

# INSPECTION REPORT

**St Mark's Catholic Primary School**

Halewood

LEA area: Knowsley

Unique Reference Number: 104469

Headteacher: Mrs M. Gilbertson

Reporting inspector: Mr P. Martin  
23262

Dates of inspection: 6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> December 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706718

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

© Crown Copyright 1998

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated. Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

Under the Education (Schools) Act 1992 and the Education Act 1993, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Primary School
Type of control:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Fir Avenue Halewood Knowsley Merseyside L26 OXR
Telephone number:	0151 486 2236
Fax number:	0151 448 0224
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend Father Richard Colbert
Date of previous inspection:	May 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

<b>Team members</b>	<b>Subject responsibilities</b>	<b>Aspect responsibilities</b>
Philip Martin, RgI	Science Design and technology Information and communications technology Physical education Under-fives	Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management Efficiency
Mary Le Mage, Lay Inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community
Raminder Arora	Mathematics History Geography Art Equal opportunities	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision
Angela Molyneux	English Music Special educational needs	Curriculum and assessment Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

The inspection contractor was:

PkR Educational Consultants Ltd  
6 Sherman Road  
Bromley  
Kent  
BR1 3JH

0181 289 1923

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints which are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

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

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

**Paragraph**

### **MAIN FINDINGS**

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

### **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

1 - 4

**Characteristics of the school**  
**Key indicators**

#### **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

##### **Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school**

5 - 25

**Attainment and progress**  
**Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**  
**Attendance**

##### **Quality of education provided**

26 - 53

**Teaching**  
**The curriculum and assessment**  
**Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**  
**Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**  
**Partnership with parents and the community**

##### **The management and efficiency of the school**

54 - 67

**Leadership and management**  
**Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**  
**The efficiency of the school**

#### **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

##### **Areas of learning for children under five**

68 - 77

##### **English, mathematics and science**

78 - 103

##### **Other subjects or courses**

105 - 140

#### **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

##### **Summary of inspection evidence**

141

##### **Data and indicators**

142

## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- National Curriculum test results for the juniors have improved considerably since last year in English, mathematics and science.
- Results in reading, writing and mathematics are well above the average for schools with similar intakes.
- Pupils behave well in class and around school and are generally polite and courteous.
- The provision for children under five in the nursery and the reception class is good.
- The school makes good provision for children's social and moral development.
- The school achieves good results in sporting competitions.

### " Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Teachers do not always set work suitable for the range of achievement within in the class.
- II. There is unsatisfactory teaching in about 12% of lessons
- III. There is not enough monitoring of teaching.
- IV. There are not enough good quality resources for teaching in some subjects and the school's libraries are not useful resources for teaching library skills and extending the children's capacity for independent study.

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

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

The school has overcome many of the weaknesses pointed out in the last inspection in 1996 and is better than it was. Standards have improved in information technology for infants but are still unsatisfactory for juniors. The school has put measures into place to remedy this situation. Progress in physical education has improved for the juniors. Teachers have increased their understanding of the use of information and communications technology and most of the staff have taken part in training in design and technology. Teaching is now satisfactory in information technology. The school now has curriculum plans that should help teachers to plan lessons that build on what pupils already know and understand and progressively develop their skills. However, these plans are not yet fully effective because teachers do not always use them to plan lessons that match the full ability range in classes. The quality of written reports to parents has improved. These now give parents a clearer understanding of what their children know. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. There is now less unsatisfactory teaching and more that is at least good. Financial planning is less satisfactory than it was. There is not a wide enough range of good quality resources for some subjects. The school has set realistic targets for attainment in national test results at the end of Key Stage 2 and is successfully meeting its targets in providing a caring, Catholic environment and implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. There is satisfactory capacity for improvement.

## Standards in subjects

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

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

The information shows that standards in English in the 1999 National Curriculum tests were above average for the country and very high when compared with similar schools. In mathematics and science, standards are similar to the national average and well above the average for similar schools.

Inspection findings agree with these results in mathematics and science but find that attainment in English is about the same as that found nationally. The work seen in information technology is of a satisfactory standard for the infants, but below average at the end of the juniors

## " Quality of teaching

Teaching in	Under 5	5 – 7 years	7 – 11 years
English	good	satisfactory	satisfactory
Mathematics	good	satisfactory	satisfactory
Science		satisfactory	satisfactory
Information technology		satisfactory	satisfactory
Other subjects	good	satisfactory	satisfactory

Teaching is at least satisfactory in 88 per cent of lessons. It is very good in nearly 5 per cent, good in about 30 per cent, but less than satisfactory in 12 per cent. The quality of teaching is good for children in the Nursery and Reception classes and satisfactory for the infants and juniors.

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

## Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good. Pupils have a positive attitude towards learning that helps them to make progress.
Attendance	Satisfactory, similar to the national average.
Ethos*	Good. Pupils are usually keen and interested in their work. Relationships are very good.
Leadership and management	Satisfactory overall. The governors have a sound involvement in the life of the school. The headteacher provides satisfactory leadership, but there is too little effective monitoring of teaching <sup>1</sup> . Financial planning has not led to improved resources for teaching in a number of areas.
Curriculum	Sound. Stimulating for under-fives in the nursery and reception class. Sound planning in other subjects. There is a good range of clubs outside school hours for sporting activities for juniors, but not as many non-sporting clubs.
Pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is sound overall
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Social and moral provision is good.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory overall - spacious classrooms and a pleasant environment but there are shortages of resources in a number of areas. The playgrounds are unstimulating but there are firm plans to improve these.
Value for money	Satisfactory

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

## " The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
V. They are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school.	X. A few do not find it easy to approach the
VI. They are kept well informed about their children's progress.	XI. A few feel that complaints are not handled
VII. Their children are encouraged to achieve a good standard of work.	XII. A few are not satisfied with the amount and
VIII. The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on their children.	
IX. Their children like school.	

Inspection findings generally support the parents' positive views. Parents' meetings and written reports provide sound information about what their children know but some lack detail about progress. The school has positive relationships with the vast majority of parents. The school has recently adopted a homework policy that clearly outlines the amount and type of homework to be done. The policy is beginning to have a positive impact on children's progress and helps them to prepare for homework at their next school.

<sup>1</sup> The school has identified this in its development plan for this academic year



" **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

In order to improve the quality of education, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

XIII. Use the school's assessment procedures to ensure that the work set in all lessons is well matched to each pupil's prior attainment.

(paragraphs 29, 37, 40, 56, 97)

XIV. Improve further the quality of teaching by:

- . developing the role of the senior management team and subject co-ordinators in monitoring the quality of teaching to identify strengths and weaknesses<sup>2</sup>;
- . sharing good practice and putting into place measures to improve teaching where it is unsatisfactory;
- . eliminating the shortcomings in resources.

(paragraphs 31, 55, 60, 61, 63, 64, 87, 97, 98, 109, 114, 119, 126, 131, 135)

•. Develop the libraries' usefulness as an effective resource by:

- a. ensuring that each library has a sufficient range of up-to-date fiction and non-fiction books and other library resources.
- b. organising these in appropriate ways so that the libraries can be used by classes, groups and individuals to develop library and independent research skills.

(paragraphs 63, 87)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

•. Reducing the gaps in knowledge and procedures relating to child protection among some members of the non-teaching staff.

(paragraph 50)

•. Ensuring that registers are taken promptly at the start of sessions and that there are clear procedures for collecting them.

(paragraph 49)

•. Providing more opportunities for all pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills to a wide enough range of problems.

(paragraphs 37, 91, 95)

•. Ensuring that governors formalise the sex education policy.

(paragraph 36)

•. Meeting statutory requirements by ensuring that the school's prospectus includes details of parents' rights to withdraw pupils from religious education and collective worship.

(paragraphs 59)

•. Improve the quality of financial planning so that classroom and library resources are improved.

(paragraphs 64)

---

<sup>2</sup> This is included in the school's development plan for this academic year.

## INTRODUCTION

### " **Characteristics of the school**

- 1 St Mark's Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic school situated to the south of Halewood in Knowsley. There are 189 boys and girls at the school aged between 5 and 11. Ten boys and girls attend the nursery in the mornings and twenty in the afternoon. The children mainly come from the nearby area. Most pupils come from local rented housing and a few from privately owned accommodation. No pupils come from homes where English is not the first language spoken. The percentage of pupils who take free school meals is 43%. This is much higher than the national average. Altogether, 26 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs. Two of them have statements of these needs. The proportion on the register of pupils with special educational needs (14%) and with statements of these needs (1%) is lower than average. When children start school in the nursery, their attainment is below that which can be expected from the age group.
  
- 2 The school aims, formulated in its mission statement, are to promote pupils' personal, social and academic growth in a Catholic, Christian setting, to foster links with the home, the parish and the wider community. The school has set realistic targets for improvement in English and mathematics, and its immediate aims are to develop the use of literacy in other subjects, and to introduce the National Numeracy Strategy and nationally developed guidelines for teaching in science and information and communications technology.
  
- 3 The school is smaller than it was at the time of the previous inspection. Also since the last inspection, there have been alterations to the school buildings, including the development of a building linking the infant and junior sections. The headteacher was absent, recovering from surgery, during the half-term that the inspection took place.

