesson observed in the inspection, *sum* was listed as a key word, whereas *percentage* was not, even though the lesson was concerned with percentages.
 21. Teachers' planning is effective in general, and very effective in design and technology. Teachers produce an appropriate weekly plan for all subjects. Homework is generally given once a week in English and mathematics, and in other subjects as "finishing off", or preparation. The setting and marking of homework is satisfactory. Home-school reading records are well kept, and are very valuable in charting pupils' progress and setting pupils' reading targets, thus raising standards.
 22. The main weakness in teaching is the quality and use of ongoing assessment, which is unsatisfactory at both key stages. Marking is conscientious and encouraging, although few teachers use it as a record of what each individual pupil can do, or as a vehicle for setting individual short-term targets, so an opportunity for

improving progress is missed. Assessment is used well to set or group pupils in English and mathematics. This helps to ensure that teaching can be aimed more specifically at individual pupils' needs, and targets can be set. However, once the pupils are set in Key Stage 2, not all teachers provide work which is closely matched to attainment levels. Assessment in other subjects is not consistent; so, for instance, the use of ongoing assessment in religious or physical education is poor. Teachers carry out evaluations of their daily lessons in order to inform their planning for future work. However, the quality of the assessments made is inconsistent in quality and sometimes only evaluates how much of the planned work was covered. In other cases, teachers' evaluations are well focused and, as well as identifying those pupils who have successfully achieved the desired learning, make specific comment of pupils who need further help.

23. The management of pupils and discipline in lessons are satisfactory, and good in Years 4, 5 and 6, where lessons are generally categorised by a quiet, working atmosphere and enthusiastic learning.
24. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is always satisfactory and sometimes better. All teachers are aware of the pupils on the register of special educational needs and all make reference to the individual education plans when planning their teaching. Teaching is informed and attention is given to ensuring that the work set is appropriate and helps pupils to make good progress. Particularly notable features of the provision for pupils with special educational needs are the regular assessments of the progress that pupils make towards learning targets and the detailed, informed records kept of their progress. Teachers show patience and understanding and have high expectations of both the academic performance and the behaviour of pupils on the special educational needs register. They are given very good, skilled assistance from the well-qualified and experienced support staff. The combined attention of teachers and support staff has a positive impact upon the good progress made by pupils.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

25. The curriculum is broad and gives an appropriate emphasis to developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The time allocated to the different parts of the curriculum has been reviewed and adjusted to take account of the extra time devoted to literacy and numeracy, whilst ensuring that other subjects continue to receive an appropriate amount of time. Some curriculum time is lost as pupils and teachers move between buildings.
26. The school's curriculum meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum although there are some weaknesses in information technology, particularly at Key Stage 1. In religious education, the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus are met. The school's policy for health and sex education is satisfactory, and is currently being reviewed as a target in the school development plan. 'Circle time' is being introduced into the curriculum in a number of classrooms but as yet the school does not have an effective whole-school policy for the development of pupils' personal and social skills in dedicated lessons, and this is a weakness.
27. Subject policies and schemes of work are in place for most subjects, although these need reviewing in several non-core subjects. The school has effectively reviewed curriculum provision in English, mathematics, religious education and information

technology over the last 18 months. Progress in this has been satisfactory since the last inspection, where developing schemes of work was a key issue. The scheme of work for science needs further development. A common format for medium and short-term planning is now in place throughout the school and learning objectives are identified in individual lesson planning. Teachers carry out evaluations of their daily lessons in order to inform their planning for future work. However, the quality of the assessments made is inconsistent in quality and sometimes only evaluates how much of the planned work was covered. In other cases, teachers' evaluations are well focused and, as well as identifying those pupils who have successfully achieved the desired learning, make specific comment of pupils who need further help.

28. The curriculum for the under-fives is based on the six areas of learning suitable for this age group, ie, language and literacy; knowledge and understanding of the world; and personal and social, mathematical, physical and creative development. Appropriate priority is given to personal and social development, to language and literacy and to mathematics. Elements of the literacy and numeracy hours have been successfully introduced. Whilst a range of experiences is provided across the curriculum, these are not always sufficiently interesting and purposeful in all areas, to enable the pupils to build up skills systematically over time.
29. The school has effective strategies for teaching the basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has begun to improve pupils' awareness of books and a wider range of different genres, and also improve their enthusiasm for reading. The implementation of the National Numeracy Project, although at an early stage, is already beginning to raise the accuracy and speed of pupils' mental calculations.
30. The curriculum provides equality of opportunity and access to the curriculum for all pupils. However, there are instances when the curriculum entitlements of small groups of pupils are not always met. This happens when pupils receiving instrumental music tuition miss lessons in the information technology suite, or when pupils are withdrawn from music and science lessons to receive extra literacy and numeracy support.
31. After-school activities include a soccer club and a choir for older pupils at Key Stage 2 and a choir which meets in the summer term at Key Stage 1. A significant number of parents would like to see more clubs after school. However, the curriculum is greatly enhanced by the range of residential visits provided each year. These are provided for all pupils in Key Stage 2 and Year 2 pupils stay at an old primary school at Burwardsley while studying a contrasting locality in geography. In Key Stage 2, pupils are given opportunities to take part in fieldwork activities in science, history, and geography, and outdoor and adventurous activities in physical education, through stays at Fairbourne, Menai and Manor. A trip to Northern Europe is also an annual feature. These effectively promote pupils' social, cultural and personal development and involve pupils co-operating, supporting and caring for one another. An appropriate range of day visits to places of interest and visitors to the school further enhances pupils' curriculum opportunities.
32. The school's links with parents are successfully promoted through the groups of parents who have taken part in the training being offered in the use computers in the information technology suite. Twelve parents are currently attending this session each week, and this is the third group that has been organised. Parents

have also been offered sessions in literacy and numeracy, though the take-up rate has been low.

33. Pupils' personal development is promoted satisfactorily as they progress through the school. Pupils are helped to explore the values of others in some history and geography lessons as well as in religious education lessons. Spiritual development is satisfactory. Prayers are said at the end of the day in some classes, and Year 5 pupils have composed and illustrated their own prayers of thanks to God. Spiritual awareness is also enriched in some school assemblies, such as when pupils are encouraged to spend a minute or more in quiet reflection about things to be thankful for, to a background of calm classical music. The school complies with the statutory requirements on collective worship.
34. There is satisfactory provision overall for pupils' moral and social development. Pupils are helped to distinguish right from wrong in various ways. When hearing the story of Jack and the Beanstalk, Year 1 pupils consider how Jack was naughty in stealing from the giant. The merit and award scheme is developing well and this helps pupils recognise values including honesty, and respect for truth and justice. In the weekly Friday meeting (whole-school assembly), pupils are identified for Person of the Week awards (Key Stage 2), or Group of the Week awards (Key Stage 1). These awards underpin various achievements that might reflect good social behaviour, academic effort, or other qualities from individuals which merit commendation. Class teachers choose them and often this builds on the assertive discipline practised in the school.
35. The school works hard and successfully to promote the pupils' social development. Assemblies also enhance this, and pupils respond well to them after they settle. Older pupils are given some responsibilities such as corridor monitors, and organising the music centre and overhead projectors during assemblies. Circle time is developing successfully with some classes, and has been very effective in helping pupils to become more sensitive to others, to listen more carefully to each other, and to feel they are part of the community in the classroom. In many lessons, such as design and technology, pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively, and older pupils, especially in Year 6, are able to do this well. Pupils can also experience a range of visits which further support their social development as they pass through the school. In an infant assembly, eight Year 2 pupils shared experiences of their residential visit to Burwardsley by reading a short account of their activities to pupils in Year 1 and reception. Year 5 and 6 pupils visit the Commonwealth war graves when in Belgium. Year 6 pupils, talking about their visit to 'Flanders Field', describe the impact that seeing these cemeteries had on them. It made them 'sad'; 'you know what people suffered, and they died for your country'. They also spoke of 'the cruelty of the Nazis' in the following war.
36. Overall, the cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. Some of the visits to Chester and Liverpool, which link to history, geography and art, help pupils to learn more about their own cultural traditions. In religious education pupils develop their knowledge and understanding about other faith traditions, such as Judaism and Islam. Similarly some geography topics on Chembakoli (India) and Castries (St. Lucia) help pupils learn about people from other cultural backgrounds. However, the school does not make the most of opportunities to develop the multi-cultural potential in many topics, and many pupils are insufficiently aware of the cultural diversity of British society. The lack of provision in this aspect prevents the school

from fully addressing its aim of developing respect for religious and moral values of other religions, cultures, races and ways of life. The school is making some effort to celebrate cultural diversity through religious education and to a limited extent in art. There are plans at an early stage for bringing in an African arts group.

