

INSPECTION REPORT

HEYES LANE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Timperley, Altrincham

LEA area: Trafford

Unique reference number: 106288

Headteacher: Mr D Helsby

Reporting inspector: Mr M Lester
20596

Dates of inspection: 14th to 17th February, 2000

Inspection number: 188219

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Crofton Avenue Timperley Altrincham Cheshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Cllr. Mrs P Dixon
Date of previous inspection:	22 nd to 26 th April 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Martin Lester	Registered Inspector		What sort of school is it?
			The school's results and achievements
			How well are pupils taught?
Bill Twiss	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
			How well is the school led and managed?
Kuldip Rai	Team inspector	Art	
		Geography	
		History	
		Religious education	
		Equal opportunities	
Pat Cassidy	Team inspector	Mathematics	
		Music	
		Physical education	
		Special educational needs	
Kevin Cassidy	Team inspector	Science	
		Information technology	
		Design and technology	
Doreen Cliff	Team inspector	English	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Heyes Lane Junior School is a large school with 383 pupils on roll. The number of pupils has risen steadily for the past five years but is expected to stabilise in the near future. The school is located in a mainly residential suburb, comprising both owner occupied and local authority housing, in the north-eastern corner of Altrincham, close to the border with Manchester Education Authority. It shares a site with its counterpart infant school. The majority of the pupils are drawn from the immediate area, although approximately 15% travel from further afield. About 9% of the pupils each year are entitled to free school meals, which is below the national average. The pupils' attainment on entry reflects the full ability range, but for the past two years has been broadly average overall.

The pupils are of predominantly white ethnicity. About a fifth of them, which is in line with the national average, are included on the school's register for special educational needs, but most of these are at stage 1 and 2. Currently, there is one pupil with a statement of special educational need. Five pupils, which is more than in most schools, speak English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good and improving school. By the age of eleven, the pupils' achieve high standards in most subjects because the teaching is usually good and they enjoy a broad and generally interesting range of learning experiences. The pupils are well cared for and their attitudes to school, their behaviour, their personal development and attendance levels are all very good. The headteacher, governors and staff work together well to improve the quality of education and further raise standards. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in literacy and numeracy, science, art, history, information technology, music and physical education are above average by the time the children leave the school.
- Standards are high because the quality of teaching is good overall.
- The pupils' positive attitudes to work support their good progress in learning.
- The pupils' very good behaviour contributes positively to the school ethos.
- The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- There is a very good range of extra curricular sporting, cultural and other educational activities.
- The headteacher sets a very good example in ensuring that the school aims and values are clearly reflected in the day to day working of the school. This is appreciated by many parents.
- The headteacher is well supported by the governing body and senior staff in managing the school and identifying areas for development.

What could be improved

- The strategies for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the quality of education provided are not rigorous enough.
- Although teaching is good overall, it is not consistently so across all year groups.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected four years ago. Since then the headteacher, governing body and staff have worked effectively to improve the quality of education provided and the standards attained, by addressing conscientiously the previous report. For example, standards in mathematics, art, information technology and physical education have all improved from average to above average. In addition, the previous good standards in English, science, history and music have been securely consolidated

Standards have risen because the teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection when it was satisfactory or better in nine out of ten lessons seen and was good in half of them. During the current inspection, no unsatisfactory teaching was observed and in seven out of ten lessons it was good. In addition, the frequency of very good or excellent teaching has increased from one in twenty-five to one in four lessons. Most teachers have a good understanding of what needs to be taught and are now more concerned with how best to promote good learning and progress. The curriculum has also been strengthened across a range of subjects. For example, the well-managed introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has contributed positively to the raising of standards. In addition, the information technology curriculum has benefited from prudent investment in new equipment.

The headteacher, governors and senior staff have made a satisfactory start to the introduction of systems for the monitoring and subsequent evaluation of classroom practice and school development priorities and targets. For example, some senior staff have begun to observe and record classroom practice and the governing body are well informed about school attainment targets. However, these systems are not yet rigorous enough to provide consistently clear and helpful documented evidence that could be used to identify both good practice and areas in need of improvement.

The school has made good progress overall since the last inspection and is well placed to sustain further improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A	A	A	B
Mathematics	A	A	B	B
Science	B	A	B	B

<i>Key</i>	
Well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

The table illustrates the high standards achieved in recent years. This is evident when comparing the pupils' performance with all schools and with those containing a similar number of pupils entitled to free school meals. The results in 1996 were at a lower level in all three subjects and in particular in mathematics. They have been raised to a high level and have continued to improve in line with the national trend when considering all three subjects. Taking the four years 1996 to 1999 together and considering English, mathematics and science together the performance of both boys and girls was well above the national average: Heyes Lane pupils were approximately half a year ahead of the national picture. The results in 1999 remained high and although they improved slightly in mathematics and science, overall they were not so far ahead of the national picture as in 1998. This was due to the year group containing fewer higher attaining pupils. Similarly the current Year 6 contains fewer higher attaining pupils whereas Year 5 contains significantly more. The Year 6 targets appropriately take account of the pupils' previous performance and although challenging they do vary from year to year. Accordingly, the school exceeded the 2002 national targets for English and mathematics in 1999 and is set to do so again in 2001. Whereas, this year the school targets match the 2002 national targets in English and exceed them in mathematics. By the time the pupils leave the school, standards are also above average in information technology, art, history, music and physical education.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils are confident, motivated, enthusiastic and very keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good overall. Most children behave extremely well and act in a mature and responsible manner at all times. Only a small number of the youngest pupils do not yet achieve this consistency.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The pupils relate very well to their teachers, each other and visitors to the school.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance rates are above average and there is very little unauthorised absence.

These aspects are strengths of the school and contribute positively to it functioning as an orderly, tolerant and hard-working community that reflects the schools stated values and aims.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall. During the inspection, the teaching was never less than satisfactory and was good or better in 70% of the lessons seen. It was very good or excellent in 28% of lessons. However, there remains some variation between the year groups. The teaching seen in Years 5 and 6 was rarely less than good and on occasions excellent, particularly in Year 5 where it is more consistently of a very high order. The teaching in Year 4 is good overall but varies from satisfactory to very good, whereas in Year 3 it is satisfactory overall and occasionally good. The setting of the pupils into ability groups and the provision of additional teachers to reduce the group size have a positive effect upon the quality of the teaching and learning in English and mathematics.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school's curriculum is broad and balanced and reflects the current national priorities for literacy and numeracy. This provision is very well enhanced through extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. These pupils are effectively supported and make good progress in their work. This is particularly so concerning literacy and numeracy.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The needs of those pupils with English as an additional language are well met.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The pupils are encouraged to take significant responsibility and to show initiative. They clearly understand what is right and wrong and show a high degree of respect for other peoples' values and beliefs.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The teachers recognise and respond well to the pupils' needs. The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance and behaviour are very good; they are satisfactory in regard to academic progress.

The information technology curriculum has benefited from considerable investment in new equipment and the determination of the staff to increase their own expertise. The school works well in partnership with parents. There is strong parental satisfaction with the school, based on secure understanding and regular involvement in its work. However, although the annual written reports provide good information about the pupils' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science, they do not always provide similar information for other subjects.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED?