4 **Key indicators**

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

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	12	16	28

4 National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	10	10	10
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	24	24	24
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	86 ( 85 )	86 (88)	86 ( 92 )
	National	- (80)	- (81)	- (84)

4 Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	10	10	11
	Girls	15	14	15
	Total	25	24	26
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	92 (85)	86 (88)	93 (85)
	National	- ( 81 )	- (85 )	- (86)

### Attainment at Key Stage 2

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	10	15	25

4 National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	7	8	10
	Girls	13	12	13
	Total	20	20	23
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	80 (51)	80 (46)	92 (49)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

4 Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	6	7	7
	Girls	11	11	12
	Total	17	18	19
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	68 (65)	72 (65)	76 (71)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

.....  
1

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

### 4 Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions)

%
---

missed		
through absence for the latest complete reporting year:	Authorised	School
	Absence	National comparative data
		5.5
		5.7
	Unauthorised	School
	Absence	National comparative data
		0.1
		0.5

4

4 **Exclusions**

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

4 **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	5
	Satisfactory or better	88
	Less than satisfactory	12

## **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

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

#### **4 Attainment and progress**

- 5 The range of attainment on entry is below average. Children make good progress in the six suggested areas for learning and, by the time they start statutory education at Key Stage 1, most children have attained the Desirable Learning Outcomes for the age group. Children with special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates.
- 6 The overall English results in the 1999 national tests for eleven-year olds were above the national average and well above the average for schools in similar areas. Results over the three years from 1996 to 1998 have been well below average so this year's results represent a significant improvement. This improvement is partly due to the very effective action taken by the school to identify and remedy gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding before the tests. Another factor has been the successful implementation of the literacy strategy.
- 7 In the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 tests, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level was about the same as the national average in both reading and writing. The proportion reaching the higher Level 3 was well above the average for reading but below average for writing. Compared with schools with similar intakes, the percentages reaching the expected levels in reading and writing were well above the average. The percentage reaching the higher Level 3 in reading was very high in comparison with similar schools but about the same in writing.
- 8 Inspection evidence shows that pupils are making satisfactory progress in all aspects of English, including speaking and listening, reading and writing, at both key stages. The percentages attaining the expected standards in these aspects by the ages of seven and eleven are broadly in line with the national average. At Key Stage 2, there is a lack of challenge for some higher attaining pupils so the overall results at the end of Key Stage 2 are in line with, rather than above, the national average. However, these overall results are very high in comparison with similar schools.
- 9 By the age of seven, most pupils listen carefully to explanations and talk confidently about the work they have done or what they think is happening. At the age of eleven, pupils show by their answers that they understand the main points of a discussion and make sensible contributions to it. They talk confidently about stories they have read and characters in the story.
- 10 Most pupils read reasonably accurately and have a sufficiently wide range of ways of tackling unfamiliar words by the time they are seven. They enjoy reading both fiction and non-fiction books and understand the main points of a story. By the age of eleven, they read a wider range of fiction and other books confidently and talk about characters and plot. They know how to find information in books.
- 11 Most seven-year-olds have sound writing skills and use a variety of forms, including descriptive, report and story writing. By the end of Key Stage 2 attainment in writing is sound. Pupils have increased their range of writing, although they have few opportunities for writing extended pieces. Their spelling and handwriting are satisfactory.
- 12 Pupils have sound opportunities to use their English skills of speaking, reading and writing in

other subjects. These opportunities make a sound contribution to the satisfactory progress made in English skills.

- 13 The 1999 results in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 were below the national averages but well above the average for similar schools. In the same year, the overall results for eleven-year-olds were similar to the national average overall. The proportion reaching Level 4 and above was above the national average, and well above the average for similar schools but the proportion achieving Level 5 was below the national average, although above the average for schools with similar intakes. As in English, the results were a marked improvement over the previous year's and, for the most part, the effects of the same exercise. Inspection findings are that attainment at the end of both key stages is in line with national expectations, which agrees with the test results for 1999 at Key Stage 2, but is a slight improvement at the end of Key Stage 1. The school has made a successful start in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy, which has had a positive impact on standards.
- 14 Pupils make sound progress in mathematics and, by the age of seven, recognise and order numbers and use mental recall of number facts to solve addition and subtraction problems. They recognise simple number patterns and fractional parts such as halves and quarters. They use appropriate mathematical vocabulary when describing shapes. They measure using standard and non-standard units, but some have had insufficient practice in this. They collect information and display it in bar charts. Pupils continue to make sound progress at Key Stage 2 and by the time they are eleven, they recall multiplication facts up to 10x and have a sound range of strategies for solving problems mentally and on paper. They solve problems in numbers with two decimal places in the context of money and recognise reflective symmetry. They talk about the likelihood of different events using the appropriate vocabulary and they construct a wider range of graphs, sometimes using computers. At Key Stage 2, pupils have had insufficient opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge and understanding to problems from the world outside.
- 15 Overall, pupils make sound progress in science and the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level in teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 was similar to the national average. However, no pupils reached the higher Level 3, which was very much below the national average. The percentage reaching the expected level was well above the average for similar schools, but below for those reaching the higher Level 3. Although more pupils achieved the expected level this year, fewer than last year reached higher levels. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected and higher levels in the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 1999 was about the same as nationally, but fewer than could be expected reached the higher Level 5. In comparison to similar schools, the percentage reaching the expected level and above was well above average and that reaching the higher Level 5 was above average. This is also a considerable improvement over the previous year's results. The school's programme for raising standards before the tests was successful in science as well as in English and mathematics.
- 16 From the inspection evidence, attainment at the end of both key stages is in line with national expectations. Progress is satisfactory at both key stages. At both key stages, pupils are learning the elements of fair testing and why this is necessary but have too few chances to design and carry out their own experiments. Pupils have a sound degree of scientific knowledge and understanding.
- 17 Pupils make sound progress in information and communications technology through Key Stage 1 and their attainment is in line with national expectations by the time they are seven. Because of the introduction of new guidelines for teaching and improved access to computer equipment, progress overall at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. However, these initiatives have yet to have their full impact for pupils currently in Year 6 whose attainment by the end of the key stage is below

national expectations as they have not had the full range of experiences required by the National Curriculum for the subject. Key Stage 1 pupils write poems and produce bar charts using computers. Older pupils use word processing and data handling programs well to edit and produce text and display information. This is an overall improvement since the last inspection when attainment was below national expectations at the end of both key stages.

- 18 At Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress in design and technology. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection when it was unsatisfactory. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on progress in design and technology at Key Stage 2. Progress in physical education for pupils at Key Stage 2 has also improved since the last inspection as this is now satisfactory at both key stages. However, there has been a decline in progress in history at Key Stage 2 and progress is now unsatisfactory. There is a lack of challenge for pupils at this key stage, and insufficient emphasis on the development of enquiry skills. Progress is satisfactory in art, geography and music at both key stages and in history at Key Stage 1. Where progress is satisfactory, pupils' attainment at the end of key stages is about that which can be expected from pupils of their age groups.
- 19 Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress in relation to their prior attainment at both key stages. These needs are identified early and pupils receive effective support, including specialist teaching, which contributes to this sound progress.

19 **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

- 20 When children start in the Nursery, their personal and social development is below that which can be expected for children of that age. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes in this area. By the time they are five, they have reached a level that is average for the age group. Children know and follow daily routines and work and play appropriately with each other. They listen to the teachers and to each other and show a sound degree of independence, for example, when changing for physical education or moving between activities.
- 21 Throughout the school pupils have satisfactory attitudes to their learning. They sit quietly, respond quickly and sensibly to questioning and are eager to contribute. They show interest in their work when the content of the lesson is stimulating and the teaching effective but their ability to sustain concentration is dependent on the quality of the task set. Pupils co-operate and collaborate with each other when the opportunity is given. However, pupils show limited initiative in their own learning due to restricted opportunities to plan for themselves or make choices and discuss how to tackle a piece of work and record it. There are few opportunities for personal study and independent learning skills are generally underdeveloped.
- 22 Behaviour in the school is good. Pupils relate well to one another, are trustworthy, polite, friendly and helpful to visitors. They show respect for their environment and take care of the resources available to them. There have been no exclusions in the last 12 months. The standards of conduct expected and the sanctions applied for failing to meet them are well known by the pupils and have a positive impact on the pupils' learning. When incidents of inappropriate behaviour were observed during the period of the inspection the supervising staff quickly and effectively dealt them with. Standards of behaviour in the school have improved since the time of the previous inspection.
- 23 The relationships in the school are good both between adults and pupils and between pupils, who learn very early in their time at school how to share and take turns. This develops as the pupils move through the school into an ability to cooperate well when working with a partner.



24 The personal development of pupils is satisfactory. They work well together and are supportive of one another. They acknowledge views and opinions other than their own and have some awareness of different cultures and traditions. There are some opportunities for them to take responsibility, for example within the classroom as monitors and in the dining room with the younger children.

#### 24 **Attendance**

25 Attendance is satisfactory and is in line with the national average. The school has thorough procedures for following up recurring absenteeism and well-structured initiatives to encourage attendance and punctuality. Parents report their children to be enthusiastic to attend school and punctuality at the beginning of all sessions is good. The efforts expended by the school to promote good levels of attendance and punctuality contribute positively to the standards attained. There has been a significant improvement in attendance since the time of the previous inspection when figures were lower than the national average.

25

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

#### 25 **Teaching**

26 The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory with much that is good. During the inspection, the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in nine out of every ten lessons. Teaching was satisfactory in nearly six out of every ten lessons and teaching was at least good in about a third of all lessons. This includes two lessons in which the teaching was very good. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. There is now a smaller proportion of unsatisfactory teaching and a higher proportion of teaching that is at least good. However, there was unsatisfactory teaching in just over one in every ten lessons observed.

27 The quality of teaching for the under-fives is good overall and never less than satisfactory. The teaching was good in three-quarters of the lessons observed and, in one case, the teaching was very good. Good teaching was seen in all areas of the school. The quality of teaching is judged to be satisfactory in all subjects except design and technology where inspectors had insufficient evidence to make judgements.

28 Teachers generally have a sound knowledge of the subjects they are teaching, how they can be taught to the particular age range and the requirements of the National Curriculum. They use this knowledge and understanding to plan relevant lessons with clear learning objectives. Teachers usually share these objectives with the pupils. This helps to focus on what they are to learn and aids progress. However, there are occasions when teachers do not pay enough attention to the requirements of the National Curriculum. For example, a lack of concentration on historical enquiry at Key Stage 2 resulted in a lack of progress in the lesson.

29 The work that teachers plan in whole class work is usually at an appropriate level so all pupils benefit from this work. However, sometimes the work that is planned for independently working groups lacks an appropriate degree of challenge and is not well matched to pupils' prior attainment. This means that some pupils, particularly the higher attainers, do not always make enough progress in lessons. The school has made little improvement in this since the previous inspection.