37. Links with the community and with other schools are satisfactory. Many parents and their children benefit from the pre-school group which the school houses. Through this a close relationship is forged with the school and the transition from pre-school to reception is a pleasant and natural one for the children. Although the oldest pupils have an opportunity to visit the secondary schools and to meet their future teachers, there are few professional links with the school to which a large majority of pupils are likely to transfer. There is a connection with local churches and with a local home for the elderly, which is visited by the school choir. The school's talented brass band has given concerts for visitors. The school takes advantage of the historic city on its doorstep and benefits from sports coaching by Chester Football Club and basketball coaches. Many local professionals contribute to the school during the occasional health weeks, and there is regular and effective input by the police, nurses, and fire officers. Apart from the use made of the site by the pre-school group there are no significant lettings to other organisations. The school is now on the Internet, and plans to use this facility to develop links with other schools.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school has satisfactory procedures for assessing and monitoring the pupils' academic attainment. Arrangements for baseline testing on entry to the school, and for the assessment of standards in English, mathematics and science at the ages of seven and 11 years meet statutory requirements. The results of these tests, together with teacher assessment, are used effectively to form groups within classes in Key Stage 1, and to form ability sets in English and mathematics in each year in Key Stage 2. Analysis of the results is being used to identify areas for curricular development, such as improving the performance of boys in English, and to set appropriate, overall targets for school improvement.
39. The school is moving forward in this area and has detailed long-term plans for developing and using systems of assessment. However, recent initiatives have not yet produced sufficient data to influence standards. An annual testing week, including optional National Curriculum tests in Years 3, 4 and 5 has been recently introduced to check on individual and school attainment from year to year. New tracking sheets are being implemented to monitor individual progress as the pupils move through the school, but these have not yet made an impact.
40. Management teams in literacy and numeracy have been set up and are beginning to monitor progress and attainment over time. Procedures for the ongoing assessment and monitoring of attainment in information technology and in science at Key Stage 1 are clearly in place. Whilst there are some instances of good practice, a clear consistent system for assessment in all other subject areas across the school is in need of further development. Assessment in science at Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory.
41. Procedures to assess the attainment of pupils with special educational needs, and to monitor their progress against their individual education programmes are good. They are used effectively to plan an appropriate curriculum, which specifically meets the pupils' needs.

42. The staff and governing body contribute to the provision of a caring school which effectively meets the personal needs of the pupils. There is a positive atmosphere and the teachers know their pupils well. Pupils say that all the staff are kind and supportive, but not all parents fully appreciate the positive behaviour approach taken by staff. Mealtime supervisors have had useful and effective training sessions on behaviour management in the playground.
43. Pupils with special educational needs are identified and are given good support both by staff in the school and also staff from the local education authority's support services, the educational psychologist and other agencies. Some pupils are taught, within the school, in units specifically staffed and resourced for their needs and their progress is monitored carefully. The progress and personal development of these pupils are regularly reviewed and their needs regularly assessed. Parents are invited and consulted at these reviews.
44. Pupils are given appropriate responsibilities to help their personal development. These include classroom tasks such as stick-insect duty, and help around the school such as looking after chairs. Pupils can win house points. However, despite the clear behaviour policy reinforced by a well-understood system of rewards and sanctions, not all pupils benefit from regular structured lessons in which some of their personal and interpersonal issues can be expressed and explored. This happens to some extent in assemblies and in some classrooms through 'circle time' but there is no whole-school approach to personal, social, and health education.
45. The school monitors attendance satisfactorily. Parents are reminded of the importance of good attendance and there are rewards for pupils and classes for good attendance and punctuality. Despite this the level of attendance is slightly below average, and unauthorised absence is above average. At present the school has no way of analysing the times at which pupils arrive, and how often individuals are late at Key Stage 2. There is an attendance policy but it is not fully applied and needs revision. Some registers lack clarity, not helped by the very cramped format that teachers are expected to complete, but they conform to requirements. There are good relations with the educational welfare officer. Staff are fully aware of child protection procedures and know who is responsible for dealing with concerns should they arise. There has been good progress since the last inspection in health and safety and attendance aspects, which constituted a key issue.
46. The main premises provide a secure environment - an improvement since the last inspection. It is clean and pleasant. Staff take good care of their pupils - for example at the swimming pool, and on the way to and from it, staff ensure that pupils are sensible and safe. A member of staff is qualified in first aid and others are experienced, and aware of requirements. A record of more serious accidents is kept, but there is no medical room and pupils have to be treated in busy public spaces.
47. There are regular professional checks on the safety of portable electrical equipment, fire extinguishers and physical education equipment. The headteacher and maintenance staff regularly inspect the site but there is no formal health and safety audit or risk assessment. The school is safe and clean and the few minor matters regarding health and safety were discussed with the staff, and these matters are being dealt with.

48. The provision for special educational needs is very good. The experienced and well-qualified co-ordinator is freed from teaching for a half day each a week to liaise with teachers and outside agencies and to complete any necessary administration. Individual education plans are very good. They are compiled jointly by teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator and contain much information about the specific learning difficulties of individual pupils. Learning targets set are, in the main, detailed, specific and achievable in the short term. The individual plans are reviewed regularly and targets modified according to pupil performance. The records kept by the special educational needs co-ordinator are comprehensive. She is in regular contact with concerned external agencies such as the medical and psychological services and contacts all parents as soon as concerns are noted about their children. There is evidence of parental involvement in all stages of the Code of Practice. Good provision is made for those pupils who have specific learning difficulties in English and mathematics. Part-time support teachers are employed to give specific help in literacy and numeracy to the lower sets in Year 2 and Key Stage 2. The provision for those pupils who have behavioural difficulties is equally comprehensive and detailed, and they make the same good progress towards targets set.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. Most parents agree that the school works closely with parents and actively encourages them to contribute. A small number of parents take the opportunities given to visit the reception class and to work with the children but few parents come to help in other parts of the school. However, many do attend class assemblies during which pupils from a single class contribute. The school welcomes parents to read with pupils or work on computers, and a few are now taking up the offer. Many parents come to important events such as Harvest assemblies and school performances.
50. With the new demands of the curriculum, and new staff and policies, there have been changes in the school over the last two years. The consequences of these changes, for example, greater demands on academic, rather than the Christmas, performance, or the dismantling of the obsolete science laboratory to make space for the new nursery, have not successfully been communicated to all parents, and consequently there is a degree of misunderstanding. This needs to be addressed.
51. There are regular review meetings about the progress of pupils with special educational needs and parents are closely involved. Most parents feel well informed about their children's progress. Although there is no parent-teachers' association, parents do help when the school organises fund-raising events.
52. The quality of information for parents is satisfactory. Home-school record books for children's reading give an opportunity for parents and staff to comment on the pupils' progress, although they are not widely used for this purpose, and tend to be encouraging or descriptive.
53. Parents are sent a considerable amount of information about school activities, though these include no information about the curriculum. Most parents have signed the home/school agreement. The main annual reports for parents cover all subjects and generally describe the attainment of the pupils. There are several meetings a year at which parents are invited to meet their children's teacher and to discuss their children's progress. In addition the school has had meetings about the many school journeys, the numeracy and literacy strategies, and health education. The number of parents coming to these meetings has been low. There are occasional coffee mornings to which a few parents have come, and the sessions on computers have been rather better attended.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The way the school is led and managed is sound overall. The headteacher has a good vision for how he wants the school to develop in order to improve the quality of education. Following his appointment less than two years ago he gave the necessary priority to a number of issues which required immediate attention. These included eliminating the budget overspend, implementing government initiatives such as the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and meeting statutory requirements in respect of registration, pupils with special educational needs and the functioning of the school's governing body. He is committed to raising standards of attainment and behaviour through an appropriate, longer-term strategy. This includes the establishing of a nursery, promoting staff development, creating a management team with the necessary skills to assist and support him, and developing the governing body so that it can fulfil its proper role. In the difficult

circumstances of taking over from a long established headteacher, and of national initiatives in the last two years since his appointment, the headteacher has taken positive steps which have had beneficial effects on the school's organisation and management.

55. The needs of the school are very well identified and prioritised in a school development plan which provides a clear basis for its work. The headteacher is assisted by a recently appointed, experienced and skilled deputy headteacher. The roles of senior managers are now being defined through a process of consultation and careful definition of appropriate levels of delegation. Senior managers, who had had little prior experience of management responsibilities, are being given the necessary support and training. Regular meetings of staff are well used to pursue areas of development as well as routine school business. Separate strategy groups for literacy and numeracy are making a useful contribution to these areas. However, specific subject co-ordinators and some other senior staff do not have job descriptions reflecting new expectations for these posts. There are imbalances in the allocations of responsibilities across the school as a whole. In some subjects responsibilities are held separately for the two key stages. The role of subject co-ordinator is insufficiently well defined and developed for those staff to make the maximum contribution to the development of the curriculum and the raising of standards. Policies for some subjects such as mathematics, science, geography and history are out of date and some schemes of work give inadequate support to teachers. Assessment procedures are insufficiently well developed in a number of subjects. Monitoring by co-ordinators in some subjects, e.g., science, history, geography, is at a level which is insufficient to ensure consistency in standards within year groups and progress as pupils move through the school.
56. At the time of the appointment of the current headteacher the governing body lacked a properly functioning structure of committees. These are now in place and are more involved in the process of decision-making. The Chair and three other governors are new to these roles. The governors are committed to the school and to working with the headteacher to bring about necessary change. Governors are now becoming more involved in monitoring attainment and in setting the budget. However, they are insufficiently aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and do not have experience of monitoring the quality of education or the effectiveness of specific decisions they make. In this aspect there has technically been insufficient improvement since the last inspection, but the governing body and senior management of the school have changed since then, so direct comparisons cannot be made. Appropriate plans for training of governors are in hand, and training has started.
57. Working together on producing policy documents on teaching and learning and a new mission statement for the school has helped to build a good team spirit and a shared understanding of aims and values. The staff and governors are committed to the highest standards for their pupils, and to good behaviour and high quality relationships between pupils. These aims underpin the work of the school, and pupils are aware of what is expected of them. The headteacher has a formal programme of monitoring the work of teachers in classrooms, but progress in this programme has been slow. The main reason for this is that the school behaviour policy hinges on the headteacher, and he is often dealing with emergencies of a pastoral nature. Along with his regular playground presence every break and lunchtime, this takes up a lot of his time. Support has also been given in different ways by various local authority staff. These and other strategies have led to

improvements in a number of areas including the quality of teaching, and standards in English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 2. However, the school is aware that progress still needs to be made if it is to become a self-improving and self-evaluating school.