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher very effectively leads by example concerning the development of the school vision. He is well supported by the senior staff in managing the school and identifying areas for development.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors work well with the headteacher to guide the work of the school. They effectively fulfil their statutory requirements with the exception of aspects of the reports for parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The leadership has a good understanding of general strengths and weaknesses. However, the systems for more rigorous evaluation are at an early stage of development.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school's spending decisions clearly relate to the priorities for improvement and benefit the pupils.

The leadership provides a clear educational direction, but does not systematically identify and disseminate the best classroom practice throughout the school. The governors work closely with the staff and apply the principles of best value in their budgetary decisions. The school has a generous number of teachers who are effectively deployed. The accommodation is used efficiently but is varied in quality. The levels of educational resources are good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy coming to school. They are well taught and encouraged to work hard. • The school successfully promotes positive attitudes and values that are reflected in the pupils' behaviour. • The headteacher and staff know the pupils well. They are approachable and always willing to discuss the children's progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small minority feels that they would like more information about how their children are getting on. • A similar number feel that there is a limited range of activities outside lessons.

The inspection team agrees with the very positive views expressed by the overwhelming majority of parents, both at the pre-inspection meeting and in the very large number of questionnaires returned to the Registered Inspector. The inspection findings confirm that the annual written reports need modifying in order to provide the parents with a more detailed account of how their children are progressing in all subjects. However, in other respects the school provides parents with satisfactory information about their children. The inspectors were impressed by the very good range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school. Although many of the opportunities are for the older pupils, it is not exclusively so and overall this provision compares favourably with that offered by similar schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 In last year's tests for eleven-year-olds, standards were well above the national average in English and above average in Mathematics and science. When compared with the results of schools with a similar number of pupils entitled to free school meals, standards in all three subjects remained above average. The inspection findings confirm that by the end of the key stage, standards are currently above average in English, mathematics and science.
- 2 Analysis of national test results of recent years shows that the pupils' performance has improved steadily across all three subjects since 1996. This improvement has been most marked in mathematics, closely followed by science. Based on the pupils' combined performance in all three subjects over the last four years, results have been well above average and have still continued to improve in line with the national trend. Over this period, Heyes Lane pupils were approximately half a year ahead of the national average. There was no significant difference between the cumulative results of boys and girls which is different from the national picture where girls slightly out-perform boys. The school is well aware of a range of differences in performance between pupils in both the same and different cohorts. The inspection findings show no evidence of gender bias within the teaching; both boys and girls are working productively across all subjects.
- 3 Last year's results remained high. However, although they improved slightly in mathematics and science they dipped slightly in English and overall were not so far ahead of the national average as in 1998. The inspection findings indicate that the current Year 6 contains fewer higher attaining pupils than last year. Nevertheless, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected levels in English, mathematics and science continues to be above average. The Year 5 cohort has a high proportion of pupils who are already approaching the levels expected of eleven-year-olds in all three subjects. The school targets take account of the pupils' previous performance, and although they vary from year to year are appropriately challenging. For example, the Year 6 pupils exceeded the 2002 national targets for English and mathematics in 1999 and are set to do so again in 2001. Whereas this year, the realistic school targets match the English and exceed the national targets for mathematics in 2002. All these targets require the pupils to maintain good progress as they move through the school.
- 4 The standards attained by the end of the key stage have improved overall since the last inspection and are now securely above average in relation to national standards or expectations in most subjects. The school's efforts to consolidate literacy skills and to improve numeracy skills have been successful. By the time they leave school, most pupils listen attentively to other people's opinions and ideas and respond in a constructive and reasoned way. Many are accomplished readers who possess a good range of skills that enables them to retrieve information from books or screen and to justify their opinions by direct reference to the text. Similarly, many pupils produce varied and interesting writing for different purposes, choosing words imaginatively and using them precisely. The pupils' confidence in handling numbers is good and by the age of eleven most use a wide range of strategies to carry out complex mental calculations involving large numbers. In addition, they use standard written methods to accurately solve addition, subtraction, multiplication and division problems. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported in English and mathematics and usually make good progress towards the targets identified in their individual education plans.

- 5 The strengthening of the curriculum in English and mathematics has also had a beneficial effect on the pupils' work in other subjects. For instance, in science by the age of eleven, the pupils accurately make, record and interpret measurements and then write quite detailed accounts of their work. The frequent opportunities given for investigative and experimental work effectively encourage the pupils to think hard about what they can deduce from their results.
- 6 The considerable investment in information technology has similarly resulted in improvements in the development and use of pupils' information technology skills. Standards have improved and are now above the expected level by the end of the key stage. This is because the necessary skills are being well taught in discrete information technology lessons using the new computer suite. Moreover, the teachers increasing knowledge and confidence means that they are finding interesting ways to use information technology to support learning in other subjects. They include, for example, researching information for history and geography using the Internet, presenting scientific and mathematical data on spreadsheets and recording field trips with a digital camera.
- 7 By the time the pupils leave the school, standards are also above average in art, history, music and physical education. In art many pupils confidently record their ideas and feelings, accurately or imaginatively, representing what they have seen using a variety of techniques. The pupils show a good factual knowledge and understanding of the aspects of history they have studied. These skills are often well applied to discussions about the consequences of major events and changes. The ability of the pupils to appraise and respond to music is well developed as is their ability to compose and perform both as individuals and as members of a group. A particular strength of the pupils' achievements in physical education is their ability to respond imaginatively, precisely and safely to challenges when working collaboratively. The standard and quality of work seen in design and technology, geography and religious education is in line with the expected levels at the end of the key stage.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 8 The pupils' attitudes to their work, their behaviour, relationships and personal development are very good. These strengths of the school have a very positive effect on the standards achieved by the pupils.
- 9 All staff have high expectations of acceptable standards of behaviour. Consequently, the pupils know and understand how they must behave whilst they are in the care of the school. Parents are happy with the high standards of good behaviour consistently achieved by the school.
- 10 Most pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to their work. They sustain concentration, are keen to answer questions and often offer their own views and ideas to their teachers. They settle into their daily routines quickly and are often enthused by the brisk pace and excitement of lessons. The pupils in a Year 4 class, for example, asked the if they could continue with their work during a wet lunchtime. The pupils are keen to participate in the range of clubs offered by the school. For instance, many willingly give up their lunch break to work on a millennium project. The overall effect is that, the vast majority of pupils are well motivated, very enthusiastic and show a strong desire to know more.
- 11 Overall, the pupils' behaviour is very good. They are responsible and mature citizens who move around the school in a safe and orderly manner and usually conduct themselves very well in lessons. Very occasionally, the younger pupils become excitable, but in the lessons seen, this was always checked by the teachers. The same orderly picture was evident at lunchtime and during

breaks. There were no signs of bullying or oppressive behaviour and no pupils have been excluded in recent years.