- 30 On the whole, teachers move lessons along at a reasonable pace and pupils' progress benefits from this. Teachers generally use questioning and discussion effectively, both to gauge understanding and to help pupils to develop their thoughts. In better lessons, for example, for the under-fives, teachers give children the opportunity to elaborate on their answers and thus develop their speaking skills. Teachers check pupils' work during the lesson and make useful teaching points to individuals, or in some cases to the whole class, when there is a common error or misconception. This effectively helps pupils to correct these at an early stage, and aids progress. Pupils are well managed and encouraged to work hard. The class teacher for pupils in the younger half of Key Stage 2 made good use of praise and encouragement so that all pupils were willing to try hard and say when they were having difficulties. Another positive feature of teaching is when pupils are encouraged to ask their own questions and discover ways of finding the answers. This was noticeable at upper Key Stage 1 when pupils began to devise their own investigation into the way seeds grow. However, pupils have insufficient opportunities to do this, particularly in science and mathematics. This places a restriction on their capacity to apply and extend their learning to new situations.
- 31 Teachers usually make sound use of the available resources. At times, however, resources are not so well prepared and pupils make insufficient progress in the skills to be taught, for example, on one occasion when the clay in an art lesson was too hard. In a music lesson, the actual distribution and collection of resources took too long and pupils became inattentive, with a consequent reduction in progress.
- 32 Teachers make sound use of time at the end of lessons to go over the work that has been done with the whole class and to relate this to the learning objectives. This serves as a useful focus for pupils and reminds them of what they have done and learned. Teachers keep work marked and the best practice outlines what pupils know and understand and what they need to do to improve. Although the results of these assessments are sometimes used when planning lessons, this practice is inconsistent throughout the school.
- 33 Teachers provide effective support for pupils with special educational needs at both key stages. A number also receive useful specialist teaching for a short session during the week. This support is a significant factor in their sound progress.
- 34 There is a new homework policy and this is used soundly to reinforce pupils learning and prepare older pupils for the next stage of their education.
- 35 Teachers have successfully introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies into their daily work and these strategies are having a positive impact on pupils' progress in English and mathematics. Teaching in these subjects is satisfactory.

35 **The curriculum and assessment**

- 36 The curriculum provision for the under fives is very good. It is very well planned and effectively reflects the programmes of study for these children outlined in the required areas for learning. For older pupils, the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, which meets statutory requirements in all subjects of the National Curriculum except in information and communication technology for pupils at the end of Key Stage Two. These pupils have not yet encountered the full range of activities required by the Programmes of Study in the subject, although the school has implemented firm plans to ensure that this situation is remedied for the rest of the school. There is appropriate provision for health education, including the harmful results of substance

misuse. Religious education is included in the curriculum, and has been inspected separately. The governors have chosen not to include sex education in the curriculum but have not yet framed this as a policy and so do not fulfil their legal responsibility. The curriculum provides pupils with a sound education that promotes their intellectual, physical and personal development in accordance with the school's mission statement and statutory requirements.

- 37 A key issue raised in the last inspection, that the school should develop a whole-school curriculum plan in order to ensure that the work done builds steadily on what pupils already know and understand, has been soundly met. However, the full impact of this on planning work for some individuals and groups has yet to be felt. The school has introduced short-term plans that incorporate learning objectives, and medium term plans match the short-term plans to the whole curriculum. The school has successfully adopted the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Daily literacy and numeracy sessions, which reflect the national frameworks, are taught in each class. However, there is sometimes insufficient curriculum provision in using and applying mathematical knowledge and understanding at both key stages and in devising and carrying out scientific investigations at Key Stage 2. The school has adopted government recommended guidelines for teaching in science, information and communications technology, design and technology, geography and history. It also intends to adopt similar guidelines for art, music and physical education. As these schemes become more established, they will help to make sure that pupils' work builds on their prior attainment.
- 38 In the Nursery and Reception classes, all children, including those with special educational needs, have very good opportunities to learn and develop in all the areas for learning. All older pupils have sound opportunities to benefit from the curriculum. Overall, provision for pupils on the school's special needs register is satisfactory throughout the school. These pupils are effectively identified and individual plans are drawn up to meet their needs. They are appropriately supported by their own and visiting teachers.
- 39 The enrichment of the curriculum with extra-curricular activities is satisfactory overall, with the sporting provision being very good. The school has been very successful in sporting competitions. Pupils take part in football, rugby, netball, cross-country, rounders and athletics. The school has recently introduced a drama club and a choir which is due to take part in the school's Christmas Concert. At the meeting for parents held before the inspection, most parents felt that after school opportunities were limited to sporting activities with limited opportunities for non-sporting activities, a view supported by the inspection team. However, the after-school sessions for Year 6 pupils aimed at improving standards in the National Curriculum tests made a positive impact on the results. The school has plans to start an Internet Club early next year when it has been connected to the Internet.
- 40 Procedures for finding out what children in the Nursery and Reception classes know and understand are very good. Teachers note their successes and weaknesses on a daily basis and keep useful records of their progress. They then use their findings well when planning future activities. The teacher uses more formal testing to assess children's attainment when they start in the Reception class, but the analyses of this have not yet been returned to the school, reducing its effectiveness as a planning aid. The school soundly measures attainment and progress for pupils at both key stages in a number of ways. Teachers record pupils' progress in each subject at the end of every term and this information is used to complete written reports for parents. However, the school's policy of keeping these and passing them on to subsequent teachers is inconsistently applied, reducing their value as a planning tool. Teachers also use a range of commercial tests including non-statutory National Curriculum tests in Years 3, 4 and 5. This information is used to set targets for children, although assessment is not always sufficiently used in planning individual lessons throughout the school. This sometimes leads to work being set that does not build sufficiently on pupils' prior attainment. The school has, however, introduced a useful

programme for assessing Year 6 pupils' knowledge and understanding in English, mathematics and science a few months before they take the end of year National curriculum tests. The results are carefully analysed and used well in designing a structured revision programme that has helped to raise test results in these subjects.

41 There is a collection of samples of work at different levels in writing that is useful in helping teachers to check the National Curriculum writing levels of their pupils, but there are no such collections in other subjects, such as mathematics and science. Consequently, teachers do not always have sufficient information to judge an individual pupil's progress.

#### 41 **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

42 Since the last report, the school has maintained its development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. The ethos of the school is very positive in terms of its expressed aims and practice. It is founded upon the caring relationships evidenced at all levels in the school community. The school's philosophy, code of conduct and a series of experiences and activities effectively promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. The sense of family encourages pupils to reflect on their actions and those of others.

43 The provision for pupils' spiritual understanding is satisfactory. Time to reflect on pupils' own beliefs, values and experiences is effectively provided in the daily assemblies. The talks in assemblies based on Christian beliefs are effectively explored for a spiritual thought or prayer. However, the school is not taking the full opportunity to explore the spiritual dimension of curriculum areas such as art, drama, music, science, poetry and literature.

44 The provision for moral development of pupils is good. The school effectively teaches the values that distinguish right from wrong. Due attention is given to the reinforcement of codes of behaviour and sharing of positive values. The pupils respond positively, enjoying their work and showing care for the school. Pupils are well disciplined and understand what facilitates an orderly school. Moral values are well taught through fables and stories from the Old Testament, songs and discussions. Pupils are well rewarded in assemblies for best work and good actions. Both teaching and support staff provide good role models and encourage pupils to relate well to each other and behave courteously. Pupils participate in a number of charities supported by the school. They have recently raised funds for Bolivia and collected for Kosovan refugees.

45 Good provision is made for pupils' social development through daily life, curriculum and local educational visits. The school provides a secure environment in which pupils feel cared for. Pupils are encouraged to relate well to each other and act courteously. When provided with appropriate opportunities, pupils carry out responsibilities with confidence. Monitors and house captains are given different responsibilities at break times, for example looking after younger pupils. Year 4 pupils have participated in a Citizenship award scheme, showing responsibility for their own environment and the world around. Social interaction is also achieved through promoting equal opportunities within the school. The quality of relationships between adults and pupils is good.

46 The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. It is promoted through opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of their own cultural traditions and practices and the key features of other groups in the society. It is also developed through visits and visitors to the school. The school actively promotes respect for the cultural diversity through its curriculum. Pupils are given opportunities to develop their understanding of the central beliefs and practices of different faiths. Pupils' multicultural experiences are developed through opportunities to

appreciate art and recognise festivals such as Diwali and Chanukah. However, the school's provision of multicultural resources of a suitable range and quality is limited. There are few opportunities to involve visitors from the ethnic minority organisations, in order to contribute and enhance pupils understanding of a culturally diverse British society.

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

47 The provision for support, guidance and pupils' welfare is good. Staff respond well to the pupils both within and outside the classroom. They provide care, guidance and reassurance and encourage pupils to be sensible and polite both to each other and to the adults they meet as they move around the school. The dining arrangements make the midday meal an enjoyable social time at each table.

48 The monitoring of personal and academic progress of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory. The progress of all pupils is monitored using different types of assessment but full use is not always made of this information to inform teaching and provide individual support. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are reviewed and updated regularly and the work of support staff is very effective. Formal monitoring and recording of the personal development of pupils is less well developed, although on an informal level the pupils are well known by all staff in the school.

49 The procedures developed by the school to promote discipline and appropriate behaviour are very good. The school maintains good procedures for recording and reporting absences and lateness, and in the event of persistent absenteeism, or poor punctuality, the educational welfare officer for the school is involved. However, registers are not always taken promptly at the start of sessions, for example before assemblies, and the system for collecting registers could lead to confusion in the case of a fire, when the register may not be in the office or with the class teacher.

50 The school pays due attention to safety, both within and outside school, and all areas are checked regularly for potential dangers. The school gives clear guidance on safety to pupils when they handle equipment and move around the school building. However, there are gaps in knowledge and procedures relating to child protection among some members of the non-teaching staff. The integration of children into the nursery proceeds in a structured way at an appropriate speed for the individual. This continues into the reception class, building awareness of the main school and its staff through planned contact throughout the time the child spends in nursery. Older pupils are effectively prepared for the changes that face them as they move to secondary school.