58. The school has a commitment to providing equality of opportunity and education for cultural diversity. It has a policy to support these aspects. However, there is no strategy for monitoring practice and nobody has specific responsibility for promoting and co-ordinating developments. Staff have received no specific training.
59. The school has an adequate number of teaching staff whose qualifications and experience broadly match the demands and range of the National Curriculum. There are co-ordinators for all subjects, special educational needs, and assessment. A particular strength of the school is the high number of support teachers and well-qualified and experienced teaching assistants. They work closely with the teachers and provide high quality assistance, particularly when supporting learning in the literacy hour and in special educational needs work throughout the school. The school secretaries efficiently carry out administrative duties. The most helpful site manager maintains the school in very good order and the cleaners, cooks and mid-day supervisors perform their roles in a friendly capable way and are all valued members of the school.
60. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are satisfactory. They are overseen by the headteacher and deputy headteacher and reflect both the identified needs of the school and the personal needs of the staff. Senior teachers have in the past supported newly qualified staff satisfactorily, but the lack of any formal written induction policy leads to variations in provision. An in-school staff evaluation and appraisal scheme is being trialled under the direction of an educational consultant. The process, which is intended to highlight professional strengths and indicate areas for development, will be reviewed in the summer term. Many members of staff have attended relevant courses in the recent past.
61. The accommodation is adequate for the numbers on role and allows for the curriculum to be taught effectively. However much potential teaching space is taken up by poorly stored equipment and the passage of both teaching staff and pupils between the two school buildings results in the loss of curriculum time. There is no library in the junior school. Consequently the provision for pupils to develop efficient library skills and engage in independent research is very limited. This has a negative impact on the development of literacy. The school has ample playground areas and grassed playing fields. The buildings are well maintained, kept clean and enhanced by displays of pupils' work.
62. Learning resources throughout the school are, overall, sufficient for the school's curriculum and the range of pupils. Equipment is mainly stored within classrooms, and it is generally accessible and used appropriately. However the provision of resources in mathematics is unsatisfactory. There is a shortage of calculators, scales, mathematical games, structural apparatus and measuring equipment in Key Stage 2. This limits the experiences gained by pupils in mathematics and has a negative impact upon standards. There is a shortage of books and other resources which reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of society and which challenge race and gender stereotypes. Resources for the teaching of pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory overall. However, the range of computer

software is limited, and information technology generally is under-used in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs.

63. The budget allocation is quite large by national standards, and careful management has ensured that the school has maintained benefits for pupils whilst ensuring that the financial situation has improved over the last two years. There is now a reasonable contingency amount set aside. This should enable management to plan for the future without having to make drastic changes. Specific grants are used for their intended purposes.
64. The school development plan is costed and clearly prioritises the development of the work of the school. The governing body's finance committee is kept informed of the financial situation but has not as yet taken an active part in determining spending priorities based on an analysis of assessment results, parents' views, and its own vision for the future of the school. The governing body has not developed a formal tendering process, and although certain work has gone to tender, some major expenditure has not. For example, the recent expenditure on new computers and networks was commissioned on the basis of professional advice.
65. Arrangements for financial control and the day-to-day management by the office staff are good, and technology is used effectively. However, the local education authority's audit of the financial systems made several recommendations in 1998, not all of which have been adopted. There is no complete current pay policy for example and some routine house-keeping procedures have not been fully implemented.
66. In assessing the value for money provided by the school, the standards achieved by pupils together with the quality of the school as a caring community have to be weighed against the income per pupil. This amount is significantly higher than the average figure in the primary sector. Nonetheless, given the poor attainment on entry, the generally poor socio-economic circumstances in the area, and satisfactory achievement of pupils, Dee Point Primary is an effective school, which provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards, the school needs to:

- (i) Further increase attainment in English, especially in writing, and in mathematics and science, by:
 - Raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. (paragraphs 17, 18, 81, 97, 146)
 - Improving resources in mathematics. (paragraphs 62, 96)
 - Improving the organisation of independent group work within the literacy hour. (paragraphs 20, 84)
 - Improving the quality and consistency of ongoing assessment and evaluation. (paragraphs 22, 40)
 - Developing an effective scheme of work for science. (paragraphs 27, 102)
 - Sharing good practice in teaching. (paragraphs 17, 40)
- (ii) Increase the efficiency of the school's governing body by:

- Providing further governor training on roles and responsibilities, in order to improve governors' understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and increase the involvement of the governing body in shaping the direction of the school and monitoring its effectiveness. (paragraph 56)
 - Ensuring that the principles of best value (comparison, challenge, consultation and competition) are applied to all financial decisions. (paragraph 64)
- (iii) Continue the reorganisation of the school's management structure, in line with the targets of the school development plan, by:
- Ensuring that all staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities in line with the identified needs of the school, and ensuring that teaching and learning are monitored and evaluated effectively to raise the quality of education. (paragraph 55)
- (iv) Provide opportunities to increase parents' support for the school and involvement with their children's learning, at home and at school, by:
- Improving communication, ensuring all parents are aware of the reasons for change. (paragraphs 42, 50)
- (v) Improve the attitudes and behaviour of pupils, especially those in Years 1, 2 and 3, by:
- Making systematic and consistent provision for personal, social and health education according to an agreed policy. (paragraph 26, 44)
 - Comprehensive and consistent implementation of the school's equal opportunities policy, along with any staff training needed to do this effectively. (paragraph 13, 30, 36, 58)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

Extending opportunities for pupils to develop further their independent learning, by building up a Key Stage 2 library as finance allows. (paragraphs 14, 61, 89)

Improve standards of attainment in information technology at Key Stage 1, by better organisation of use of the computer suite, and better provision of resources in the infant department. (paragraphs 5, 120, 126)

Further develop schemes of work in art, design and technology, geography, and physical education, in order to ensure that learning takes place in small, identifiable steps. (paragraphs 27, 106, 110, 114, 140)

THE WORK OF THE MLD UNITS

67. The school hosts two units planned for a total of 24 pupils who have moderate learning difficulties, and in some cases associated behaviour difficulties. Currently the units are made up of ten pupils in the upper juniors and 11 pupils in the lower juniors.

68. Individual education plans formulated from pupils' Statements of Special Educational Needs are detailed and contain clear individual learning targets. Whilst the overall standards of literacy and numeracy are well below national expectations, most pupils are making good progress in relation to their abilities. Some pupils make gains well above expectations. In the 1999 national tests two pupils achieved Level 3 and one pupil Level 2 in English. One pupil achieved Level 3 and another Level 2 in mathematics, whilst four pupils achieved Level 3 in science.
69. Pupils have very positive attitudes to working in the units. In all lessons observed they were enthusiastic, interested in their activities and generally well behaved. When appropriate, some pupils integrate with mainstream classes for lessons, such as music, science and physical education. All pupils have an 'attachment class' with whom they link for assemblies and annual concerts. The curriculum followed by pupils in the units is appropriately broad and balanced and meets statutory regulations.
70. Teaching in the units is never less than satisfactory and often good or very good. Teachers know their pupils well and have high expectations of both learning and behaviour. Lessons are well planned and assessments of pupil performance used effectively to modify activities. Very detailed records are kept of pupil progress. Enthusiasm and carefully directed questioning characterise good lessons. The pace is brisk and good attention is given to praising efforts and raising pupils' self esteem. The teaching assistants, who work closely with the teachers and have a good understanding of the needs and abilities of individual pupils, give very good support. The high quality teaching and support has a positive impact upon the good progress that pupils make.
71. The units are well managed. Staff are well qualified and experienced. Very good links are maintained with all concerned agencies and appropriate liaison is maintained with feeder schools. Parental links are good, and parents frequently visit the units for informal discussions. Formal reviews of individual statements take place annually according to the Cheshire regulations, but the school also holds termly meetings with parents to discuss progress. The two spacious classrooms provide ample accommodation, and resources are generally adequate for delivery of the National Curriculum. However the range of appropriate computer software available is limited and this approach to learning is not fully developed.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	99
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	52