- 12 The pupils are courteous and they relate well to each other, their teachers and adults. They are polite and welcoming and have a healthy sense of enquiry. They are, for instance, interested to know what visitors are doing in the school and are keen to help them find their way around the premises. The pupils work well together and they are willing to share the resources available to them in lessons. They frequently discuss their ideas with each other to good effect. In a Year 4 science lesson, for example, the pupils collaborated effectively and discussed a range of ideas for classifying living organisms. The pupils show great respect for property for example, they treat their new computers with care and understand that these resources make a valuable contribution to their learning.
- 13 The pupils' are developing an extensive range of social skills that enable them to act as very sensible citizens. They are willing to take responsibility, for example they often help their teachers with routine jobs such as distributing and collecting resources. In many lessons seen, the pupils worked well. They take responsibility for their own learning and get on with the task in hand even when not closely supervised. In an information technology lesson in Year 6, for example, the pupils often worked independently and productively when researching information.
- 14 The levels of attendance are very good. There is a very low incidence of unauthorised absence. The parents are very supportive in ensuring their children come to school regularly and punctually.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 15 The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. Then, half of the lessons seen were good and almost nine out of ten were satisfactory or better. Just one in twenty-five lessons was judged to be very good or better. During the current inspection, the teaching was never less than satisfactory and was good or better in seven out of ten lessons seen. It was very good or better in one out of four lessons. However, there remains some variation between the year groups. The teaching in Years 5 and 6 was rarely less than good and on occasions was excellent. However, in Year 5 it was more consistently of a high standard. The teaching in Year 4 is good overall, but varies from satisfactory to very good whereas in Year 3 it is satisfactory overall and occasionally good.
- 16 The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is effective throughout the school. The leadership has spent a lot of time ensuring that the national initiatives for literacy and numeracy are introduced successfully. There has been effective training, and there are regular checks on planning and some monitoring of the teaching by the senior staff. However, the leadership is aware of the need to monitor more systematically the teaching and pupil's work in order to identify good practice precisely and accurately. The intention is then to share the best practice in order to further improve the quality of teaching to a consistently high level throughout the school. A similar initiative to monitor the progress of cohorts of pupils is more securely established. This provides the teachers with clear and helpful information that assists them to set challenging but appropriate targets for their pupils. Two particular features of the teaching in English and mathematics are the setting of pupils into ability groups and the deployment of additional teachers. These impact positively upon the rate of learning for pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, as the teachers have smaller groups and a narrower range of abilities to manage. This helps them to match the work more closely to the pupils' needs. In most sets observed, the pupils' were very keen to learn and often made good progress.

- 17 The teaching of the other subjects of the National Curriculum also contains considerably more strengths than weakness. In science, the teachers have maintained the good provision for investigative work that usually brings the pupils' learning to life. The teaching of information technology skills is consistently good and on occasions is better. In addition, the pupils are increasingly effectively supported in applying these skills to enhance their learning in other subjects such as English, mathematics, science, geography and history. The teaching of music is usually good or better and supports the pupils' musical and cultural development. A feature of the frequently good teaching in physical education is the way in which it motivates the pupils to work productively and creatively in group activities.
- 18 Most teachers have a good understanding of what needs to be taught and are now more concerned with how best to present their lessons to consistently promote good or better learning and progress. Overall, most of the whole class teaching is good: it is well organised and productive. The teachers are normally well aware of how to motivate and interest the class so that the pupils remain on task and benefit from the input. However, when the pupils are involved in independent or group work there is some variance in the effectiveness of the teaching. When good or better teaching was observed it was usually characterised by a brisk pace and exciting challenge. In addition, the pupils were usually clearly aware of what is to be learned, and how much time they have to complete a task. This results in the pupils being enthusiastic about completing the work on time and assessing their own progress with the support of focussed input including marking by the teacher.
- 19 The effect of all this good teaching is clearly evident in the positive response of the pupils. They are interested in the activities that the teachers have organised, are eager to learn and find most lessons exciting. The leadership is keen to ensure that high quality teaching is consistently evident throughout the school in order to further raise standards.

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

- 20 The curriculum is broadly based, well balanced and meets the statutory requirements. The quality of the vast majority of learning opportunities provided is good. The curriculum ensures equality of access and opportunity for all pupils and effectively meets the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of the pupils, including those with special educational needs. The organisation for the teaching of literacy and numeracy is effective and is reflected in the continuously high standards of attainment at the end of the key stage. A high proportion of time is spent teaching literacy and numeracy, but the school also provides a stimulating curriculum in other subjects such as information technology, art, history and music. The school motivates the pupils to apply themselves well in lessons and take a pride in their work, thus preparing them successfully for the next stage of their education.
- 21 The school has very clear policies and guidelines to support the personal, social and health education curriculum. There are appropriate opportunities to raise the pupils' awareness of the dangers of drug misuse and to offer sex education within a supportive environment.
- 22 The school has good links with the local community, which positively impact upon pupils' learning. They have opportunities to visit local museums, galleries and other places of educational interest. Well-developed links with the infant school and local secondary schools allow for smooth transitions between each key stage.

- 23 The extracurricular provision is a strength of the school. A wide range of activities including art, music, sport, French and information technology is offered. The commitment of teachers and parents to these activities means they are well supported and effectively enrich the curriculum. However, these activities are mainly available to the older pupils and opportunities for younger pupils are more limited.
- 24 The school makes very good provision for the pupils' personal growth, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The high standards and the caring and supportive examples set by the headteacher and all those working in the school make this provision a strength.
- 25 The pupils' spiritual development is very well promoted, not only through assemblies but also in lessons. Regular opportunities are provided for the pupils to reflect on their own and other peoples lives and beliefs. They are encouraged to show respect towards other peoples and in turn their opinions and ideas are valued and shared with the teachers. In the very good or excellent lessons observed, there was usually an element of awe and wonder present for example, when contemplating a winter landscapes in art lessons, appreciating and responding to music, both in music and physical education lessons, and in realising the impact of multi-media communication.
- 26 The provision for the pupils' spiritual development is effectively linked to their moral and social development. Although the school has a very clear code of conduct, the pupils are most successfully encouraged to develop their own moral code based on principles rather than fear of punishment. The school very effectively fosters values such as honesty, fairness and respect for truth and justice. The pupils are also successfully encouraged to apply these values in their relationships with each other and within the local community. They are given responsibilities around the school and within the classrooms. They look after equipment and the school environment well. There is a high level of commitment made by older pupils to extra curricular activities. The pupils support a range of local and national charities, and have raised nearly £1,500 during the last year. They have a developing awareness of major social issues, and have taken steps to address those that can affect school life for example, the pupil-designed notices and posters remind everyone of the agreed school aims and rules. The pupils celebrate the success of others both in the classroom and in the "achievement assemblies".
- 27 There are good opportunities for the pupils to develop an awareness of their own culture through the curriculum and through visits, clubs and other activities. For example, in lessons during the inspection the pupils considered the work of famous artists, composers and historical characters, and Year 6 pupils have recently visited the Halle Orchestra. However, opportunities to explore the contributions of other cultures, for example through literature and history, are under-developed.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 28 The support and guidance offered to the pupils is good and enables them to leave the school as responsible, rounded citizens. All staff take the pupils' well being seriously and pastoral leadership is by example from the very top. A well-established child protection policy is understood by staff, but is rarely needed. The school is regularly inspected for any health and safety hazards, risks are assessed and timely action is taken to rectify any shortcomings. The constant vigilance of the site management staff ensures that the pupils have a safe environment in which to learn.