50

#### **Partnership with parents and the community**

51 Partnership with parents and the community is satisfactory. Parents are supportive of the school, its aims and values and they feel they can approach school with any concerns, confident that they will be dealt with. The school prospectus is informative and comprehensive, as is the Governors Annual Report to Parents. Parents receive an annual report on their child's progress. However, although these reports are comprehensive and free from jargon, some lack enough information about achievement in comparison with national expectations, and targets for improvement are too general. Nevertheless, annual reports have improved since the previous inspection and the information available to parents is satisfactory.

52 The parents of nursery pupils are given detailed information about the main learning focus for the week in each area of the curriculum and how they can support the development of their child at home. However, there are inconsistencies in the quality and regularity of information given to

parents about what their child is being taught in the rest of the school. Parents, therefore, are restricted in their ability to support their children's work at home. The number of parent helpers in school is very low, but their skills are well used and pupils benefit from the effective help they give. The school has arranged useful, regular courses for parents in conjunction with Knowsley College on a range of subjects ranging from basic numeracy and literacy to psychology. The school's plan for future development outlines ways in which it hopes to increase parents' involvement in their children's learning.

53 Links with the local community are satisfactory. A number of people come into school to enrich the curriculum including a theatre group, sportsmen, the parish priest and the community policeman. The school uses the local environment to support learning and some local industries support the school with resources and finance, for example, computers from a local car manufacturer. The school contributes to local and wider communities by involvement in sporting initiatives, singing at local events and charity fund-raising for local, national and international charities.

53

## 53 **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

### 53 **Leadership and management**

54 The school is managed effectively. At the time of the previous inspection, the headteacher and governing body were seen to be providing sound leadership. This is still the case. They work together to meet their legal responsibilities. The school's aims and values, outlined in its mission statement, are central to its planning and teaching. They are strongly supported by parents, and come to life through the good quality of relationships in the school, the sound progress made by all pupils and the improvement in National Curriculum test results. The good ethos in the school reflects its clear set of aims and values, including those of providing a caring environment for the pupils as well as improving standards. Good account is taken of pupils' social and personal needs. However, there is still some mismatch between the work set in some lessons and the range of pupils' ability, as in the last inspection.

55 The head teacher provides satisfactory leadership for the school. She shares a clear vision for the school's future development with the governing body and other members of staff. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher, particularly during her absence during the half term of the inspection whilst recovering from major surgery. Members of staff share the workload, particularly in co-ordinating subjects, and try hard to discharge their duties effectively. For example, they compare the work done in different classes at the end of the term with the agreed plans. They have been successful in introducing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. A number of teachers are new to their particular subject co-ordinator's role and have not yet had the opportunity to develop this. There is little monitoring of teaching in their own subjects, except in Literacy, where the headteacher has observed lessons by all teachers. The local education authority's adviser who is linked to the school has also observed a selection of literacy and mathematics lessons. However, good practice has not been sufficiently shared and unsatisfactory elements sufficiently identified. Monitoring has been more effective where areas for development, such as omissions in teaching, have been noted and targets set. As yet, there are no recorded outcomes of these targets and the outcomes of lesson observations by the headteacher were not available during the inspection. There are not enough checks on the work that is actually going on, and there have been few opportunities to share good practice or identify areas for development in teaching. The school has already recognised this deficiency and the its plan for future development contains a programme to remedy this.

56 The school has responded satisfactorily to the key issues specified in the previous inspection

report. There have been improvements in teachers' subject knowledge with resulting improvements in standards and progress in information technology, design and technology and physical education. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, although in some cases the work planned for pupils does not match their prior attainment, as noted in the previous report. However, lessons now have clear objectives, which are usefully linked to National Curriculum Programmes of Study. There are now clear long- and medium-term plans for what is to be taught in each subject at each year and the school is adopting government recommended guidelines for teaching in many subjects. This also helps to ensure that teachers' planning is clearly linked to the National Curriculum. It is too early to judge the efficacy of these initiatives. There has also been an improvement in the quality of written reports since the previous inspection. However, these are inconsistent in quality.

- 57 The headteacher and governing body have produced a useful plan for the school's future development. The plan identifies relevant and attainable targets in curricular and non-curricular areas. The financial and time implications of meeting these targets have been soundly assessed within the plan. However, although money has been allocated to each subject, there is insufficient detail about how this is to be spent. The governing body keeps an overview of developments, allowing members to play a useful part in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.
- 58 The management for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The present co-ordinator has held the responsibility since the beginning of the school year and has made sound progress in ensuring the needs of pupils are met. The school fully complies with the Code of Practice on the identification and assessment of pupils with these needs. There is an appropriate governor designated as the responsible person, who is in regular contact with the co-ordinator. This sound level of management means that these pupils make satisfactory progress.
- 59 The governing body has produced a statement on sex education but has no formal policy. The prospectus does not include details of parents' rights to withdraw their children from religious education or collective worship. Otherwise, the school fulfils its legal responsibilities.

59 **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

- 60 There is an appropriate number of qualified, experienced teaching staff. Many have recently taken on new subject co-ordinator responsibilities and are still reviewing training needs both for themselves and for other members of staff. As reported in the previous inspection, there are too few support staff to support learning, especially in Reception and at Key Stage 1 and for younger pupils at Key Stage 2. The staff as a whole have sufficient knowledge and expertise to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and the areas of learning for children under five, apart from the composing element in music at both key stages. There is little monitoring of teaching, so strengths and weaknesses are not always identified and training does not always meet these needs. An above average number of administrative and welfare staff ensures that the day-to-day life of the school functions effectively. A local education authority support teacher has provided expert support for the new special needs co-ordinator enabling a smooth transition into the new procedures. One pupil in Reception has very effective support from a part time specialist teacher of the deaf and two part-time nursery nurses.
- 61 Subject co-ordinators work hard and provide effective support for their colleagues in planning and checking pupils' work. However, there is no time available for co-ordinators to monitor teaching in their subject areas. The school recognises the need for this and has included it in its development plan. Where the headteacher has monitored teaching, few records have been kept so there is little evidence of targets or progress. Some co-ordinators are new and there has been little

time for them to update their own knowledge and understanding of the curriculum area. Since the last inspection, training in information technology, design and technology and physical education has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching in these subjects, thus pupils' progress. Procedures for the induction of newly qualified teachers are now satisfactory. There is a sound system for teachers' appraisal, but this is underused as the school is awaiting the new requirements.

62 The school has good accommodation for the number and ages of pupils at the school and the range of subjects taught. There are large outdoor areas and there is a safe play space for children under five. Funding has been made available to improve the school grounds and to undertake projects on litter and recycling. The school has previously been the subject of acts of vandalism and has extensive security procedures that are proving effective. The new building has enhanced the school environment and new school offices and staffroom are attractive and bright.

63 Learning resources are unsatisfactory overall. Recent purchases have improved resources for literacy; however they are still insufficient. Reading schemes are, on the whole, old and unattractive and there are not enough new resources for use with all pupils. There are two libraries in good-sized rooms, but there are not enough books. These include old reading scheme books and non-fiction books whose age makes them inaccurate research tools. Numeracy equipment is also in short supply. Other areas where resources are inadequate include science, music, art, history, special needs and design technology. The school has a new suite of computers and good use is made of these, both in lessons and as the focus of information and communications technology skills teaching. The school uses educational visits and visitors appropriately to extend pupils' opportunities and experiences. Classes visit museums, theatres and local areas for geographical studies. Visitors to the school talk about their lives. These activities make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.

### 63 **The efficiency of the school**

64 The school manages its resources soundly overall, as reported in the previous inspection report. However, although targets in the development plan are costed, the school relies overly on the way it has budgeted in the past and some of the funds allocated to the school are not always suitably spent. For example, cleaning and caretaking costs are high because of the physical size of the school compared with the number of pupils. The governors recognise this and have already reduced costs and are negotiating further reductions. Also, the hours allocated for administrative and clerical staff are very high in comparison with schools of a similar size. During the inspection, the school was employing another clerical assistant on a temporary basis because of the recent absence of a member of the office staff and of the headteacher. At the same time, some subjects are inadequately resourced and some resources in the Nursery are in need of replacement and renovation, as stated in the last inspection report. The current development plan allows a sum of money for each subject, but there has been little analysis of what resources are required to meet the needs of the new guidelines.

65 The school makes satisfactory use of the teaching and support staff. Teachers are deployed effectively and all have additional responsibilities. The support in the Nursery class is very effective, as is that in the Reception class, provided by the support worker for a pupil with special educational needs as well as classroom support on a rota basis. Although there are shortages in a wide enough range of good quality resources in some subjects, those that the school has are generally soundly used, as is the accommodation, including the computer suite, which is timetabled for use by all classes. Its use is a significant factor in the progress made by all pupils. However, the infant and junior libraries are understocked and not as useful as they could be as a resource for teaching library skills and developing pupils' capacity for independent study.