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	8	32	54	6		

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	431
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	186

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	18
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	130

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	58

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.2
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	34	29	63

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	12	27
	Girls	26	21	23
	Total	41	33	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	65 (55)	52 (45)	79 (63)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	26	13
	Girls	16	23	14
	Total	28	49	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	44 (49)	78 (60)	43 (48)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	42	26	68

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	24	28
	Girls	18	16	22
	Total	35	40	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	51 (44)	59 (34)	74 (46)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	16	18
	Girls	13	17	15
	Total	24	33	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	35 (39)	49 (40)	49 (53)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	427
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	10	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	20
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.55
Average class size	22.7

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	330

Financial information

Financial year	98-99
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	£
Total income	884599
Total expenditure	875366
Expenditure per pupil	1950
Balance brought forward from previous year	19457
Balance carried forward to next year	28690

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

431

Number of questionnaires returned

124

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	39	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	42	5	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	44	10	5	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	40	13	5	2
The teaching is good.	64	36	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	34	13	5	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	41	5	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	40	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	34	44	14	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	36	43	5	7	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	46	6	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	35	26	7	6

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, ASUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

72. Children are admitted to the two reception classes each year in the September before their fifth birthday. At the time of the inspection, there were 38 children who were four years old out of a total reception year of 51.
73. Whilst there is a wide range of attainment on entry, standards overall are well below average. Statutory assessment in the first weeks in school indicates that the children's number and visual reading skills are particularly poorly developed. Standards of oral language and personal and social development are also well below those expected for this age group.
74. Given their low starting points, the majority of the children make satisfactory progress. Less than half, however, are on target to reach the Desirable Learning Outcomes in the areas of personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development by the age of five. In physical development, where standards on entry are higher, the children continue to make sound progress and the majority are on target to reach the Desirable Learning Outcomes.

Personal and social development

75. Although most of the children are confident and respond positively to established routines, many find it hard to sustain concentration in small or large groups, particularly when not actively involved in practical experience. They frequently call out to attract the teacher's attention in class activities, and have difficulty waiting their turn. A significant number do not relate well to each other. For instance, in a mathematics lesson, they were unable to share fairly and pushed and pulled to obtain the equipment they wanted. Almost all can select an activity, but many do not persevere and often move to another task rather than ask for help. Their ability to initiate ideas and solve problems is limited. Almost all are beginning to express feelings and communicate with each other in role play. They show some understanding of celebrations and special occasions, such as family christenings. Teaching is satisfactory in this area. The teachers' supportive manner encourages the children to explore the range of activities offered, and praise is used successfully to build up self-esteem. The teachers establish routines where the children listen to each other in special personal and social education sessions, but do not consistently insist on the same standards in all other lessons. Whilst there are opportunities for the children to select their own activities, the overall emphasis is on teacher direction and the range for the children's choice is limited. Children are sometimes expected to spend an overlong time in listening sessions.

Language and literacy

76. The ability of many children to listen attentively in small and large groups is limited by their short concentration span and their low levels of understanding. They are often confused in following instructions and need much reassurance from the teachers. They enjoy listening to stories and looking at books, especially the large class books, which they 'read' together with enthusiasm. Most turn pages and follow the text, knowing that it carries meaning. The higher attainers can recognise

several letters of the alphabet by shape and sound, and some characters from the first readers. Some of the pupils recognise letter characters from a commercial scheme and are not yet secure in their knowledge of the actual letters. They listen carefully to identify simple rhymes. The majority of the pupils are beginning to recognise their name, although few can write their name in appropriate upper and lower case. They use pictures and letter shapes increasingly to communicate messages: for instance, when making appointments in the pretend baby clinic. Teaching in this area is satisfactory overall, although there are shortcomings in the overuse of worksheets, which do not meet the children's needs or fully engage them in learning. The teachers are introducing appropriate elements of the National Literacy Strategy and give high priority to the pupils' language development. There is particular emphasis on the teaching of letters and their sounds, and on promoting guided reading in small groups. This is largely successful in promoting early reading skills, but does not give enough emphasis to developing positive attitudes to books.

Mathematical development

77. Many of the children can recite numbers forwards to ten, 20, or 30, and the highest attainers can do it backwards. They are beginning to count with a variety of practical apparatus, and match reliably on a one-to-one basis. They are familiar with number rhymes and songs. Through practical experience, they are beginning to make comparisons, and to use language such as 'longer' and 'shorter' correctly. They exchange coins for magazines in the play shop. Teaching in mathematical development is satisfactory overall, but is variable between the classes. It is unsatisfactory when the range of activities is narrow, or if tasks are not sufficiently structured, or do not challenge all of the pupils, to make progress. In the satisfactory lessons, good questioning is used to extend the children's thinking, and plenary sessions are used effectively to consolidate learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

78. The pupils are interested in the world around them. They enjoy looking at artefacts such as christening gowns and presents, and are beginning to gain a sense of the past when looking back to their own babyhood. They are aware of the changes in bulbs growing in the classroom, although their ability to look closely and describe their observations is limited. The majority are able to follow simple instructions, but are not skilled in asking questions, or becoming independent in their learning. With help, they use information technology and are beginning to use the mouse to move characters on screen. Teaching is satisfactory. Resources are usually well prepared with a balance of formal teaching and play activities, for instance, at the sand tray. Some of the informal activities, however, are not sufficiently structured or objectives clearly focused to enable the children to make optimum progress.

Physical development

79. The pupils use space confidently. In the hall, they handle a good variety of wheeled toys with increasing control and with a growing awareness of space and of each other. They climb and balance carefully on the climbing frame. They take part confidently in gymnastics and dance lessons. They handle scissors and paste spreaders appropriately and are able to manipulate construction toys to fulfil their intentions. Teaching is satisfactory. The play areas between the classes, and the hall, are largely supervised by non-teaching staff. They intervene to develop the

children's physical skills effectively, are well aware of the safety aspects, and make a good contribution in this area.

Creative development

80. The pupils explore media such as paint, pastels and collage to make pictures of themselves, or to print. They listen to, and join in with, musical activities, often clapping and playing percussion in time to the music. They show imagination in role play in the pretend baby clinic. Teaching is satisfactory. A range of informal activities is provided, usually with appropriate adult intervention to make teaching points. Some tasks are over-directed and require little creative input from the pupils. For instance, whilst the pupils enjoy the experience of printing with their hands, they have no choice over how the prints are to be arranged, and do not have the opportunity to look closely, in order to evaluate the effect of their individual contribution to group/class work. Little evidence was seen, during the inspection, of three-dimensional work.
81. The teachers plan their work with reference to the Desirable Learning Outcomes for the under-fives. However, plans often concentrate on describing the activities to be carried out and do not consistently specify clear objectives for what the children are to learn. This sometimes leads to a lack of expectation of the pupils' performance across the curriculum and insufficient challenge for some of the children.
82. The non-teaching staff provide good quality assistance and make a very good contribution to the smooth running of the early years' department. They support the children's learning well.

ENGLISH

83. In national tests for seven-year-olds in 1999, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level (Level 2) was well below that found in most schools. The percentage reaching the higher level (Level 3) was also well below that found nationally. In writing, the percentage reaching the expected level was very low compared with most schools. No pupils achieved the higher level. Compared with similar schools, standards were below average in reading, and well below average in writing. In national tests for 11-year-olds in 1999, the percentage of the pupils who reached the expected Level 4 or higher was well below that found in most schools. Compared with similar schools, standards were below average. Boys did significantly less well than girls, especially in Key Stage 1. From 1996 to 1999, the test results show a gradual trend for improvement, in line with the national trend. Overall, standards reached in English in 1999 at the end of Key Stage 2 were higher than at the time of the last inspection.
84. Evidence gathered during this inspection confirms that standards are well below the national average at the end of each key stage. There are, however, indications that the school is maintaining a slight improvement, especially in reading. The effective introduction of the National Literacy Strategy in all classes is increasing the pupils' enthusiasm for, and knowledge of, a wider range of literature. In Key Stage 1, the emphasis on the systematic teaching of letters and their sounds is improving the pupils' confidence in reading and in spelling. There are, however, weaknesses in the organisation of independent group work within the literacy hour. Where group tasks are not matched to the pupils' needs, or when insufficient support is provided, the rate of learning slows, and some of the pupils do not make enough progress.
85. Whilst there is a wide range of attainment on entry to the school, a high percentage of children have poorly developed language skills. In a significant minority, this is

very poorly developed. By the end of Key Stage 1, many of the pupils still have difficulty in understanding what is said, in answering questions succinctly, and in articulating their own ideas. The majority of the pupils apply themselves well when listening in small and large groups, and are interested in what adults and other pupils have to say. Their responses, however, often reveal a low level of understanding, for instance, when following instructions given to the whole class for group work. The higher attaining pupils are beginning to widen their vocabularies and can suggest alternative adjectives such as 'massive' for 'good' and 'freezing' for 'cold'. Opportunities to develop oral communication skills in well-structured role-play situations are underdeveloped. By the end of Key Stage 2, although standards generally are still well below national expectation, the higher attaining pupils are able to discuss and constructively criticise their own work with the teacher. They listen well to each other's suggestions. In some lessons, however, many of the pupils are not confident in expressing their ideas, and tend to wait for the small group who are confident to respond to the teachers' questions. Poorly developed vocabulary often limits the pupils' ability to discuss issues, present information, or promote their own point of view persuasively, in English, and in other subjects.