- 29 The school takes particular care to ensure that professional help is available for pupils who have specific conditions. The premises are, for example, adapted to accommodate the disabled and extra help is provided for pupils who are visually impaired. Visiting professionals from the health services provide routine screening and advice for the pupils and parents.
- 30 There are very effective procedures for promoting good behaviour. They are clearly understood by the pupils and the staff, and are valued by the parents. As a result, expectations are high and the procedures are successful in eliminating all forms of oppressive behaviour. Similarly, the very good computerised procedures for monitoring attendance ensure that it remains at a high level.
- 31 The school has made satisfactory progress in improving the assessment and monitoring of the pupils' progress since the last inspection. It recognises that there is still some way to go and reflects this in its current plan for school improvement. Much of the assessment of the younger children's progress relies on the conscientious work of the teachers in building up knowledge of what the pupils can do, and noting where and how improvements can be made. As the pupils move through the school, key learning targets are set, especially for literacy and numeracy. The school has recently developed exemplar files, which contain work samples referenced to the key learning targets. The teachers record what the pupils have learnt against each target and note what needs to be done to aid further progress. Although this reflects good practice, the rigour of the system and the effectiveness of the use of the data gathered varies across the school. For example, the key learning targets are not consistently and explicitly made clear to the pupils. This sometimes results in pupils not benefiting fully from independent or group work, as they are not entirely sure of what they have to do. When this is the case the teachers do not completely develop the well-planned learning targets into helpful teaching and assessment points for the pupils. This in turn affects the quality of some of the teachers' marking; the use of which, as a form of assessment, is inconsistent. In the best examples, such as those seen in the pupils' books in Year 5, helpful comments refer to the intended learning, the quality of the work and areas for improvement. Good use is made of a range of national tests and other assessments to monitor the progress of individual pupils and year groups. The information gathered is carefully analysed to support the teachers in setting appropriate targets for pupils.
- 32 The pupils' personal development is monitored effectively. The teachers have a good working knowledge of the pupils in their care and use this to guide any extra help which the pupils may need. They often call upon the services of their professional colleagues for help with such things as support for pupils with special educational needs. The teachers are vigilant in their day to day assessment of the pupils' personal needs. For instance, in an art lesson seen, the teacher ensured that a pupil who was colour blind was able to participate fully in a lesson on the work of Lowry. A useful Record of Achievement enables the pupils to celebrate their successes.
- 33 The majority of the pupils transfer from the adjoining infants' school. They are well supported and most pupils quickly settle into their new routines. When pupils enter the school in later years, the teachers respond quickly to any needs they may have. In Year 5, for example, a pupil who recently joined the school rapidly showed potential and the teachers arranged for him to join a group of higher achievers for his mathematics lessons. When pupils leave the school at the end of year 6, they go on to a number of secondary schools. The school works hard to ensure that the pupils and their parents are given opportunities to sample what is on offer in secondary education. This is useful in making the transition to the next stages of education a smooth one.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 34 The school prides itself on being both welcoming and approachable, and its relationships with the parents are good. In turn, the parents are very satisfied with most aspects of the school: and in particular the standards of work and behaviour. They are afforded opportunities to discuss with the teachers how their children are doing at school for example, two consultation meetings are organised each year. However, a small minority of parents felt that an additional meeting would be helpful. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to all reviews and are well informed of relevant targets and any changes in need. Informal communication between the teachers and parents is good, and they often discuss such things as homework at the start and end of the school day. Although the end of year reports for parents provide clear detail about attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science, they contain insufficient information about other subjects and areas for improvement. The information for parents about their children's progress is satisfactory on balance but the leadership is aware of the need to review existing arrangements in order to strengthen this aspect of school life. There is regular flow of letters from the school and a newsletter from the governors, which keep the parents well-informed about general school matters.
- 35 The school's links with the parents are effective. Parents are encouraged to come into school and help with important aspects of the pupils' work, such as reading. A regular team of helpers supports the school's activity afternoon for the Year 3 pupils by helping with work in art, design and technology and information technology. The parents make suitable comments about their children's progress with reading in a jotter record that goes home regularly. An active and successful Friends Association organises social and fund raising events. Recently, they have contributed towards the cost of the new computer suite, thereby further enhancing the range and quality of the learning resource for the pupils. A small number of parents felt that there were insufficient clubs and enrichment activities for the pupils. The inspectors were impressed by the very good range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school. Although many of the opportunities are for the older pupils, it is not exclusively so and overall this provision compares favourably with that offered by similar schools.
- 36 Overall, the parents' involvement with and support for the school have a positive impact on its work.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 37 The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher and the management team continually strive to make a good school even better. There is no room for complacency in their approach and they share a vision of raising standards further. As a direct result, the quality of teaching and the standards achieved have improved since the last inspection.
- 38 The management team reflects a blend of experience and youth. The senior staff demonstrate a very clear commitment to the school's aims. Consequently, the school maintains its traditions and strengths whilst also recognising the areas in which it needs to improve. The strong pastoral leadership has, for example, maintained high standards of care that most effectively promote the pupils' personal development. The school carefully analyses the results of national assessments carried out each year as the pupils move through the school. Using this data, the headteacher and governing body set challenging but realistic targets for improvement. A strong sense of teamwork and a consultative style of planning ensure that all staff share a commitment to achieving the school's targets.

- 39 The governing body is properly constituted. It benefits from effective leadership and appropriate expertise amongst its committees. The governors see themselves as being accountable to the parents for the school's performance. They keep the parents informed through a newsletter and a well-attended annual meeting. Overall, the governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities effectively. However, the annual pupil reports do not fully meet the requirements.
- 40 The governors support the headteacher and staff in shaping the strategic direction of the school. They conscientiously evaluate and question plans. Significant items of expenditure are carefully considered and comparisons of the costs, benefits and options available to the school are made. This makes a valuable contribution towards ensuring that the school's educational priorities are relevant and are supported from the annual budget. In recent years, the cornerstone of the school's strategy has been to maintain additional teaching support in order to raise standards. This has been successfully achieved. Effective administration of the school's budget by the office manager ensures that all moneys are properly accounted for. Grants allocated to the school for specific purposes are used to good effect.
- 41 The headteacher and his deputy maintain a broad overview of what is taught. This is formulated into termly plans, which indicate when each element of the subjects will be taught. A team of co-ordinators gives careful attention to their roles in the day to day leadership of their subjects. They know what is being planned, but in most cases are not fully aware of how these plans are translated into practice.
- 42 The current plan for school improvement recognises the need to build on the work that has already started on monitoring the pupils' academic progress. The school has developed appropriate key learning targets and clear systems for assessing exactly what the pupils understand, know and can do. These systems reflect good practice, but the effectiveness of the use of the data gathered vary across the school. The leadership is keen to ensure that the teaching throughout the school is consistently good in order to further raise standards. However, the present arrangements for the monitoring of the teaching are at an early stage of development and lack the necessary rigour. As a result, the opportunities to further enhance the quality of teaching through the accurate identification and subsequent sharing of good practice are not being fully exploited.
- 43 The school has generous staffing levels and is well able to deliver the school and the National Curriculum. Whilst it does not have any classroom assistants, the school uses specialists effectively to provide help and support for the pupils who need it. A team of midday supervisors, the caretaker and cleaners make a useful contribution to the smooth running of the school. An appropriate programme of professional development for experienced and new staff is in place. The school has achieved the "*Investors in People*" standard, recognising its good practice in the training and development of staff. Overall, the learning resources are good. The school benefits from a new computer suite the use of which is successfully raising standards in information technology. Although there have been substantial purchases of books and other resources to support the development of literacy and numeracy skills, some of the library stock is becoming rather dated. The accommodation is used efficiently but relies on ageing mobile classrooms as the teaching base for four classes.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The school should now:

1. Strengthen the procedures for monitoring, evaluating and improving the quality of education provided by:

- Clearly identifying what needs to be monitored
- Considering who should carry out the process;
- Organising staff training to assist the process;
- Providing opportunities to disseminate best practice;
- Systematically managing the agreed procedures.