- 66 Day-to-day financial control and administration are good. The office staff are capable and conscientious and collaborate well with parents, teachers and governors. As a result, members of staff are able to focus appropriately on pupils' education. The school is dealing with the few minor recommendations in the recent audit report, which judged financial procedures to be good.
- 67 Taking into account the high costs per pupil, the satisfactory levels of attainment when pupils leave school compared with the below average levels when they start, and the sound quality of teaching, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

## **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

### **67 AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

- 68 The range of ability on entry is below that which can be expected from children nationally, particularly in the areas of language and literacy and physical development. Children in the Nursery make good progress overall in all of the areas for learning. They make a smooth transition to the Reception class in the year they are five and continue this good progress. By the time they start education at Key Stage 1 they have made good progress and their attainment in the areas of learning is at the level which might be expected from five year olds nationally. The good progress represents an improvement since the last inspection, when it was reported to be satisfactory.
- 69 By the age of five, children have reached a level of personal and social development that is about average for the age group. Thanks to a well-thought out and implemented policy of the school contacting and visiting the children's homes, followed by visits to the Nursery by children before they start, children settle quickly into the daily routines. They learn to share tasks and equipment, for example, when making 'sandwiches' and develop a sound degree of independence in personal skills such as preparing for physical education. Children in the nursery carry out their snack-time duties conscientiously. They behave well during activities such as physical education. This means that they are able to benefit from the lessons and make good progress. In the Reception class, children listen attentively to the teacher's explanations of the daily tasks and respond willingly to instructions. They concentrate well during group activities, creating an atmosphere of industry and enjoyment.
- 70 By the age of five, attainment in language and literacy is, for most pupils, slightly below that expected from the age group. This represents good progress during their time in the Nursery and Reception classes because of the well-planned activities and the opportunities that staff make to develop this area. Children in the Nursery talk and listen carefully to staff and talk to each other during creative play activities, such as the post office. They handle books carefully and know that the text carries a story. They make marks on paper to represent writing and one or two write recognisable letters and copy their own names successfully, for example on worksheets before the main activity. In the Reception class, children talk about positions, for example, in front of, or on top as part of their work in mathematics. They talk about their news in front of the class, supported by the class teacher and they listen politely to others doing the same. They concentrate well whilst being read to and make sensible contributions using suitable vocabulary during discussions, for example, about a story about frightening things. They read their own names, and a few recognise familiar words such as the days of the week. When writing, they hold pencils in an appropriate way and know the direction in which to read and write. Children take advantage of opportunities to write and record their findings as they move between different activities, for example, the numbers they caught in a magnetic fishing game.
- 71 Attainment in mathematics is in line with that expected for the age group by the time the children are five. This reflects the very good progress made. Children in the nursery count, sort and match objects and a few are able to count up to 10. They copy patterns when threading objects in a particular order and recognise a few plane shapes such as triangles, rectangles and circles, and they know the names and properties of some three-dimensional shapes, such as cylinders. Children in the Reception class recognise and know the names of solid shapes such as cubes, cuboids and spheres. They know how to describe the positions of objects in relation to others, for example, 'in front of' or 'in the middle of'. The highest attaining pupils read, write and order numbers to ten and use these to solve problems in addition and subtraction.

- 72 Children make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world and by the time they start Key Stage 1, their attainment is about that expected for their age. They use a range of materials such as salt dough and toy food to make 'sandwiches' and compare objects and group them according to their properties, such as shininess. They compare their weight now with that when they were born and record the months they were born by means of a 'Birthday Train'. Children explore different materials such as sand, water and soap froth during creative play. They find out about customs such as birthday parties and celebrations such as Christmas and Diwali. Reception pupils use magnets to make a fishing game, cutting and colouring their own fish. A few remember that two ends of a magnet attract or repel. They visit their own 'Santa's Grotto' and take photographs of their visits. They use a range of construction kits to make models, for example, Santa's sleigh.
- 73 Children make good progress overall in physical development. There is good provision for those in the Nursery to practise climbing and balancing skills during play and in more formal sessions in the hall when they use appropriate gymnastic equipment. They use scissors, brushes, pencils, rollers and other writing, drawing and constructional equipment with increasing control and confidence during class activities. For example, children in the nursery rolled out salt dough and used pastry cutters when making sandwiches for their 'birthday party'. Older children in the reception class continue to develop these skills by taking part in a series of well thought out activities. These include the development of co-ordination and control using construction kits and playing magnetic fishing games as well as using cutting, writing and drawing equipment. By the time they are five, most children achieve the standard expected for their age.
- 74 Children make good progress in creative development and the overall standard achieved is satisfactory. Both Nursery and reception children have opportunities to work with paint, collage and shapeable materials such as dough. The role play areas and home corners, including the Post Office in the Nursery and Santa's Grotto, successfully promote imaginative play. In the nursery, children paint colourful self-portraits and Reception pupils carefully apply glaze to clay pots they have made. Children build up a repertoire of songs, for example, birthday songs in the Nursery.
- 75 Children with special educational needs make sound progress. Those whose progress is giving rise to concern are identified early and appropriate action is taken.
- 76 The quality of teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. Teachers have a good understanding of the needs of children in the classes and plan a good range of activities to promote their development in all the suggested areas. These activities are well paced. Children have ample opportunities to benefit from them and to move on when necessary. Activities include whole class sessions which also contribute well to personal and social development. Good use is made of other adults in the classroom. Members of staff have good relationships with children that help their learning. They also take incidental opportunities to develop children's learning, such as mathematical shapes in physical education. When making a magnetic game, staff effectively included activities in language and literacy, creative development and mathematics as well as knowledge and understanding of the world, thus promoting development in these areas.
- 77 The curriculum for the under-fives in the Nursery and Reception class is rich and varied and is planned and taught to cover all of the required learning outcomes. Staff make and record useful observations to note children's attainment and progress in both classes. They use these records well in identifying potential problems and difficulties, for example, if a child needs further practice in a particular skill. Children's attainment when they start in the reception class is measured but, at the time of the inspection, the results had not been returned. The classrooms are imaginatively arranged and organised. However, as in the last report, much of the apparatus and equipment is in need in refurbishment. There is some lack of computer programs for children in

the Early Years.

77 **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

77 **English**

- 78 The percentage of pupils reaching the expected level and above in the 1999 English tests for eleven-year-olds was above the national average and very much higher than the average for schools in similar areas. These results were a considerable improvement on the previous year's. They also show an improvement in the trend over the three years between 1996 and 1998 when results were well below the national average. Over these three years, the boys' performance in English was below the national average, but the girls' was well below. Improvements are attributable to the intensive programme of reinforcement based on an analysis of each pupil's strengths and weaknesses in the subject in the few months before the tests. These were discussed with parents and appropriate revision homework provided. There was also an after-school club for all Year 6 pupils in English, as well as mathematics and science. The school's successful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has also contributed to the improvement in standards.
- 79 In the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 tests, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected and higher levels in reading and writing was in line with the national average. Compared with schools in similar areas, the proportion reaching the expected and higher levels was well above the average.
- 80 Inspection evidence is that attainment at the end of both key stages is in line with national expectations, as reported in the previous inspection. This agrees with national test results at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2, where test results were above average in 1999, there is a lack of provision for extended writing and insufficient challenge for some higher attaining pupils.
- 81 Progress in speaking and listening is satisfactory at both key stages. By the age of seven, the large majority listen carefully to explanations and respond sensibly. For example, a group of Y2 pupils discussed a taped story independently and answered prepared questions at the end of the session. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress through Key Stage 2 as they build on and practise these skills. They talk confidently and demonstrate careful listening by relevant responses. For example, Year 6 pupils discussed the structure and effectiveness of a newspaper article with confidence and knowledge.
- 82 Pupils at Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress in reading as they follow reading schemes designed to build their reading skills progressively. These include a recently bought one for use during reading during the Literacy Hour when staff work with small groups of children. This has a positive impact on progress. Pupils learn a sound range of reading skills including the recognition of a number of words by sight and recognition of the sounds made by patterns of letters. Some make sensible predictions about what will happen next in the story based on information in the text. They have a satisfactory range of strategies for finding information in non-fiction books. For example, older pupils in the key stage use contents and index pages confidently. Pupils continue to make sound progress through Key Stage 2 as they increase the range of books they read and meet new ideas and authors during the literacy sessions. They use a number of strategies to read previously unknown words and discuss the use of contents and index pages to find information. Some pupils use appropriate expression and intonation when reading aloud, thus enlivening the reading for listeners. They enjoy books and read at home for pleasure.

- 83 Progress in writing is sound at both key stages. At Key Stage 1, pupils practise their writing skills in English lessons and in a range of other subjects. By the end of the key stage, pupils write descriptions and reports, for example about their work on growing seeds in science. Generally, pupils write in sentences, their spelling of simple and familiar words is accurate and the quality of their handwriting is satisfactory. Pupils sometimes use information and communications technology well when producing their work, for example, Year 2's 'Silly Poems', or when older pupils edited a piece of writing to make it more interesting for the reader. Progress continues to be satisfactory overall at Key Stage 2 as pupils increase their range of writing and develop their skills. They write satisfactory stories, reports, instructional texts and play scripts, using appropriate vocabulary for these types of writing. Pupils use information and communications technology when drafting work, for example, enriching the quality of a piece of writing by varying the adjectives used. However, progress is sometimes less satisfactory in independent group work when pupils are working on undemanding tasks.
- 84 Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress in relation to their prior attainment. They are supported well by a visiting teacher. Small groups of pupils work with this teacher, reinforcing their existing skills and making sound progress in relation to targets that have been set for them. No difference in the progress of boys and girls was noted during the inspection.
- 85 Pupils' response to English lessons is good and they have good attitudes to work. This is a significant factor in their overall satisfactory progress. Most pupils behave well during the literacy hour and are developing satisfactory skills in working independently. Pupils approach independent activities with enthusiasm and commitment and procedures are in place to ensure that pupils are able to complete activities independently. However in some classes where pupils have unchallenging tasks, for example playing word games, copying text or completing simple handwriting worksheets, they have difficulty remaining on task and do not complete work with the result that their progress slows.
- 86 As at the time of the last inspection, the quality of teaching is sound overall. Teachers have worked hard to implement the literacy strategy and this is having a positive impact on the standards attained. They plan effective lessons with clear learning objectives that are shared with pupils and are revisited at the end of the session. In this way, pupils are able to concentrate on what they are to learn during the lesson and are usefully reminded what they have learned at the end. In better lessons the pace is brisk and teachers use good questioning techniques to enable pupils to explore the topics under discussion, thus enhancing their progress. Group activities in these sessions are well planned and match pupils' abilities, and plenary sessions return to lesson objectives to allow pupils to say what they have learned. However, in one or two lessons, teachers have low expectations and sessions are slow and activities unchallenging. The work set does not always match pupils' prior attainment and higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 2 in particular sometimes do not make a satisfactory rate of progress. The school has made insufficient progress in this since the last inspection. Teachers keep marking up to date and some teachers include useful comments that help pupils improve their work. However, this practice is variable throughout the school and in some classes this written guidance is missing. Teachers set useful homework, which is relevant to the work done in the classroom and makes a useful contribution to pupils' progress.
- 87 The subject co-ordinator has undergone a significant amount of training to help colleagues implement the literacy hour. The school has made a sound start in this, for example including all the requirements in teaching and due attention to building on work that has gone before and structuring the lessons appropriately. However, at times, the work provided for pupils working independently lacks challenge. Many resources have been purchased to support the introduction to the literacy hour, however there are still insufficient resources to deliver the literacy framework effectively. The libraries are stocked with old books, some of which are factually inaccurate and

will not enable pupils to do accurate research and develop independent learning skills. The libraries are not an effective learning resource.