86. The school gives high priority to the teaching of reading. In the shared text element of the literacy hour, the pupils in Key Stage 1 enjoy reading stories together, as a class, from big books. They read with expression, giving appropriate emphasis to the way the print is presented. By the end of the key stage, the majority of the pupils have satisfactory knowledge of letters and their sounds. Their ability to use this knowledge to decode unfamiliar words when reading alone is variable, and many of the pupils do not always know the meaning of the words they have decoded. The higher attainers read fluently from familiar texts, but generally do not have a good range of skills for reading new words. Few of the pupils are confident in finding information using contents or index. By the end of Key Stage 2, most of the pupils read independently, and establish meaning through a range of appropriate strategies. They encounter the works of famous authors such as Dickens. The higher attainers are able to recognise the way language is used to affect the reader, for instance, in creating an atmosphere of fear or suspicion in Pip's first encounter with the convict in *Great Expectations*. They are beginning to make inferences and deductions from the text, and have appropriate referencing skills. A few of the pupils are developing higher order skills of skimming and scanning, and using the computer in the local and central libraries to find information. There is still, however, a high percentage of the pupils whose reading skills are not sufficiently developed to support their learning effectively across the curriculum. Their ability to find information in reference books and to discuss what they have read is limited.
87. The school is aware of the need to raise standards in writing and has introduced extra weekly writing sessions in addition to the literacy hour in each class. Progress in writing is, however, unsatisfactory in Key Stage 1. By the end of the key stage, many of the pupils still have difficulty in developing their ideas, in constructing sentences, and in using basic punctuation reliably. Handwriting is not joined, and sometimes printing is poorly formed, with upper and lower case letters used at random. In Year 2 the majority of the pupils write briefly for a range of purposes, including making lists and instructions, and retelling a part of a familiar story. When writing a letter to their parents about their trip to Burwardsley they show an appreciation of the reader. The pupils make satisfactory progress in spelling and become increasingly accurate in building up simple regular words such as 'mash' and 'chips'. By the end of Key Stage 2, the majority of the pupils are becoming

quite thoughtful writers. When composing the opening paragraph of a ghost story, they choose words carefully for effect with the intention of grabbing the reader's attention. A significant minority have difficulty in putting forward their own ideas, due to their lack of imaginative vocabulary. The majority of the pupils write in simple sentences and are becoming increasingly reliable in using basic punctuation of capital letters and full stops. A few of the higher attainers use punctuation marks inside sentences correctly and use speech marks accurately when reporting dialogue. Most of the pupils are aware of basic spelling patterns and are able to build up common polysyllabic words accurately when developing their ideas. When working with the teacher, most pupils are able to improve their work significantly through redrafting, with close attention to sentence structure. All of the pupils write in joined script, but whilst handwriting is legible, neat and well formed in handwriting practice sessions, these skills are not consistently transferred to the everyday use of writing in other lessons.

88. The overall quality of teaching in English, as at the time of the last inspection, is satisfactory. In Key Stage 1, teaching in 75 per cent of lessons is satisfactory, and in 25 per cent it is good. In Key Stage 2, 53 per cent of English teaching is satisfactory, 33 per cent is good, and seven per cent very good. Seven per cent of teaching is unsatisfactory. All of the teachers have secure knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy, and this enables them to teach in a structured systematic way, which ensures satisfactory progress over time. Planning in *Writing* lessons is not always sufficiently focused to ensure the small steps to success that many of the pupils need. Often group activities are organised without clear objectives as to exactly what the pupils are expected to learn by the end of the lesson, or within a specific time-scale. Whilst there are some instances of detailed evaluation of what has been achieved, assessment is often too general and indicates little more than what ground has been covered. This does not provide enough information for accurate planning to meet the needs of different levels of attainment in each class or set. Basic skills, including phonics in Key Stage 1, and redrafting in Year 6, are taught well. The teachers usually make teaching points clearly so that the majority of the pupils know what is expected of them and can make satisfactory progress. Relationships between the staff and the pupils are good, and praise and rewards are used effectively to encourage the pupils to try harder. In several classes, however, mainly in Key Stage 1 and younger juniors, the attitudes of some of the pupils are not conducive to progress. Their low levels of concentration and poor listening skills lead to restless behaviour. The time taken for teachers to deal with this behaviour slows the pace of learning for all of the pupils in the class. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported in class, sets and withdrawal groups. Good quality assistance is provided in the additional literacy support group work.
89. In support of literacy through the rest of the curriculum, there are several opportunities for the pupils to practise literacy skills in subjects such as religious education, history and geography. However, insufficient opportunities are created to develop speaking and listening skills across the curriculum, or to extend the pupils' literacy skills through finding information independently, for instance, when carrying out topic work. There is no school library in the junior building and the library in Key Stage 1 is inappropriately situated and was underused during the week of the inspection. Whilst there are book collections in classrooms, the absence of library facilities does not promote the pupils' progress in developing independent research skills in using their reading ability to further their knowledge in other subjects.

90. The roles of the English curriculum co-ordinators are in need of further development to increase their effectiveness in promoting a whole-school approach to raising standards. The two curriculum co-ordinators are beginning to monitor standards through scrutinising the teachers' plans and samples of work. Procedures to involve all of the teachers in moderating samples of work in line with National Curriculum levels are not in place, and a bank of moderated work is not available to support the teachers in their judgements. This is leading to some inaccurate judgements of attainment and under-expectation of the pupils' performance, reflected in the discrepancy between teacher assessment and the test results in writing at the end of Key Stage 1, and English in Key Stage 2, when the tests yielded better results than the teachers anticipated. The school has not yet carried out a rigorous evaluation of its setting procedures in Key Stage 2, and the possible effect of the considerable gender imbalance in higher and lower sets on the progress of the boys. An audit of the school's standards and resources, including analysis of the results of statutory and optional tests, has recently been completed. A detailed action plan has been drawn up and targets set for improved performance.

MATHEMATICS

91. In the national tests in 1999, the school's mathematics results were well below the national average at the end of both key stages. At the end of Key Stage 1, attainment was also well below that of similar schools, but at the end of Key Stage 2, it was broadly in line with that of similar schools. Inspection evidence confirms these findings. Attainment in number is better than in other areas of mathematics, and in using and applying mathematics it is not as good, although the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy is beginning to correct this. Investigation skills, which were criticised in the last inspection, are still not well developed except with higher attainers. The attainment of boys is lower than that of girls, especially in Key Stage 1. Higher attaining groups and sets are composed mainly of girls.
92. Attainment in mathematics has risen since the last inspection. In Key Stage 2 the numbers reaching the nationally expected Level 4 of the National Curriculum has more than doubled. Pupils' strategies in mental mathematics have improved, and the school has moved away from a reliance on a commercial scheme. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.
93. As pupils enter the school, their mathematical skills are generally well below average, and in some cases very poorly developed. Learning is satisfactory, with teachers, quite rightly, concentrating on number and developing essential skills in mathematical language. At the end of Key Stage 1, all pupils can add numbers to ten, name simple two-dimensional shapes, and understand *half* and *quarter* in relation to these shapes. They are working accurately with money up to 20p. Average attainers know the difference between odd and even numbers, and can add tens and units accurately, including horizontal addition if there are no carries. They can sort three-dimensional shapes by their attributes, and carry on simple sequences. They are beginning to measure accurately in centimetres. Higher attaining pupils are exploring different ways of making 20 and have moved on to working easily with hundreds, for instance in the relationship between pounds and pence.
94. Learning is satisfactory in Key Stage 2. At the end of Year 6 lower attaining pupils can add, subtract and multiply tens and units. They can draw bar charts from tallied

information, multiply and divide by ten and 100, and work accurately with money to £10. Average attainers understand the symmetry of various named quadrilaterals, are adding and subtracting hundreds, tens and units, and can work with decimals to two places. Higher attainers understand long multiplication and are beginning to understand long division. They can interchange fractions, decimals and percentages, and understand, and work accurately with, a range of metric measures. Understanding of data handling is underdeveloped, especially probability.

95. Teaching is satisfactory in both key stages. In eight of the 18 lessons seen in the main school, teaching was good, and in one it was very good. Teaching seen in the MLD upper junior unit was also very good. Only one mathematics lesson seen in the school was unsatisfactory, in lower juniors. Although pupils were grouped by prior attainment in this lesson, not enough was done to ensure that the work given matched the ability of each pupil. Consequently, expectations were too low or too high for different groups, and progress was slow. Progress was also hindered a little by the unacceptable behaviour of a small number of boys. Although the teacher dealt with this well, it necessarily slowed the lesson down. Management of pupils is generally good, especially in Years 4, 5 and 6. The teaching of basic skills is good throughout, with technical words introduced appropriately in almost all classes, in line with the National Numeracy Strategy. The use of assessment to inform teaching is good in Key Stage 1, and satisfactory in Key Stage 2, where it is used to set classes, but sometimes is not used well to target pupils within sets. Marking is conscientious, but not all teachers make use of it to record pupils' progress and set short-term targets.
96. The mathematics policy is old, and bears no relationship to what is actually being taught. The Key Stage 2 mathematics co-ordinator has written a new, more relevant policy, but it is not yet in place. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced, and some training has taken place, though the training has yet to be completed. Assessment of pupils is good, with yearly testing used to set realistic and suitably challenging school targets. There is a co-ordinator for each key stage, an unnecessary duplication which leaves continuity between key stages insecure. Resources are inadequate, particularly in Key Stage 2, with not enough measuring equipment and structural apparatus for number.