(Paragraphs 31, 41, 42)

2. Ensure that the existing good quality teaching is consistently delivered in all classes by:

- Fully utilising the procedures agreed when addressing issue 1 above;
- Considering how best to deploy the teachers;
- Clearly sharing learning targets with pupils so that they are fully aware of what they have to do, particularly in independent and group work;
- Strengthening procedures for marking pupils' work in order to assist the recording of progress and the highlighting of areas for improvement.

(Paragraphs 16, 18, 31, 49, 50, 56, 58, 62)

Other issues which should be considered by the school:

How best to keep parents informed of the progress their children are making at school. This should involve a review of end of year reports so that they include details of all subjects and clearly identify targets for improvement in order to fully meet the statutory requirements.

(Paragraphs 34, 39)

How best to organise and use classroom based computers in association with the effective use of the information technology suite.

(Paragraph 79)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	89
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	22	42	30	0	0	0

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	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	383
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	36

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	71

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	59	46	105

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	50	50	52
	Girls	38	36	36
	Total	88	86	88
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (84)	82 (79)	84 (89)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	52	52	56
	Girls	39	39	39
	Total	91	91	95
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87	87	90
	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	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	375
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.2
Average class size	31.9

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	6

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	0	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.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/1999
	£
Total income	530493
Total expenditure	527793
Expenditure per pupil	1347
Balance brought forward from previous year	646
Balance carried forward to next year	3346

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

766

Number of questionnaires returned

354

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	43	3	0.5	0.5
My child is making good progress in school.	43	52	4	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	59	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	59	14	0	2
The teaching is good.	41	55	1	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	48	18	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	39	3	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	44	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	31	52	13	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	46	51	1	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	55	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	50	15	4	3

Other issues raised by parents

Those parents (38) attending the pre-inspection meeting identified the following aspects as areas of improvement since the last inspection:

- Standards in mathematics;
- Setting by ability in English and mathematics in all year groups;
- The provision for information technology.

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

English

- 44 In the 1999 national test at the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils' results were well above the national average and above those achieved by pupils in similar schools. The percentage of pupils attaining the expected level 4 was above average and at the higher level 5 was well above average. This is an improvement upon the 1995 results included in the last inspection report when the proportion of pupils attaining level 4 or above was slightly above the national average. Analysis of the results for the last four years shows that standards have been consistently well above average, and that there is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.
- 45 The inspection findings confirm that by the end of the key stage standards are currently above average. Most of the year 6 pupils are achieving level 4, but fewer pupils than last year will reach the higher levels. However, the school has set appropriately challenging targets for this cohort that match the 2002 national targets in English. Standards in Year 5 are high; a majority of pupils are already working within levels expected of eleven-year-olds. The targets for these pupils in 2001 are higher and exceed both the 1999 results and the 2002 national targets.
- 46 The school has effective organisation for developing the skills of literacy. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has been carefully managed and its planning ensures that skills in reading and writing build on the pupils' prior learning. Time has been designated for the teaching of extended writing and this has contributed to developing both factual and imaginative writing skills, particularly in Years 5 and 6. There is also evidence of writing for a range of purposes and readerships being extended beyond the English curriculum into other subjects. For example, history folders about the Victorians and Styal Mill, geography about Timperley and the use of multi-media in information technology reflect a variety of skills. Grammar and punctuation are generally well applied. The pupils are introduced to cursive writing at the beginning of the key stage, and use it consistently by Year 6. The presentation of written work is generally satisfactory and in some classes is very good.
- 47 The pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average by the end of the key stage. Those with special educational needs are encouraged to answer questions and express their opinions. The vast majority of pupils have a very positive attitude towards learning and show interest and concentration. The teachers question the children in a way that encourages them to respond confidently and with enthusiasm. They are taught to listen to other people's opinions and ideas and respond to them in a constructive, reasoned way. The pace of the class teaching is often good with questions and answers presenting challenges and developing understanding. Opportunities for the pupils to share and explain their work at the end of lessons are clearly planned, but not always well developed. This is generally as a result of the pupils not being fully aware of the precise learning targets for the lesson.
- 48 By the age of eleven, attainment in reading is above average. A majority of pupils show pleasure in reading and an enthusiasm for books. Time is devoted to reading each day, both in the literacy hour and at other times. Several parents help by hearing readers in school, and reading is an important part of homework. Many pupils use inference and prediction to answer questions about the text and can give examples to illustrate their answers. They are familiar with research skills, and use them confidently to retrieve information from reference books and computers to support learning in other subjects, particularly history and geography. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils use the skills of skimming and scanning a text and recording information in note form.

- 49 By the time the pupils leave the school, their attainment in writing is above average. In Year 6 they are effectively taught the conventions of persuasive letter writing. Poetry and journalistic writing in Year 4 show an imaginative and expressive use of vocabulary. The pupils edit their work for spelling mistakes, understand the use of tenses and are develop skills of punctuation. The marking of work by teachers often recognises effort, but it is most effective where it evaluates the pupils' attainments precisely and identifies individual targets for improvement. For instance, a display of Year 4 handwriting clearly identifies the ways the pupils can improve their skills of presentation and individual Year 5 pupils could describe what they needed to do to improve their style of writing. Similarly, when pupils are made aware of learning objectives and have a clear understanding of expectations they work with greater purpose and effectiveness.
- 50 Two interesting features of the teaching in English are the setting of pupils into ability groups and the effective deployment of additional teachers to reduce the group size. These impact positively on the quality of the teaching and the pace of learning for all pupils as the teachers have smaller groups and a narrower range of abilities to manage. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress in all aspects of literacy as a direct result of working in small groups. The targets for all these pupils are clearly identified in their individual education plans. These are well used by the teachers to provide lessons that effectively meet the pupils' needs. Similarly, the higher attaining pupils are generally suitably challenged in their groups to reach high standards. Although the teachers regularly mark work to provide encouraging comments they do not always guide the pupils in the next steps in their learning. A more favourable aspect of the marking, in some classes, is the pupils' self-evaluation.

Mathematics

- 51 In the 1999 national tests for eleven-year-olds, the proportion of pupils attaining both the expected level 4 and the higher level 5 was above the national average. This is a significant improvement upon the 1995 results included in the last inspection report, when the percentage of pupils attaining level 4 or above was below average. The pupils' results last year were above average both in comparison with schools nationally and with similar schools. Taking the four years 1996 to 1999 together, the standards achieved by the pupils have been well above the national average, with no significant differences between the performance of boys and girls.
- 52 The inspection findings confirm that by the end of the key stage standards are currently above average. The targets set for these pupils appropriately reflect the fact that there are fewer higher attaining pupils than last year, but nevertheless remain challenging as they match last year's results and exceed the 2002 national targets. Standards in Year 5 are high; a majority of pupils are already achieving levels expected of eleven-year-olds. The targets for these pupils are challenging and well above the 2002 national targets.
- 53 The pupils' confidence in handling numbers is good, and by the age of eleven most use a wide range of strategies to carry out complex mental calculations involving large numbers. In addition, they use standard written methods to solve accurately addition, subtraction, multiplication and division problems. The improved curriculum provision and the increased emphasis on the teaching of the basic skills and mental arithmetic are contributing to the maintenance of these high standards. The consistent structure of the planning results in well balanced lessons, and effectively builds on what the pupils already know and understand.