- 88 There are inadequate procedures established to assess pupils' progress in English on a day-to-day basis throughout the school. Teachers record pupils' attainment and progress at the end of each term and these records are useful in producing reports for parents, but there are insufficient records to aid the planning of future work. Whole school reading records record the titles of the books children have read but rarely record or track developing skills and are not of any great use in identifying individual pupils' strengths or areas for development. In one class, individual targets for pupils are set and these effectively support the children's learning.

88

## **Mathematics**

- 89 By the end of both key stages, most pupils attain standards that are in line with the national averages. Pupils' attainment is similar to the standards achieved at the last inspection. The inspection findings reflect the average performance of previous years.

- 90 In the 1999 national tests for eleven-year-olds in mathematics, the average attainment of pupils was similar to that in most schools nationally. Most pupils reached the expected levels, but fewer than nationally reached higher levels. Results were well above average for pupils in schools in similar areas. These results represent a considerable improvement over the previous year's, when performance in mathematics was well below the national average, but average for schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. The percentage reaching the higher Level 5 was above average for schools with similar intakes. In the three years from 1996 to 1998, pupils' performance was well below the national average for their age group. Last year, the school put into place a successful programme to boost pupils' knowledge and understanding in mathematics, similar to that in English and science, with very positive results. Inspection findings agree with test results in that attainment in mathematics is in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. The percentage reaching the expected and higher levels in the tests for seven-year-olds at the end of Key Stage 1 was slightly below the national average but well above the average for schools with similar intakes. This represents a slight drop in standards of attainment since the previous year. However, inspection findings are that standards of attainment in mathematics are now in line with national averages by the time pupils are seven as a result of the successful introduction of new teaching initiatives. This agrees with the overall results over the three years from 1996 to 1998. However, over these three years, girls' performance has been above the national average, whilst boys' has been below.

- 91 Standards in mathematics are similar to those found at the last inspection. Pupils' ability to use and apply their mathematics skills and knowledge is still limited and insufficient attention is given to work on investigative and problem solving activities and to ensuring a better match of work to the needs of pupils with different abilities. In most classes, there is a lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils. Consequently, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher levels is below the national average.

- 92 The school is successfully implementing the National Numeracy Strategy. Pupils' skills in numeracy make a positive contribution to their attainment and progress in other subjects. However, an over-reliance on commercially produced workbooks, also reported at the last inspection, limits the breadth and the range of 'hands on experience' most necessary for mathematical learning.

- 93 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils count sets of objects accurately and solve simple number

problems. They confidently recall addition and subtraction facts to 10, while some pupils continue up to 20 and beyond. They show a developing awareness of place value. Most pupils have recognised simple relationships and patterns and identify halves and quarters in numbers and shapes. They have begun to recognise and use coins and apply knowledge of numbers in practical situations such as shopping. Most pupils are secure, confident and speedy in their mental calculations. Pupils have adequate knowledge of two and three-dimensional shapes, but their measuring skills are less well developed and many lack confidence in explaining their work. They have few opportunities to collect their own data, but their skills in recording and interpreting the given data are satisfactory. They use simple computer programs to consolidate number skills and to record and display information they have collected, for example when constructing block graphs of the pets they own.

- 94 By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils add and subtract numbers to thousands and multiply and divide by tens and units reasonably accurately. Pupils begin to use multiplication skills correctly, for example as they count in tens, fives and sixes. They add and subtract decimals and a significant number of pupils confidently convert these to percentages and fractions with developing understanding. Most pupils use mental recall of 2, 5 and 10 times tables in whole number problems involving multiplication and division. Pupils confidently solve money and measurement problems and employ a range of strategies to overcome difficulties. Most pupils are able to identify and recognise the properties of common two-dimensional shapes and draw them variously orientated, on grids, but their ability to solve problems and to use units of length, capacity and time in practical contexts, is limited. Pupils understand how to collect, use and interpret simple data and use a frequency table to record it and represent findings in a pictogram chart. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils investigate to find the most favourite chocolate bar and produce accurate frequency tables. Most Year 6 pupils are familiar with the language of probability, for example, they know that '0' means impossible and '1' means certain. They understand and convert 85% to  $85/100$  and 0.85 in relation to probability. Pupils make sufficient use of information and communications technology for data handling and know where to use different types of graphs, for example, a line graph to show rainfall.
- 95 Pupils make satisfactory progress at both key stages. They experience a range of mathematical activities and learn an appropriate amount of mathematical knowledge and strategies. Pupils with special educational needs make equally sound progress. Their progress accelerates where tasks are closely matched to individual stages of development and learning can proceed in progressive, manageable steps. Pupils in the Reception class learn to match and sort objects, explore numbers and count groups of objects accurately. Year 1 pupils practice rapid recall of numbers to and from 20, and Year 2 show developing skills of classifying information in frequency tables and bar graphs. Year 3 pupils are gaining an understanding of counting forwards and backwards in 10, 50 and 100. Most are beginning to spot features of patterns on a 100 square. Year 4 pupils are developing the accurate use of decimal notation when counting below zero. Year 5 show increased competence in the use of different strategies to analyse and represent data, while Year 6 successfully use a mirror to determine lines of symmetry and develop use and understanding of first quadrant co-ordinates. They demonstrate developing confidence in explaining their work and recording it with improved understanding. However, the lack of opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and understanding to a wide enough range of problems sometimes has an unsatisfactory impact on progress.
- 96 Pupils' attitudes in mathematics are good. They persevere and approach the tasks with good interest and enjoyment, when provided with challenging opportunities, with 'hands on' experience and appropriate real life situations. Most adopt good work habits and collaborate well in pairs and groups. Presentation of work is generally good. Most pupils apply themselves well to their task in hand and are willing to ask questions and communicate what they have learnt. Relationships are good and promote effective learning.

- 97 The quality of teaching in mathematics is satisfactory at both key stages. The teaching observed during the inspection was all at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Teachers have sound knowledge of the subject. They use suitable teaching methods and effective organisational strategies. In good lessons, teachers provide a brisk pace, clear purposes and tasks that are well matched to pupils' prior attainment. Their teaching includes effective introductions, good quality discussion and opportunities for consolidation and practical work. Most teachers manage pupils skilfully with appropriate expectations of behaviour. However, their expectations of work are sometimes low and result in a mismatch of work to the abilities of pupils, particularly the higher attainers. Teachers' day-to-day assessment of pupils' work is less purposeful and the marking of pupils' work, although generally positive and completed regularly, is insufficiently used to inform the planning of pupils' work. Teachers' assessments of pupils' work do not always effectively relate to the levels in the National Curriculum. Teachers set a suitable amount of homework to extend what is learnt in school and this helps to consolidate pupils' understanding.
- 98 The school is aware of the need to raise standards, and the successful implementation of the numeracy strategy is a move in the right direction. Most teachers are successfully following its structure although there are sometimes insufficient opportunities for pupils to use their mathematics in a wide enough range of situations, including the use of 'real' problems, partly because of the over-reliance on commercial workbooks. There are sound systems for monitoring pupils' attainment and progress as they move through the school. However, insufficient attention is given to the systematic assessment of pupils' work against National Curriculum levels and its analysis, in order to provide a correct match of task to pupils' prior attainment. There are insufficient resources to enhance the teaching of numeracy, for example, number cards for involving all pupils in introductory sessions.

## Science

- 99 Attainment in science is in line with national standards at the end of Key Stage 2, as reported in the previous inspection. In the National Curriculum tests in 1999 at this key stage, the standards of attainment were about the same as the national average, but well above the average for schools with similar intakes. Most pupils reached the expected level, but not as high a proportion as nationally reached the higher level. In comparison to schools with similar intakes, however, the percentage reaching the higher Level 5 was about average. This year, although average performance in the tests has been well below national averages over the three years between 1996 and 1998 for both boys and girls, there has been a considerable improvement in the results. The school implemented a good range of effective strategies in order to raise standards, as in English and mathematics. Attainment in science is average at the end of Key Stage 1, as reported in the previous report. Inspection findings broadly agree with the results of teachers' assessments at the end of the key stage, although more pupils are on target to attain higher levels. These results are well above the average for schools with similar intakes, an improvement since last year when results were above average.
- 100 Pupils make satisfactory progress at both key stages. Key Stage 1 pupils cover a satisfactory range of work in science including scientific investigation. They are interested in finding out and their enjoyment of science lessons has a positive impact on their progress. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they predict what conditions a seed needs to germinate and record their findings in words and pictures. With the help of the teacher, they make sound progress in designing their own experiments to check their findings, using the idea of a fair test. Year 2 pupils offer reasons to explain why particular creatures are found in certain habitats, for example, that slugs like wet places so they can be found in grass. In one or two cases, their thoughts are less well organised, for example, declaring that 'seeds without water didn't grow



because they had no sunlight'. Pupils know that there are different sources of sound and carry out investigations to find the effect distance from the source has on the way they hear them. Pupils at Key Stage 2 continue to make sound progress overall. They increase their knowledge, understanding and skills as they learn an increasing amount of scientific ideas and concepts, engaging in a satisfactory range of investigations. They use the idea of fair testing well when investigating the solubility of sugar in water at different temperatures, being careful to use the same amount of water and to add the sugar in the same amounts. Sometimes pupils' progress is less satisfactory in developing their capacity for personal study and designing their own investigations as a result of overdirection from the teacher.