SCIENCE

97. Attainment in science is well below average at the end of Key Stage 1, and below the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. The National Curriculum assessments in 1999, and for previous years, show a generally similar pattern of very low attainment in the infants, with a slowly improving picture in juniors. In 1999 the scores for 11 year olds showed a big improvement, with 74 per cent of pupils attaining the nationally expected Level 4 and above, compared with 78 per cent nationally. Whilst this is still below the national average, it is above the average attainment of pupils at this age in similar schools. The higher attainment of the older pupils is due largely to better teaching, more effective use of investigative and experimental work, and the fact that boys in the school are making more progress in science than in other subjects. The 1999 cohort of pupils was also a generally more able group than previous years. As pupils have very low levels of attainment at the age of five, the pattern shows that they are only maintaining unsatisfactory standards in Key Stage 1 but making good progress at Key Stage 2. There is variation in the rates of progress between parallel classes where the quality of

teaching is inconsistent, and pupils have had disrupted education through changes in staff. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in science, with four pupils achieving Level 3 by the age of 11. Taking the last four years together, both boys and girls have attained, on average, scores that are well below the national standard. However, the gap has narrowed more for girls than boys and they are now attaining close to the national average. The very small numbers of pupils who are learning English as an additional language are progressing at a similar rate to their classmates. The previous inspection report indicated that the school should explore methods to improve standards in science and the school has achieved this, largely through increasing the amount and quality of investigative and practical work.

98. At Key Stage 1 pupils have some understanding of life and living things. They all know about the main parts of the body such as the face, leg and foot. Many can name more parts than this. They learn about healthy foods and how medicines get into the body. Pupils observe and describe features of animals such as how birds have feathers and beaks. They can identify different sources of light such as electric lights, candles and torches and understand how difficult it is to do things without any light. Pupils learn about pushing and pulling in their work on forces.
99. In Key Stage 2 younger pupils extend their knowledge of life, studying and comparing the life cycle of humans and frogs. They understand that the young can develop both inside and outside the body of an adult. Pupils learn about materials, classifying those which are natural and those that are artificial. They describe similarities and differences between materials and conduct tests to see which materials are strongest and which most flexible. In a lesson in which they test their designs for a waterproof hat they develop a good understanding of what constitutes a waterproof material. One pupil offers the explanation "Material which is designed not to let water through it". Another pupil showed how his low level of English was hindering his attainment. He understood the concept of waterproof but gave the definition as "Something that doesn't go through anything". In their work on investigating which materials are waterproof, they begin to understand the meaning of a fair test and why this is necessary. Pupils continue to develop the skills of scientific investigation in the upper juniors as they test out which materials conduct electricity and which act as insulators. Some continue to be hindered by their lack of familiarity with words such as "conclusion" and "generalisation" although most are now familiar with the idea of prediction.
100. Throughout the school, the response of pupils in more than eight out of every ten lessons is satisfactory or better; mostly it is satisfactory. There is some unsatisfactory behaviour in both key stages but more of the good attitudes and behaviour are found in Key Stage 2. This is due to higher standards of teaching, with more interesting lessons and, correspondingly, higher attainment. Pupils are generally interested in their lessons and particularly enjoy the practical work. In this work they generally behave responsibly and show that they can work well together especially as they get older. They are keen to answer questions and respond well to requests for their attention. When making waterproof hats in Year 4 pupils work hard on their designs in anticipation of testing them out. They are all fully involved in their work. They show great pleasure and satisfaction at the outcomes of the tests. Where behaviour is unsatisfactory, it is largely because of the disruption of a few pupils, mostly boys. Most often these pupils have a defined learning or behavioural special need. In some circumstances, such as in a Year 3 class, the behaviour of a small number was allowed to affect the learning of others. This

occurred as the flow and pace of the lesson deteriorated whilst the teacher dealt with the poorly behaved pupils. Attitudes to learning sometimes deteriorated as pupils were required to write down what they had learnt.

101. Teaching is satisfactory. In four of the ten lessons seen it was good, and in one it was very good. The best teaching was in Key Stage 2, notably in Years 4, 5 and 6. In the very good lesson the teacher had prepared well for an interesting and enjoyable activity. She conducted the lesson with good pace and asked questions that probed and extended pupils' thinking. In another lesson the teacher had set a challenging tasks in investigating whether certain liquids were conductors of electricity. In some lessons work is not sufficiently well differentiated to raise the attainment of all pupils especially the more able ones. In one lesson some boys took it upon themselves to find other materials to test and others fitted a piece of paper to a motor and made a fan. The unsatisfactory lesson was with younger pupils who made too little progress because they were allowed to wander around and not concentrate sufficiently well. Information technology is not yet fully used to enhance learning. It is not used, for example, in data handling.
102. There are separate co-ordinators for the two key stages. The subject benefits from their good subject knowledge, but the policy is out of date and the schemes of work are not sufficiently helpful to teachers in planning their lessons. Assessment is unsatisfactory. At Key Stage 1 procedures are clearly in place, but at an early stage of development. At Key Stage 2 there is currently no agreed system for assessing and recording progress. The co-ordinators look at teachers' planning but do not monitor implementation or pupils' progress systematically. This results in some work being repeated in successive years without sufficient progress being made, for example, in the work on animal life cycles in Years 2 and 3. Whilst progress has been made in developing experimental and investigative science, this area is still relatively weak. The school environment is little used to enhance learning. Resources are barely satisfactory. There are some shortages of small equipment such as magnifying glasses and certain items are in poor condition. Required equipment is not always easily accessible because of the separate infant and junior sites. The subject has not been reviewed recently because of the priority given to literacy and numeracy. It is scheduled for review within the next year.

ART

103. In the last inspection the attainment of pupils was 'in line with national expectation for their ages.' It was possible to see two lessons only during this inspection. However the evidence from these lessons, and from the displays and photographs of pupils' work, shows that standards achieved are about those expected of primary school pupils. Some of the work is of very good quality.
104. Most pupils enjoy art. This is observed in lessons and is shown in the imagination and care they put into their displayed work. Year 2 pupils can create their own design for a stained glass window. They are responding in part to a recent church visit as they explore the visual qualities of colours from wax crayons, and the effects of wiping with cooking oil. The sketchbooks, which pupils start in Year 2, were also seen in Years 3 and 4. These sources show their developing skills in observational drawings, with increasing appreciation of colour, and of the use of tone. Pupils through the school study a variety of artists such as Picasso, Monet, Alberto Giacometti, and Andy Warhol, and they produce work in the same style. Year 6 pupils use Salvador Dali images as a stimulus, as they use pencil, charcoal, or crayon to capture some of the detail successfully, and very often some of the

atmosphere, of Dali's pictures. Pupils with special educational needs again have good teacher support and make good progress.

105. Because only two lessons were observed it is not possible to make a detailed judgement on the quality of teaching and learning. However it is evident from work seen that teaching is at least satisfactory, and that learning is at least sound for most pupils. All teachers use display to good effect. They show respect for work well done by using attractive lettering and mounting it on suitable backing papers.
106. The school recognises the need to revise the policy for art. Also it aims to develop a more comprehensive scheme of work so as to outline the progression of skills, and to provide a system for the regular assessment of pupils' achievements. There is a good range of two-dimensional art, including collage and observational drawing, but less three-dimensional art. The school hopes that, when circumstances allow, there will be opportunities for staff development in three-dimensional work, including pottery, and work with textiles. Art supports learning well in other subjects, especially design and technology. A wide range of art from all classes is effectively displayed and it enhances the school environment.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

107. Three lessons were seen in Key Stage 2, and none in Key Stage 1. Evidence of pupils' abilities in designing and making skills is demonstrated in displays of their work. From these observations, and from examining teachers' plans, it is evident that standards achieved are in line with those expected of pupils of these ages.
108. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Key Stage 2. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on teaching at Key Stage 1. Features of good teaching included a good pace to lessons, well-managed classes, and well-structured activities.
109. Year 3 pupils concentrated well in making Egyptian collars. They can evaluate their design, and make suggestions for improvements. Year 5 pupils demonstrated the sound development in their learning when making a mask with part happy and part sad faces. Having designed the models, listed the materials needed, and sketched possible changes, they used art straws and gummed paper as part of the finishing processes. Year 6 pupils work impressively and show great concentration and pleasure in their work. They co-operate well together and are well aware of the need for safety when using tools. In developing their understanding of how simple mechanisms can be used to produce different types of movement, groups engage in a range of activities. These include making large models, lego-technic construction to produce motorised models, and measuring and cutting wood to construct a self propelled model using an elastic band.
110. There is no co-ordinator at Key Stage 2. The school recognises the need to update the scheme of work and to develop a more regular and rigorous pattern of assessment to record pupils' progress as they pass through the school. Accommodation is good, and resources are satisfactory. Pupils' learning experiences could be expanded to include more food technology and to involve greater use of the kiln in Key Stage 2. There is good provision and support for special educational needs pupils, and the successful encouragement of teamwork and of values of sharing in the upper part of the school. The cross-curricular links made between design and technology and other subjects, such as art and religious education, also make a strong contribution to raising standards of achievement.