- 54 All teachers emphasise the importance of mental calculations in the introductory sessions. However, the most effective learning takes place when the teachers use oral work to promote rapid recall skills and ensure full pupil participation by the good use of the available resources. This is more evident towards the end of the key stage where many pupils are able to multiply and divide numbers by 10, 100 and 1000, and through addition and subtraction of three digit numbers, rapidly find the missing third angle of a triangle. In Year 4 lessons, the use of number cards and grids captures the pupils' interest. They are challenged to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of doubling and halving two-digit numbers accurately and to find patterns in numbers. Throughout the school, topical mathematical vocabulary is prominently displayed in the classrooms, and the teachers use these aids well to reinforce learning and raise standards.
- 55 The older pupils make good and sometimes very good progress during lessons. This is due to the consistently good teaching in Years 5 and 6. The quality of teaching for the younger pupils is satisfactory, enabling them to make steady progress in their learning. Where teaching is very effective various strategies are used to provide well paced, challenging activities that motivate the pupils and consolidate learning. This was evident, for example, in lessons involving stimulating practical activities involving the ordering of fractions and decimals. The activities became increasingly challenging and helped the pupils most effectively understand the relationship between fractions and division, and increase their ability to accurately calculate fractions of numbers. The higher attaining pupils in years 5 and 6 progress to using calculators successfully to check the accuracy of their answers.
- 56 Most teachers ensure that the direct teaching of skills is given appropriate emphasis. For example, at the end of the key stage, in a lesson on polygons, the teacher constantly emphasises the various methods which might be used to help the pupils to understand processes, and prompts instant recall of precise mathematical language. As a result, the pupils show increasing ability to construct and name various angles and polygons accurately, and they gain confidence in applying their learning. The teachers' secure subject knowledge is demonstrated by the well focused and often challenging questioning that they use to extend the pupils' understanding. In most lessons, the teachers maintain good standards of behaviour: minor disruptions are dealt with quickly and effectively, thus keeping the pupils productively on task. However, the teaching is less effective when the learning targets are not made clear to the pupils and a specific time for completing the task is not set. Although the teachers regularly mark work to provide encouraging comments they do not always guide the pupils in the next steps in their learning. A more favourable aspect of the marking, in some classes, is the pupils' self-evaluation.
- 57 A particular feature of the teaching in mathematics is the setting of pupils into ability groups and the effective deployment of additional teachers to reduce the group size. This has a positive effect on the quality of the teaching and the pace of learning for all pupils as the teachers have smaller groups and a narrower range of abilities to manage. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress in all aspects of numeracy as a direct result of working in small groups on interesting activities that effectively meet the pupils' needs. The targets for all these pupils are clearly identified in their individual education plans. Similarly, the higher attaining pupils are generally suitably challenged in their groups to reach high standards.
- 58 The good relationships enable the pupils to contribute confidently to discussions and effectively support the teaching and learning. Throughout the school, the pupils' attitudes to mathematics are very positive and the pupils show good listening skills. They are very well motivated when given the opportunity to explain how they achieved their answers, thus reinforcing their learning. They are enthusiastic during mental activities, responding eagerly when timed targets are set and concentrate well to complete tasks. This has a strong impact on their rate of learning. In the group activities, the pupils co-operate well, sharing apparatus sensibly. However, in a minority of

lessons, the tasks for the group activity are not clearly explained, resulting in a lack of confidence when the pupils are applying their number skills. In these lessons, some pupils lose interest and become restless resulting in slower progress.

Science

- 59 In the 1999 national tests for eleven-year-olds the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level 4 and the higher level 5 was above the national average. This shows improvement upon the 1995 results included in the previous inspection report: then the percentage of pupils attaining level 4 was similar but at level 5 was slightly below the national average. The pupils' results last year were above average both in comparison with schools nationally and with similar schools. Analysis of the results in recent years indicates that the pupils' performance has improved each year since 1996. Taking the four years 1996 to 1999 together, the results have been above the national average, with no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.
- 60 The inspection findings confirm that by the age of eleven the pupils' attainment is above the national average. Most pupils have a very good understanding that scientists predict, undertake fair tests, observe accurately, record results, and draw conclusions. In Year 6 they extend their knowledge well when studying electricity, and they know how to construct a circuit using batteries, wires, and bulbs. They make circuits, both in series and in parallel, in order to test their predications about the brightness of bulbs within the different circuits. They are able to represent circuits accurately using conventional symbols. In year 3, the pupils understand that a proper balance of light, water and temperature promotes the healthy growth of plants. At year 4, the pupils know that animals may be classified and divided into different groups. In year 5, they can make predictions about rates of evaporation of water in different conditions, carry out an experiment, and record their findings on a bar chart.
- 61 The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good gains in learning throughout the key stage. This is particularly evident in their developing understanding, knowledge and scientific vocabulary, which lay good foundations for more systematic approaches to investigation as they move through the school. The frequent opportunities to undertake investigative work support pupils' learning very effectively. In addition, the teachers often encourage the pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills to support their learning. By the age of eleven, pupils accurately make, record and interpret measurements and then write quite detailed accounts of their work.
- 62 Overall, the quality of the teaching is good, impacting positively on the pupils' attitudes and attainment. Most pupils are very keen and conscientious, and they concentrate well in lessons. They collaborate very well with partners, working successfully and safely in small groups when carrying out practical tasks. Throughout the school, the teachers prepare their lessons thoroughly and ensure that they are closely matched to the requirement of the National Curriculum. The structure and balance of most lessons are good, and successful use is often made of shared evaluations to finalise the lessons. In practical work, the teachers invariably use effective questioning to encourage the pupils to make their own decisions when investigating. There are some excellent examples of teaching, in particular, in years 5 and 6, where the pace of the lessons is brisk, and the teachers successfully challenge the pupils to extend their learning. The teachers mark the pupils' work regularly, but at times their comments are encouraging rather than helpful, and do not give sufficient guidance on how they pupils might improve their work. There are, however, some examples of helpful marking, for example, in Year 5 when a teacher wrote, "*When predicting try and give your reasons for it.*"

Art

- 63 Attainment in art is above the expected levels at the end of the key stage. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when attainment was average.