101 Pupils' satisfactory response and positive attitudes are key factors in their progress. They listen to teachers well during lesson introductions and offer thoughtful contributions to discussions. Older pupils at Key Stage 1 made sensible comments when looking at the results of their investigations into growing seeds. Pupils generally work well co-operatively, for example, when dissolving sugar. Year 4 pupils take care when recording their work on the life cycles of plants. However, pupils have few opportunities at Key Stage 2 to devise their own experiments and select their own equipment. This means that they sometimes have too few opportunities to develop their capacity for personal study. At both key stages, pupils' positive attitudes help to ensure that they keep on task and complete reasonable amounts of work during lessons.

102 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the subject. They use their knowledge appropriately and plan lessons with clear objectives linked to the National Curriculum for science using government recommended guidelines for science teaching. They share these objectives with pupils and plan activities to meet them. Teachers use science lessons to reinforce other subjects such as mathematics, as when a teacher encouraged younger pupils to use non-standard measures to compare distances in a lesson on sound. In some lessons, work is suitably matched to pupils' prior attainment, thus helping their progress. In a lesson at Key Stage 1, lower attaining pupils were provided with worksheets that helped them to record their findings effectively without being delayed by below average writing. Sometimes, however, lower attaining pupils do not receive enough support, for example, when finding out about food chains. Some investigations and activities are over-directed by the teacher, particularly at Key Stage 2, with the result that pupils' progress in devising and designing their own experiments is sometimes limited.

103 Pupils have some opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills in science. Key Stage 1 pupils record their findings in words as well as pictures and discuss their findings sensibly. Lower Key Stage 2 pupils effectively compare carrots and chocolate when writing about healthy eating. Key Stage 1 pupils make appropriate measurements in non-standard units when finding out how far they can go from a source of sound and still hear it. Older pupils record and display their results in tables and graphs, for example, how an elastic band stretches when loaded with weights.

103

## **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

### **Art**

104 Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, show satisfactory progress across both key stages in the basic skills of drawing and painting. Pupils in both key stages are confidently developing an understanding of some of the aesthetic elements of art. They mix colours carefully and use different shades in their work. However, there is a lack of three-dimensional work such as devising and making artefacts and images, and using a sufficiently wide range of modelling materials such as clay, papier-mâché, and wire. Consequently, pupils' skills and knowledge of shape, texture and form in art are limited. The last inspection reported a

lack of direct observational work using a range of available objects and artefacts. The school has made few advances to improve this provision.

- 105 The youngest pupils at Key Stage 2 have opportunities to make imaginative models out of constructional materials and handle clay and play-dough. Year 2 pupils sketch and paint, often with careful attention to detail. At Key Stage 2, Year 6 pupils explore the work of famous artists, for example, William Morris, Monet and Mondrian. In a lesson involving ancient designs of repeating patterns most pupils demonstrated good powers of observation, accuracy of detail, shape form and size in drawing and colouring. However, pupils are not encouraged to record their work of observational drawings in sketchbooks or experiment sufficiently with line and tone. The higher attaining pupils progress as well as expected, especially in lessons where the task set is open-ended and expressive use of ideas and feelings is encouraged. Pupils are sufficiently encouraged to evaluate and make improvements to further develop their own work.
- 106 Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory. In the lessons observed, most pupils showed enjoyment, application and involvement in all art lessons. Pupils listen intently, follow instructions well and are considerate towards others. They are enthusiastic about art and sustain concentration during lessons. Pupils show pride in their efforts and react well to praise.
- 107 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In a good lesson, the teacher demonstrated good subject knowledge, effective planning and preparation and appropriate challenge to develop pupils' observational skills and their ability to explore with imagination and feeling, in order to appreciate an artist's work creatively. The lesson developed at a good pace with skilful management of pupils and effective use of resources to enhance their progress. Teaching was less satisfactory when the intended skills are not developed because of a lack of appropriate preparation and encouragement for pupils to work independently, for example, when pupils at Key Stage 1 were making clay pots. Teachers generally ask appropriate questions and give clear instructions. There are very few examples of the use of the teaching of computer-aided art and design at both key stages.
- 108 Art makes a good contribution to the development of literacy. Pupils are encouraged to use specialised vocabulary and develop oracy when contributing to class discussions, asking and answering questions. The subject offers links with numeracy when skills of measurement are applied. There are opportunities to use designs and sketches as well as symmetry and size. One good example of this is the school playground pathway project, supported by a visiting artist, of making clay tiles of hand and footprints for the whole school.
- 109 An art component planned into topic work successfully supports other subjects, such as history and geography. There are bright displays of work, particularly in the lower school. There are insufficient resources of good range and quality, especially modelling materials. This restricts progress in three-dimensional work. The procedures for measuring pupils skills and understanding are sound, but the results of these measurements are not used enough in planning future work.
- 109 **Design and technology**
- 110 Judgements are based on a scrutiny of pupils' work, an examination of teachers' planning and discussions with the subject co-ordinators and with pupils as it was not possible to observe any lessons during the inspection.
- 111 Pupils make sound progress through Key Stage 1. This is an improvement since the previous

inspection when progress was unsatisfactory. Pupils use a range of materials and plan, design and evaluate their work. For example, Year 2 pupils designed coats on paper and transferred their designs to fabric. They make sound progress learning sewing techniques as they work towards a finished product. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on progress through Key Stage 2 as few samples of work had been kept from different classes. Pupils have produced designs of moving carts and have made models with recycled materials and are experimenting with 'pop-up' cards.

- 112 The products being worked on at the time of the inspection show that pupils take enough care with their work, particularly at Key Stage 1, and try to finish it in a pleasing way. They are proud of the items they make.
- 113 Inspectors did not see enough teaching to make a judgement on its quality in this subject. However, following the previous inspection, teachers followed a course of training in order to develop their subject knowledge, as required by one of the report's key issues. This training included full familiarisation with the National Curriculum requirements in the subject. All of the teachers who were present at the school during the previous inspection have undergone this training.
- 114 The subject co-ordinator has a good understanding of the subject's requirements and the school is introducing government recommended guidelines for teaching, with the purpose of planning lessons that build carefully on pupils' existing skills and knowledge. However, there is a shortage of the full range of materials and equipment needed to follow these ideas through.

## **Geography**

- 115 Pupils in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress as they develop a sound understanding of their local and wider areas. They answer questions about different types of shops to be found there and comment on their likes and dislikes. Younger pupils know where they live and learn about their address. Year 2 pupils confidently identify different countries visited by Barnaby the Bear on his travels around the world. They use appropriate vocabulary to describe direction, route, the means of transport used and the main features of the place visited. They develop a satisfactory understanding of different seasons and types of weather. The scrutiny of pupils' completed work reveals that most seven-year-olds confidently map out the route from home to school.
- 116 Pupils continue to make sound progress at Key Stage 2, and by the time they are eleven, most pupils read and plot co-ordinates on a map accurately. They have adequate knowledge of directions on a compass. Pupils have some knowledge and understanding of the use of keys and symbols when using atlases and maps. As part of their local study project, Year 4 pupils learn about the attractive and unattractive features of the local area and make sensible suggestions for improvement. In one lesson, pupils in Year 6 planned for a skiing holiday and confidently searched through brochures to extract information required. They undertake a useful field study and experience orienteering on their school journey to an adventure park. Most pupils, however, have limited skills in the use of sources of information, such as books, maps and plans.
- 117 Overall, pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory where the work provides appropriate challenge. They are eager, work with enthusiasm and collaborate with each other. They apply themselves well to practical tasks.
- 118 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers have a satisfactory geographical knowledge and understanding. They plan well and their lessons are based on clear objectives.

Teachers use appropriate methods and effective questioning to explain points and assess understanding. Praise and encouragement are used to good effect in lessons. The teaching of geography makes a sound contribution to literacy skills. Effective questioning and encouragement to use appropriate terminology improve pupils' speaking and listening skills and extend their vocabulary.

- 119 The available resources in geography are insufficient in terms of range and quality of up-to-date maps of different scales. The school has some reference books and materials, including suitable atlases, globes and large maps. Resources are well maintained and centrally organised. The local area is studied in detail and pupils are able to benefit from visits to local places.

## **History**

- 120 Only few lessons were timetabled during inspection. Additional evidence for progress is therefore derived from examination of pupils' work, interviews with staff and pupils and teachers' planning. The previous inspection reported satisfactory standards across both key stages. The report highlighted weaknesses in ensuring that tasks set were appropriately matched to pupils' prior attainment. The report also stated that there was a lack of resources, which affected pupils' progress. Standards have deteriorated since and little has been done to rectify weaknesses of the last inspection.
- 121 Progress in history is satisfactory in Key Stage 1, but it is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2. It is uneven and inconsistent in some year groups. There is currently a long-term overview of topics to be taught and the school has recently adopted government recommended guidelines for teaching. However, this has not started to have an effect yet on providing consistency in pupils' overall progress. Higher attaining pupils, particularly at Key Stage 2, show unsatisfactory progress over time. This is due to lack of challenge in lessons to research, analyse and evaluate information independently. There is an over-reliance on reproduced sheets with little evidence of pupils developing their own historical enquiry. Opportunities for pupils to use information technology to support research and investigation in history are also limited. Pupils with special educational needs generally make satisfactory progress.
- 122 At Key Stage 1, most pupils demonstrate a developing understanding of the past and a sense of chronology by their ability to sequence events and objects. For example, Year 1 pupils carefully examine some artefacts of old and new toys to understand how these have changed over a period. They make comparisons between their lives and those of others who existed a long time ago. Pupils are developing confidence in the correct use of words and phrases that relate to the passing of time. Through visual sources and examination of old and new toys, younger pupils discover aspects of the past and compare them with present times. Year 2 pupils demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of the past and understand that events in history really happened and that some happened a long time ago. They have the factual knowledge of the great fire of London and have begun to understand the causes and consequences of events in the past.
- 123 At Key Stage 2, most Year 6 pupils show limited factual knowledge of aspects of history. They demonstrate unsatisfactory knowledge of the topics covered and find it difficult to recall relevant information. Year 5 pupils learn about characteristics of past periods and recognise changes, through the study of life in Victorian Britain, but they have limited opportunities to develop historical skills related to the use of evidence in history. Year 3 pupils learn about the Celtic queen Boudicca and her fight against the Romans. They find out about different opinions and know something of past customs and way of life. However, pupils are not sufficiently skilled in using and interpreting a wide range of historical sources and evidence. Many do not confidently ask questions from the past in order to develop their historical enquiry.