GEOGRAPHY

111. Only two lessons were seen during the inspection. From these lessons and from looking at pupils' work it is evident that standards achieved are about what should be expected of pupils of this age. This reflects the level of achievement noted in the last report of 1996.
112. Year 1 pupils study simple weather types and look at the local area in Blacon. Pupils revisit these topics as they progress through the school. Year 2 pupils, studying the journey of a river, can use appropriate vocabulary such as source, lake, dam, and stream as they relate these to their drawings. They also express delight as they watch the TV images of aerial views of the River Shannon. In Year 3 pupils can use aerial photographs of Blacon as well as maps, as they develop their mapping skills and their understanding of place. Pupils continue to learn about peoples and places in the wider world in Years 4 and 5 as they study small settlements drawn from St. Lucia, and Kenya or India. Year 6 pupils study Chester as part of their work on settlements. They can make distinctions between villages, towns and cities. They have also progressed in their skills of using maps, atlases and photographs to derive information. They can also work keenly together and with enthusiasm.
113. Because only two lessons were observed, it is not possible to give an overall grade on the quality of teaching. However on the evidence of these lessons, and from scrutiny of pupils' work and of teachers' planning, it is evident that teaching overall is at least satisfactory. In one lesson observed the teaching was very good. Qualities which contributed to this included the good planning, pupils being very clear of the objectives of the lesson at the start, and the efficient organisation of varied activities which stimulated the interest and confidence of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are also well supported.
114. There is sound curriculum leadership and detailed medium-term planning by teachers. However, the school recognises the need to up-date the policy for geography, and to develop the scheme of work. These developments would include a more consistent pattern of assessment and recording of pupils' achievements through the school, and, where possible, provide greater opportunities for the monitoring of lessons. Pupils' learning in geography is enriched by the visits – local and residential experienced through the school. Geography makes a good contribution to pupils' social development, and their work on people and places in the wider world contributes well to their cultural development and understanding of other traditions.

HISTORY

115. No history lessons were observed in Key Stage 1, as it was not being taught during that time. In Key Stage 2, lessons were observed in all year groups except Year 6. From an examination of pupils' work, photographs, teachers' planning, and discussion with pupils and teachers, attainment is judged to be about that which is expected of pupils in primary schools. Overall, pupils make sound progress in acquiring appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding. However, there is some variation in the rate of progress between year groups and sometimes between classes within year groups. This is noticeable in Key Stage 2 where pupils make a weak start but catch up later. Progress for some pupils is hampered by their low levels of English, as for example when pupils in the lower juniors did not know the

term "seasons". The progress of pupils with special educational needs is in line with that of their peers. The very small number of pupils learning English as an additional language make sound progress.

116. Pupils in Key Stage 1 develop an appropriate sense of the passing of time. They examine their family tree and learn about how life was different for their parents, grandparents and great grandparents. Pupils examine artefacts from the past such as a wireless set, candlestick, and a flat iron, and are able to discuss the difference electricity made to people's lives. They are able to comment on differences in trains from the coal fired "Rocket" of George Stephenson to modern day versions and possible trains of the future. Pupils learn the stories of Guy Fawkes, Robert the Bruce and Marco Polo.
117. In Key Stage 2 pupils learn about the ancient Egyptians and the importance of the gods and the River Nile for farming and transport. In this work they continue to develop an understanding of how and why people acted as they did in the past. In studying the Romans they understand why they came, how they succeeded in their invasion of this country, and about differences in the lives of the rich and their slaves. Pupils learn about the Tudor kings and queens and aspects of life such as crime and punishment and entertainment. They begin to understand how information and images can be misleading. In Year 6 pupils' learning about World War Two is placed briefly in the context of what has happened earlier in the century in Britain and the wider world. They develop a good understanding of some of the important events that changed people's lives. Pupils learn about the suffragette movement and the differences in people's lives between 1930 and now in areas such as transport, work, and education. Progress in developing understanding and empathy is particularly good as they study aspects of World War Two such as the evacuation of children and the treatment of the Jews. At this stage pupils' learning is enhanced by the increased use of group and individual work, which is then reported to the class as a whole.
118. In the relatively small number of lessons observed in Key Stage 2 the response of pupils was predominantly sound but varied from unsatisfactory to very good. At both extremes the cause could be largely attributed to the quality of teaching. Where attitudes and behaviour were very good, the teacher had good subject knowledge and a lively, humorous style, and had developed a variety of interesting activities to enhance pupils' learning. These included role play and sampling foods the Romans would have eaten. Where behaviour was unsatisfactory, the teacher talked too much, tackled a large number of aspects and did not ensure that the pupils understood what they were to do. In other lessons pupils are interested in history and respond well.
119. The subject benefits from the knowledge, experience and enthusiasm of the co-ordinator. The policy and scheme of work are in need of review, scheduled for next year. There is no agreed system of assessing, recording and monitoring of pupils' progress and in this the school has made unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection. Priority has, inevitably, been given to the development of literacy and numeracy. History makes a sound contribution to pupils' literacy through, for example, the writing of imaginary letters to Anne Frank. Pupils benefit from a good range of visits, for example to a Tudor house and a museum where younger pupils role-play aspects of Victorian life. A number visit some of the battlefields of Europe and Anne Frank's House in Amsterdam. These visits are a strength of the subject, contributing well to pupils' history learning and to their social, moral and cultural

development. However, opportunities are lost to help pupils understand how our society became so culturally diverse. Resources are barely satisfactory. In particular, the school needs more up to date books and more artefacts. Information technology is being used increasingly although there are currently problems with the hardware.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

120. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards in information technology are in line with national expectations. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards are below national expectations, and pupils at Key Stage 1 make unsatisfactory progress. This is mainly due to the lack of opportunities provided for pupils, which is partly caused by the quality and reliability of resources available in the infant department and the limited use made of the computer suite. At the time of the last inspection no comment was made of the standards of pupils' attainment except to state that they "varied enormously". Standards still vary between the key stages but have been considerably improved at Key Stage 2.
121. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are able to use the mouse to access simple programs and can click on an item and drag it to where they want it to go, such as when using programs to dress teddy or art programs to draw faces. Manipulative skills develop appropriately here, but few pupils are confident in word-processing using the computer keyboard. The majority of pupils are able to complete short pieces of writing and Year 2 pupils were observed learning to open and close programs, and print their work with adult help.
122. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are able to write stories, poems and reports using a variety of word-processing packages. Pupils' manipulative skills in using the computer keyboard vary considerably but most pupils show reasonable control when using the 'mouse' to move the cursor around the screen. They can use icons and menus to change the style, size and paragraphing of text and pupils were observed incorporating pictures from 'clipart' or their own drawings from 'Paint magic' to enhance the stories they had been writing for younger children. They use the edit function to cut and paste their work and move text when redrafting their work. Pupils have had opportunities to design their own book covers using art programs and have made use of picture 'stamps', and the paintbrush and spray-can functions to produce good quality designs. In control technology, pupils can write simple programs to make a floor robot follow a given route making use of their mathematical knowledge of degrees of turn to command the robot to follow a circular route. Work with 'Logo' programs has not yet been provided and pupils' development in this aspect of the subject and that of data handling is less well developed as yet. Pupils are able to enter simple information into a data-handling program and produce graphs and charts. Through access to the Internet and making use of CD-ROM, pupils are able to research information about the work they are currently undertaking in other subject areas, such as our solar system in science or the Tudor era in history.
123. Throughout Key Stage 2 pupils make satisfactory progress in their information technology skills. They learn how computers provide a variety of means of presenting information and pupils are suitably challenged by the work their teachers set. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 are beginning to learn how to reorganise writing by highlighting, copying and moving text and printing out their own work. In Years 5 and 6 pupils make appropriate progress in using desktop publishing to alter the

format of text and including headlines and graphics in their work. Progress in data handling and control technology skills are variable and are dependent on the teachers' confidence in using these programs. The school is aware of this and further training for teachers is planned in the near future.