- 64 By the age of eleven, the pupils are able to discuss with confidence similarities and differences in styles and elements of art used in the works of famous artists. Their previously completed work shows that they have experimented with colour, shape and space, using brushes, pencils, charcoal and chalk. There is also evidence of pupils giving attention to detail, accuracy and perspective in their work. Overall, the pupils are less secure in recognising how works of art represent the time and place in which they are made. The pupils make good progress as they move through the school. For example, in Year 4, they develop successfully their understanding of drawing techniques to represent a winter scene in charcoal and chalk. Year 5 pupils are able to compare works of famous artists such as Lowry and Monet, using technical vocabulary. They learn how to mix paints to create a palette, and know that different colours in paintings can be used to represent feelings and moods. Throughout the school, the pupils make good use of sketchbooks to investigate and record their ideas.
- 65 The quality of teaching is good overall and on occasions is very good. The teachers have a thoroughly secure knowledge of the subject, which they use skilfully to teach art vocabulary and techniques. Their instructions and explanations are clear, and they use a range of questions to elicit responses from pupils, for example when discussing the work of famous artists. Expectations are high and the teaching is often lively, informative and well structured. The resources are of good quality and the pupils are offered a range of interesting experiences to use successfully a variety of materials and tools in drawing, painting, sculpture and work with textiles. There are good opportunities for on-going assessment, and for the pupils to reflect on their work. This results in the pupils' showing very good attitudes. For example, they listen attentively to their teachers and sustain concentration for long periods of time.
- 66 The curriculum is enhanced by very good displays throughout the school and by good cross-curricular links with other subjects, for example history, design and technology, and information technology. Art work is also well supported by the cross-stitch club which meets once a week during lunchtime. This year they have been working to produce the Millennium Wall Hanging. This is a good example of collaborative effort by parents, governors, teachers and ancillary staff to support the pupils' learning.

Design and technology

- 67 Although no direct observation of teaching in design and technology was possible during the inspection, discussions with both pupils and teachers and a scrutiny of the teachers' planning and the pupils' work indicate that by the end of the key stage standards are appropriate for the pupils' age.
- 68 The previous inspection found the standards to be average over a narrow range of the curriculum. However, the available evidence indicates that the range is now broader. The teachers' planning identifies interesting opportunities for designing and making with a variety of materials. The displays, include photographs of bridge making in Year 6, and examples of the design and making of moving toys in Year 5. A videotape shows Year 3 pupils working hard, in their Friday afternoon activities session, on a range of making activities, including feltwork, puppets, weaving, embroidery, construction kits and clay work. In Year 4, there are displays of electric torches made by the pupils using tubing, foil, batteries and wires. When asked whether the torches actually worked a pupil replied immediately, "Yes," then a few moments later, with commendable honesty, "Well, some of them did anyway."

- 69 It is clear that the teaching of skills is planned carefully in all classes. Themes are linked effectively to work in other subjects such as, art, science, mathematics and information technology. It is also evident from the finished articles that the pupils take a pride in their work.

Geography

- 70 The standards of work in geography are in line with expected levels at the end of the key stage. By the age of eleven, the pupils show a good understanding of the major features of their locality and their effect on the lifestyles of its residents. They talk with confidence about the advantages and disadvantages of changes in their locality as well as the reasons for those changes. They can suggest improvements that would benefit the residents. The pupils' apply their literacy and numeracy skills to good effect. For example, they are able to prepare questionnaires to conduct surveys about local issues and present their findings in graphs. A majority of pupils can use this information to put forward arguments for and against these issues clearly both orally and in writing.
- 71 The pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. The pupils in Year 3 consolidate the use of simple grid references to interpret maps. Most of them know the names of directions on a compass, and are beginning to follow instructions related to directions to record places on their maps. In Year 4, the pupils begin to identify the physical and human features of their locality. Following a visit to Smith's Field in their locality, they suggest ideas to bring about improvements to it, showing awareness of the needs of its users, for example, people with disabilities and the elderly. In Year 5, the pupils consolidate their previous work on different features of rivers. They demonstrate understanding of an extensive range of geographical terms including source, meander, estuary, tributary, deposition and confluence.
- 72 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and on occasions is good or better. This results in the pupils having positive attitudes to learning. They are generally very well behaved and their relationships with each other and their teachers are very good. They respond to questions enthusiastically and are able to sustain tasks. The teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject. They revise previous learning at the beginning of lessons and their questions are clear. Where teaching is particularly effective the teachers have very good relationships with their pupils, their expectations are very high, the pace of the lesson is very brisk and, the pupils' understanding is assessed at regular intervals. As a result, the teaching captures the imagination and interests of the pupils who are clear about what they are trying to learn and how to improve their work. When the teaching is satisfactory these elements are generally less well developed. However, in the upper part of the key stage, and particularly in Year 5, good or better teaching makes a major impact on the quality of the pupils' learning in lessons. There are good links with other areas of the curriculum, for example history, English and information technology, which enhance the quality of provision for geography. The pupils use a range of sources of information including their parents, books, encyclopaedias, libraries, and visits into the community to deepen their understanding of the subject.

History

- 73 Although direct observation of teaching was only possible in two lessons during the inspection, discussions with both pupils and teachers and a scrutiny of the teachers' planning and pupils' work indicate that by the age of eleven standards are above the expected level.
- 74 The pupils in Year 6 demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the topics they have studied in the past, for example the Romans, Tudors and Victorians. They give reasons for and explain the effects of the main events studied. Their knowledge of technical terms and their research skills in history are well developed. They make good use of dates in their written work, which is well organised and well structured. A very impressive feature of the pupils' work is the quality of written self-evaluations, which they carry out at the end of their study units.

- 75 In the two lessons seen during the inspection, the quality of teaching was satisfactory. The teachers had effectively planned these lessons to link with learning in other subjects, geography in particular. The teaching encouraged the pupils to respond well to questions. As a result of this teaching, Year 4 pupils are developing satisfactory factual knowledge and understanding of the past. In studying the Bridgwater Canal, they learn about the reasons for and effects of historical change, and why people in the past acted as they did. For example, they are able to recognise the motives of the Duke of Bridgwater in the building of the canal, and how it affected the lives of the people in their locality. As the pupils move through the key stage, they make good progress. For example, Year 5 pupils know that the past can be divided into periods of time such as the Romans and Tudors, and they identify similarities and differences between them in relation to people's houses, clothes and lifestyles in those periods. There is good provision for visits to enhance the history curriculum.

Information technology

- 76 Standards are above the expected level at the end of the key stage. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were on balance average. The pupils understand the increasing significance of information technology in their every day lives and appreciate the importance of developing their competence in the subject. They are keen to apply their skills across other subjects.
- 77 In a Year 6 classroom lesson, the pupils use computer pocketbooks, editing and moving text around by using the cut and paste procedures. Good use is made of the classroom computers to challenge some of the less able pupils to edit some pre-installed text about electrical circuits. In the information technology suite, Year 6 pupils edit and replace a passage from the story of Black Beauty. Most show considerable skills in importing pictures from files to illustrate the text, while other pupils access the Internet to find different information and pictures of horses.
- 78 The quality of teaching is consistently good and on occasions is either very good or excellent. The teachers have high expectations, and their increasing subject knowledge impacts well on the standards attained. In year 5, some excellent teaching was seen where the particular expertise of the teachers enabled them to challenge their pupils most productively. As a direct result of the quality of teaching, the pupils' progress in learning is good. They demonstrate increasing independence and confidence as they move through the school, for example in the use of keyboard, mouse and the various programs. Their learning is enhanced by their ability to work well in pairs and small groups, helping each other and often explaining patiently to others. Throughout the key stage, the pupils show steady progress in word processing skills. They listen carefully to their teachers and each other, and are keen to pose and answer questions. They concentrate well and show an eagerness to learn new program skills. Year 3 pupils demonstrate the ability to collect and store data using a spreadsheet, and effective links with mathematics and geography were evident. In year 4, the teacher introduces the pupils to working with a digital camera to provide pictures to illustrate their work on a local field, and to link these with text. Year 5 pupils successfully use a multi-media program to extend their work on rivers. They show impressive ability to access the Internet, in order to find pictures and information about rivers, estuaries and deltas to illustrate their work.
- 79 Some of the computers in classrooms are not wholly compatible with those in the suite. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to review this aspect of the provision in order to make best use of the available resources. One idea appropriately under consideration is to link some of the classroom computers together, to form cluster groups.