- 124 Most pupils are interested and inquisitive about the past. Their attitudes and responses in history are positive. They show keen interest in finding out about how people lived in the past and how things have changed over time. They behave well in most lessons and listen attentively.
- 125 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers make effective use of their own knowledge and understanding of the subject and use materials and artefacts to support lessons. Where teaching is less than satisfactory, teacher's expectations of pupils are generally inappropriate and planning does not always ensure that work is set at a suitable level for each pupil. Teaching is less inspiring where pupils are given work sheets that provide insufficient depth and challenge.
- 126 Teaching of history makes satisfactory contributions to the development and use of literacy skills. Effective discussion about the past ensures that pupils make sound progress in speaking and listening. The teaching also contributes adequately to the development of writing and spelling. Pupils confidently use their knowledge of numbers when working on time-lines, particularly in Key Stage 1. Resources are insufficient in range and quality. The out of school visits to local places of interest based on class topics effectively enhance pupils' learning.

### **Information and communications technology**

- 127 Pupils at Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress as they learn to use a range of information and communications technology including cassette recorders and computers. This is an improvement since the last inspection when attainment and progress were unsatisfactory. Pupils learn that using a keyboard and mouse has an effect on the monitor screen and they can produce text and pictures. By the end of Key Stage 1, attainment in information technology meets national expectations, an improvement since the last inspection, when attainment and progress were reported to be unsatisfactory. Pupils use the keyboard and mouse effectively when using word processing and data handling programs. Higher attaining pupils are competent in producing bar charts of information they have collected and entered into databases. They use art packages to produce pictures and designs and word processing programs to write and display text, for example, their 'Silly Poems'.
- 128 Attainment in information technology is below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2, which means there has been insufficient improvement since the last inspection. However, pupils make satisfactory progress as they learn and practise new skills on the computers in the impressive computer suite that is now available for use by the whole school, as well as on those in their classrooms. Pupils are proficient in the word processing and data handling that they do. They enter text, and change its appearance to have a greater impact on the reader. For example, when producing summaries of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. They find information and enter it in spreadsheets and display the information in graphical form. For example, younger pupils at the key stage collected and entered data on the class's favourite football teams and produced bar graphs, which they printed out. They use computer programs to practise numerical skills. Pupils in Year 4 used cassette recorders proficiently to record imaginary discussions between a shopkeeper and councillor as part of their work in geography.
- 129 Pupils' response to work in information and communications technology is satisfactory overall. Pupils collaborate well in pairs, for example when practising on a drawing program, and are willing to ask for help when unsure. They take turns and persevere to accomplish the desired results. Older pupils demonstrate enthusiasm when carrying out an editing task.

- 130 The quality of teaching is satisfactory, particularly when the teacher understands the subject and how this technology can be used to develop other subjects, for example, when using painting programs following work in art to produce pictures in the style of Mondrian. In these cases, they teach the appropriate skills such as clicking and dragging and flood filling. Teachers prepare work well by setting up the program or by providing a suitable piece of work for editing. Teachers make sound use of the computer suite, which contains up-to-date equipment to develop pupils' text and information handling skills, sometimes linking this to work in other subjects. However, at times when there is more than one activity going on in the computer suite, teachers give insufficient attention to each activity, resulting in slower progress. The school is to review its use of the suite next term, with the intention of remedying such shortcomings.
- 131 The school has recently adopted government recommended guidelines for teaching the subject. Consequently, the planned curriculum covers the required range of activities although pupils in the current Year 6 have had insufficient opportunities to develop skills in the full range of activities, for example, control and monitoring. However, younger pupils are on target to reach the required standard by the time they leave school. There is a good number of computers in the school for the number of pupils, but still a shortage of some computer programs and the range of information programs is also limited. The school is largely relying on word processing, spreadsheet and art packages that came with the computer.

## Music

- 132 Pupils make satisfactory progress through Key Stage 1 and by the time they are seven, they have attained standards in music similar to those found in most schools. Key Stage 2 pupils make satisfactory progress in understanding, performing and appreciating music. However, composing is not fully covered by the end of Key Stage 2 with the result that, by the end of the key stage, standards are similar to those found in most schools except in composing. Key Stage 1 pupils sing in tune and are able to follow a beat and play classroom instruments. At Key Stage 2, pupils improve their singing, identify irregular or uneven rhythm patterns and understand the value of notes. Progress is less satisfactory when pupils are not engaged in the planned activities or when they are unclear as to what they have to do.
- 133 Pupils enjoy music and have positive attitudes to learning. Most are keen and enthusiastic to participate individually or in groups. They enjoy singing and playing instruments. They usually concentrate on the set activities and respond well to questions. However, when lesson introductions are too long and pupils do not have enough opportunities to take part in the lesson, their attention wanders.
- 134 Most teaching is satisfactory although there are some unsatisfactory elements. Teachers have very positive attitudes towards music and pupils pick up this enthusiasm. In the majority of lessons, there is a clear focus and good balance between discussion, performing and listening. Sometimes, however, the pace of the lesson is slow and explanations are overlong. As a result, pupils lose interest and their concentration wanes, retarding progress.
- 135 The school has recently appointed a new music co-ordinator who has rewritten the music policy document. The school is to try out new guidelines for teaching that should help to ensure that pupils' work is matched to their prior attainment and builds progressively on what has gone before. Existing procedures for assessment are adequate but will need to be evaluated and reviewed after the trial of the new guidelines. There has not been enough training to help teachers to be fully confident in teaching all aspects of this subject, particularly composing. There is a shortage of resources in that there are insufficient stringed and keyboard instruments.

## Physical education

- 136 Only two physical education lessons were observed during the inspection, both at Key Stage 2. Judgements are also based on discussions with teachers and an examination of teachers' planning and documentation.
- 137 Pupils make satisfactory progress in the infants and juniors and their attainment is similar to that found in most schools at the end of both key stages. Key Stage 1 pupils make sound progress as they build on skills learned and practised in the Nursery and Reception classes and follow guidelines for teaching that ensure that all the required areas of the National Curriculum are met, including games, dance and gymnastics activities. Pupils at Key Stage 2 refine and extend these skills through a series of lessons. The satisfactory progress that pupils make at Key Stage 2 is an improvement over the unsatisfactory progress noted in the previous inspection. Pupils in Year 5 make sound progress as they increase their control and co-ordination and range of movements in a 'cleaning dance'. They evaluate each other's performances thoughtfully. Year 6 pupils make sound progress as they put together and practise a sequence of movements. Pupils have the opportunity to swim each year at Key Stage 2 and, by the time they leave, the majority can swim at least 25 metres.
- 138 Pupils enjoy lessons and try hard to follow teachers' instructions. This has a positive impact on their progress. They collaborate well with partners in pairs and larger groups when devising and practising sequences. Year 5 pupils make constructive comments about their classmates' work. However, some Year 6 pupils take too much time to settle, particularly towards the end of the lesson, which means their progress slows.
- 139 No judgement about teaching at Key Stage 1 can be made as no lessons were seen. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and of the needs of the pupils. They plan activities with clear, attainable and relevant objectives and focus appropriately on these objectives during lessons. Teachers make good use of pupils' demonstration of their own work to reinforce good practice. A Year 6 teacher offered useful advice to a group having some difficulty achieving what they wanted, with the result that this group made good progress afterwards. However, some pupils did not have opportunities to evaluate each other's work verbally.
- 140 The school's provision for extra-curricular sporting activities is a strength of the school. Older pupils have good opportunities to take part in a range of activities including football for both boys and girls, netball, cross country running and indoor athletics. School teams have had considerable success in competitions against other schools. The school also receives visits from outside sporting clubs who offer training in football and cricket.

140 **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

140 **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

141 The school was inspected by a team of 4 inspectors who spent a total of 14 inspector days in the school.

141 During the inspection week:

" 43 lessons or parts of lessons, representing over 26 hours, were observed;

•all the work from a significant sample of pupils was scrutinised;

•the inspectors heard a cross-section of pupils read and held discussions with pupils about their work;

•teachers' planning files and records, attendance registers and pupils' records were examined;

•discussions were held with teaching, non-teaching and visiting staff and governors.

Prior to the inspection week:

•a meeting to ascertain parents' views was held (9 parents attended) ;

•the returns of a questionnaire (38%) asking for parents' views of the school were analysed;

•school policies, other documents and records of meetings were analysed.

"



142 **DATA AND INDICATORS**

142 **Pupil data**

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of Pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y6	189	2	26	81
Nursery Unit	15 fte	0	0	n/a

142 **Teachers and classes**

142 **Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)**

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

8
---

Number of pupils per qualified teacher:

24
----

142 **Education support staff (YR – Y6)**

Total number of education support staff:

3
---

Total aggregate hours worked each week:

45
----

142 **Qualified teachers (Nursery unit)**

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

1
---

Number of pupils per qualified teacher:

15
----

142 **Education support staff (Nursery unit)**

Total number of education support staff:

1
---

Total aggregate hours worked each week:

32.5
------

Average class size:

15
----

142 **Financial data**

Financial year:

1998/9
--------

£
---

Total Income	384395
Total Expenditure	379041
Expenditure per pupil	1780
Balance brought forward from previous year	-13673
Balance carried forward to next year	-8319

Number of questionnaires sent out:	180
Number of questionnaires returned:	68

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	31	60	7	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	42	48	1	9	4
The school handles complaints from parents well	25	44	16	10	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	31	56	9	4	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	36	60	3	1	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	31	63	6	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	36	54	9	1	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	38	51	4	6	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	32	60	6	1	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	31	57	9	3	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	51	43	3	3	0