124. Pupils enjoy using computers and show great enthusiasm especially when using art programs. They are well behaved when using the computer suite although some instances of silly behaviour were observed in Year 2 and 3. Pupils generally work well together, taking turns to use the computer. In some classes more able pupils are effectively used to help others and show a good sense of responsibility in undertaking this duty.
125. Only one lesson was observed at Key Stage 1 and, together with lessons seen at Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching observed was satisfactory. In these lessons, appropriate learning objectives matched to the prior attainment of pupils resulted in pupils being suitably challenged by the work they had to complete and making satisfactory progress. However, limited access to information technology at Key Stage 1 is restricting the progress pupils make over time. At both key stages, teachers' confidence, knowledge and understanding of the subject varies and although most have a secure knowledge of the work they are currently doing when using the computer suite, many are not skilled in managing the use of classroom computers during the busy school day. During the inspection many classroom computers were turned on but not being used, especially during literacy and numeracy lessons.
126. The enthusiastic and hard-working co-ordinator is well aware of what is needed to raise standards in information technology but has only recently been given responsibility for Key Stage 1. Provision, particularly at Key Stage 2, has been greatly improved by the addition of the computer suite and this is being fully utilised at this key stage. At Key Stage 1, access to this facility is more restricted and the computers available in infant classrooms vary greatly in quality and reliability. The computers available are also underused in developing pupils' word-processing skills but appropriate use is made of a variety of simple programs to develop pupils' manipulative skills. Until pupils at Key Stage 1 have more frequent access to computers their standards of attainment will remain below national expectations.

MUSIC

127. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards in music are similar to those seen in most schools. No lessons were seen in Year 6, as there were none included in the weekly timetable, so judgements on attainment at the end of the key stage are not made.
128. The pupils in both key stages join in a repertoire of songs and hymns. They sing tunefully with confidence and enthusiasm. At Key Stage 1, they clap in time with the beat and perform actions in time with the music. By the end of the key stage, they respond to an accented beat using untuned percussion.
129. At Key Stage 2, the pupils sing expressively, using loud and soft dynamics. In Year 5, they are able to follow music and have some basic understanding of notation. They are beginning to sing in two-part harmony. When listening to 1950's music 'At the Hop', they respond to the rhythm and compose their own hand-jive in four beats. Their general knowledge about a range of composers and variety of music is not

well developed. The pupils who receive small-group tuition in brass instruments make good progress and their performance skills are above those expected for their age.

130. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but varies from unsatisfactory to good. In the five lessons observed, teaching was satisfactory in three, good in one and unsatisfactory in one. In the good lesson, the teacher's secure knowledge of the subject and of the pupils enabled her to plan work which was well focused and clearly matched the pupils' needs. Her high expectations of the pupils' behaviour encouraged the pupils to stay on task and try their best, thus increasing their rate of learning. In the unsatisfactory lesson, class management was ineffective and too much time was taken in controlling the significant minority of restless pupils distracted from the central purpose of the lesson. This slowed down learning for everyone.
131. The curriculum co-ordinator has recently introduced a commercial scheme of work to support the teachers in their planning, and is monitoring its implementation through evaluating the teachers' plans. Her role in judging standards throughout the school is hampered by a lack of opportunity to observe teaching and learning directly.
132. The school brass band has traditionally been very popular and played at functions in the local community. Whilst standards in the band have been maintained, there have recently been fewer opportunities for the band to perform. An annual musical evening celebrates the school's achievement and includes performances from the band, the Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 choirs and individual instrumentalists. Extra-curricular activities, such as choirs and the band, are attended mainly by girls.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133. During the week of the inspection it was not possible to observe all aspects of the physical education curriculum. Inspection evidence is drawn from observations of lessons in dance, games, swimming and gymnastics.
134. At the end of both key stages pupils achieve expected standards in physical education overall, and a number of pupils reach well above the expected levels in swimming and games at the end of Key Stage 2. All pupils make at least satisfactory progress, and a few pupils with special educational needs make good progress, as a result of informed and sympathetic teaching.
135. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils have developed sound co-ordination when using large body movements. They move with control and make good use of general space. In dance most pupils recognise basic rhythms and create appropriate movement patterns in response to a tambourine and musical tapes. Year 2 pupils show expected skills in games. They are able to control large balls, and a large minority show good levels of skill when throwing and catching.
136. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils move around the playground with increasing control, and demonstrate an expected range of passing and catching skills. In competitive situations they show appropriate understanding of attacking and defending techniques in soccer-type situations. A number of older pupils demonstrate good levels of skill. The school currently holds a regional seven-a-side championship trophy. In gymnastics pupils demonstrate expected mobility and

control when performing rolls and turns in a limited space. The range of movements is appropriate, but many lack quality in shape and finish.

137. The school supports an effective swimming programme and most pupils are able to meet the swimming requirements of the National Curriculum before the end of Key Stage 2. A significant number of pupils achieve standards well above expectations, and swimming is a strength of the physical education programme. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. They make sound progress overall and achieve results that enhance their self-esteem.
138. Most pupils work with enthusiasm, enjoyment and commitment in physical education. They clearly enjoy the sessions and nearly all change into appropriate clothing. Pupils are willing to share ideas, work co-operatively and make good use of opportunities to practise their skills. Behaviour is usually good, apparatus is sensibly and responsibly used and in competitive situations pupils show due regard for laws and fair play.
139. The quality of teaching is always satisfactory and sometimes good. Most teachers appear enthusiastic about teaching physical education and wear appropriate clothing. This has a positive effect upon pupils' attitude to the subject. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory, and at times it is very good. Teachers manage pupils well. The best practice sees teachers using pupils' performance effectively to demonstrate achievement, and to encourage others to observe and evaluate their own actions in order to improve performance. Pupils are active for most of the time. Lessons are satisfactorily planned and appropriate activities are chosen.
140. The co-ordinator is well qualified in physical education and gives effective leadership. However, the current scheme of work is dated and the allocation of time within the physical education curriculum is no longer appropriate. These deficiencies have been recognised by the school and a review of the policy and scheme of work is planned. The provision for a number of extra-curricular activities and clubs enhances the physical education curriculum, as does the experience gained by pupils on residential visits to activity centres. However, the lack of provision of extra-curricular sporting activities aimed mainly at girls restricts the opportunities for them to develop their games skills.
141. Resources for physical education overall are satisfactory, and include two appropriately equipped halls, reasonable playground areas and an adequate games field. However, the level of small games apparatus readily available for Key Stage 1 pupils is unsatisfactory, and this limits the pupils' experiences in this area.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

142. At the end of both key stages, standards of attainment in religious education are in line with the expectations of the Cheshire Agreed Syllabus. Pupils make satisfactory gains in learning at both key stages. Whilst it was possible to observe only two lessons in each key stage, the analysis of pupils' past work, teachers' planning, and discussions with pupils, indicate that a suitable curriculum is covered.
143. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils know about celebrations such as Christmas and Easter. They are familiar with marriage and baptism ceremonies and celebrations. A Year 2 pupil recalled his recent baptism, and the occasion was used effectively by the teacher to focus and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of the

ceremony. Pupils gain an appropriate knowledge of Christianity through listening and re-telling bible stories. One class wrote to the headline 'Paralysed Man Walks' as if they were reporting for the Jerusalem Times, enhancing learning in literacy. Pupils become aware of the beliefs of other religions through the study of Judaism. They know that people celebrate and pray in different places, and are developing an understanding of the function of various items in a church. Older pupils remembered a visit made to Saint John the Divine church in Burwardsley. With some prompting, they recalled the names and function of the font, lectern, pulpit and altar. The vicar had clearly made an impression when he rang the church bells, as many pupils remembered the 'sally'.

144. Key Stage 2 pupils continue to develop their understanding of the similarities within different religions. They know that religions have special books and ceremonies, and are familiar with the names Church, Mosque and Synagogue. Through their study of Christianity, Judaism and Islam pupils understand that religions contain rules for living, and that different people worship in different ways. Pupils in Year 3 compare the ceremonies and celebrations following Christian and Muslim births. Some pupils make good use of the Internet to collect information on Islam. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 study the Bible as a collection of books, and know of the Old and New Testaments. Many know the stories of Abraham and Isaac, of Moses in the bullrushes and of Noah and the ark. Pupils understand that other people's beliefs are important to them and that religious teachings can affect the way people live. This makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. However, the focus on the factual aspects of the curriculum reduces the opportunity for pupils to consider and discuss the consequences and choices arising from living in a multi-religious society.
145. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well. As a result they make satisfactory gains in learning in relation to their prior attainment. They have equal access to all activities. Generally pupils have satisfactory attitudes towards learning. However, the amount of expected written work is limited, and, as a consequence, religious education does not make a significant contribution to the literacy skills of many pupils.
146. Teaching is satisfactory overall, and sometimes it is good. It is characterised by sound subject knowledge and use of a range of resources to interest and inform pupils. In lessons where teaching is good, questioning is used well to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding, and the lesson is thoughtfully planned. A weakness in teaching occurs when pupils are asked to complete unchallenging work sheets or colour-in drawings, rather than writing or reading about religious artefacts.
147. Planning for religious education meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and keen to ensure that religious education is regarded appropriately as a core subject. However, there are no opportunities for monitoring religious education, and the school has yet to develop systems for assessing pupils' progress in the subject. Visits to a church on a residential trip introduce the pupils to places of worship, but their experiences would be enhanced by visits to a wider range of holy buildings. Resources for religious education are satisfactory, and artefacts relating to major world faiths provide a useful contribution to pupils' learning.