Music

- 80 By the end of the key stage the standards achieved exceed those normally found for pupils of this age. The pupils sing accurately, with clear articulation and expression. They perform two-part songs, skilfully holding their own part. The teachers emphasise the importance of good posture, breathing, pitch and rhythm to improve performances. They have very secure subject knowledge and a lively, enthusiastic approach to the music curriculum. This enables the pupils to compose and perform confidently and competently, using both tuned and untuned instruments. The teachers are skilled and confident in the delivery of the lessons, giving clear explanations of what to listen for in the music and challenging the pupils to discuss why a particular instrument is chosen for its effect. Following a visit to the Halle Orchestra, the teachers effectively reinforce the techniques of how a musical composition is structured, challenging the pupils to communicate their ideas and create their own pattern of music. In these lessons, the teachers very successfully plan a wide range of exciting activities, which motivate the pupils and result in very good progress in their understanding of rhythm and musical elements within composed pieces.
- 81 The quality of teaching is good overall and on occasions very good. This is particularly so at the end of the key stage, where the teachers have very high expectations of pupils to work co-operatively and meet demanding challenges. The lessons are very well organised and the activities proceed at a brisk pace, maintaining full pupil participation and supporting good learning. For example, in the Year 5 lessons, the pupils are encouraged to listen attentively to music and identify various elements, such as tempo, rhythm and dynamics. This is followed by group work in which the pupils successfully find the different features when comparing classical and popular music. The pupils show increasing understanding of lyrics and tempo and apply these skills when performing two different styles of music to create one composition, each group holding its own part well. In Year 4, the teachers enthusiastically demonstrate the rhythm of South American music, which the pupils successfully echo by clapping and singing. They show developing knowledge of how music is affected by time and mood.
- 82 As a direct result of this good teaching, the pupils respond very well throughout the school, showing great enthusiasm when singing in assemblies and an eagerness to explore sound when experimenting with instruments. They genuinely enjoy musical activities, which is evident by the high attendance at extra-curricular activities. During an assembly, the pupils demonstrate their sensitive listening skills when they sit entranced as two girls play solo piano pieces.
- 83 Music has a positive impact on the pupils' cultural development and the ethos of the school. Taped music of famous composers is well used in assemblies and dance lessons to enhance appreciation. The pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to develop their enjoyment and understanding of music. During instrumental practices, they follow musical scores accurately and competently and practise to improve their performances. The choir makes rapid progress in communicating various styles of music with sensitivity. The music club confidently accompanies the hymns in assemblies. The pupils are encouraged to perform in concerts involving both the junior and the infant schools.

Physical education

- 84 The standards achieved by the end of the key stage exceed those expected for pupils of this age. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The pupils work safely and often creatively, either independently or collaboratively across a wide range of activities. Their positive attitudes to learning support them effectively in group, team and competitive situations where they both co-operate and compete enthusiastically; showing a keen appreciation of good sportsmanship. This is evident, for example, when developing and applying skills such as throwing, catching, passing, and shooting in netball type games. No swimming lessons took place during the inspection, but the school reports that by the time they leave for secondary school, the majority of pupils are able to swim at least 25 metres.
- 85 Overall, the pupils make good progress in learning as they move through the school. In Year 5 and 6, the teaching is consistently good or better and has a positive effect on the standards achieved in gymnastics and games. The pupils show increasing ability to work co-operatively, and in using apparatus safely and independently. They learn new skills and successfully apply them. The teachers use their secure knowledge of the subject to encourage and challenge the pupils to improve their performance through increasingly demanding activities. For example, the pupils consolidate their skills in sending and receiving the ball, increase their control in travelling and progress to taking part successfully in team games. In Year 5 gymnastics lessons on counterbalance, the pupils plan and perform more complex series of movements, linking their actions together to create increasingly imaginative sequences. In Year 4 dance lessons, good teacher participation enhances the quality of the pupils' performance. The pupils respond with imagination and sensitivity to the mood of the music to successfully create a dramatic narrative, showing control of their movements and increasing understanding of how to interact within a group.
- 86 The quality of teaching is good overall, but varies from very good to satisfactory. The teachers are usually dressed appropriately for the subject and provide good role models through their enthusiasm and participation. They emphasise the importance of warming up and cooling down activities, helping the pupils to understand the effect exercise has on their bodies. Where the teaching is most effective, very good use is made of demonstration and opportunities are given for the pupils to judge their own success. The pupils are encouraged to develop their own ideas, find areas for improvement and raise the standard of their individual performance. Groups are well organised and a wide range of apparatus and activities is used to help the pupils to extend their learning. The teaching is supported by suitable planning with clear learning objectives that builds on the pupils' existing skills. The pupils' response throughout the school is very good. This is an indication of the interest generated by the teachers, who have high expectations of behaviour and performance. The pupils are encouraged to listen attentively to instructions and follow them quickly. Consequently, they show enthusiasm and perform confidently to others, taking pride in their efforts. Their good relationships are demonstrated when they co-operate in groups, showing respect for each other's work. They are eager to practise, and this further improves their learning. The curriculum for physical education is enhanced by the provision of many extra-curricular activities.

Religious education

- 87 Only three lessons were observed during the inspection. Additional evidence was gained through discussions with pupils and teachers and scrutiny of teachers planning and pupils' work. On the basis of this evidence, the pupils' attainment meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

- 88 By the age of eleven, the pupils understand the concept of God and what belonging to a religion means. They have a sound understanding of Christianity and demonstrate a satisfactory knowledge of its teachings. They know that the Bible is divided into the Old and New Testaments and show some awareness of when the New Testament was written. The pupils know the names of the main religions followed in this country and their knowledge and understanding of those religions is satisfactory. They show developing sensitivity towards the feelings and values of others as evidenced in their current work on the notion of a community and its values, and previous work on bullying. The pupils know that ‘rules and moral codes’ are important because they inform people about what is right and wrong.
- 89 The pupils’ make satisfactory progress overall as they move through the school, and in the lessons observed progress was often good. As part of their work on Sikhism, Year 3 pupils demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of this faith. For example, many pupils know that the founder of the Sikh faith was Guru Nanak, and that the Golden Temple is situated in Amritsar. They also show a sound understanding of the basic beliefs of the Sikh people, the name of their holy book, their place of worship and their symbols. Year 4 pupils have studied the Jewish faith, and they have produced extended pieces of writing in their books, for instance, on King Solomon’s Wisdom, Jonah, the Torah and the beliefs of Judaism. Year 5 pupils have made good progress in their topic on “Christmas around the World.” A strong feature in religious education throughout the school is the empathy which pupils are developing through their lessons and assemblies towards other people’s feelings and beliefs. This has contributed to the harmony between all pupils.
- 90 The quality of teaching was good in two of the three lessons seen, and satisfactory in the other one. The teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject, and their lessons are planned well. Their questions and explanations are clear and help the pupils to understand religious concepts. The pace of lessons is generally brisk, and the teachers use questions effectively to assess the pupils’ understanding. The pupils have positive attitudes to religious education. They are courteous, and they talk about different religions with respect. Their relationships with each other and adults are generally good.