

INSPECTION REPORT

St Margaret Ward RC Primary School

Sale, Cheshire

LEA area: Trafford

Unique reference number: 106359

Headteacher: Mr A Ratchford

Reporting inspector: Steve Bywater
18463

Dates of inspection: 14th to 17th February 2000

Inspection number: 188686

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior school
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Cherry Lane Sale Manchester
Postcode:	M33 4GY
Telephone number:	0161 969 9852
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Franey
Date of previous inspection:	June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Steve Bywater	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information technology Physical education English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught?
Colin Herbert	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Derek Pattinson	Team inspector	Science Geography History Design and technology Special educational needs	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Marion Hirst	Team inspector	English Areas of learning for under fives Art Music	How well is the school led and managed?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is smaller than other primary schools. There are 142 pupils aged between 4 and 11 and a nursery with 26 full-time equivalent pupils. The general attainment of pupils on entry to the school is average (and better than the intake of recent years) but includes the full range of attainment. This is a mixed catchment area. Some reside in private dwellings, others on a large Manchester overspill estate of council and housing association rented properties. The number of pupils on free school meals is 45 per cent which is high when compared to the national average. Fourteen pupils are from ethnic minority groups and four of these pupils speak English as an additional language. There are 39 pupils on the special educational needs register, none with statements.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a school that provides a satisfactory education overall for its pupils with both strengths and weaknesses. Standards in English and mathematics are average at the end Key Stage 2 but below average at the end of Key Stage 1. Teaching, although satisfactory overall has strengths and weaknesses. Leadership and management are sound with some good features and weaknesses in some systems and procedures. The school recognises the weaknesses and had already taken action to address a number of the issues raised and has plans to address the others.

What the school does well

- Teaching is good in the nursery and in upper Key Stage 2.
- Most pupils behave well and have good attitudes to their work.
- The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and personal development is good whilst cultural development is very good.
- Relationships in school are very good.
- The school promotes good relationships with parents and the community.
- The parents' involvement in children's education is good.

What could be improved

- Standards throughout the school in science and information technology are too low.
- In Key Stage 1 standards in English and mathematics are too low.
- Teaching is unacceptably variable.
- The leadership and management have weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation of standards and teaching. The roles of staff are insufficiently clear.
- Procedures to monitor and promote attendance are not effective.
- Design and technology is not being taught sufficiently.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The last inspection took place in June 1996. Since then the school has worked hard to improve the standards in pupils writing at the end of Key Stage 2. This is a result of good teaching in upper Key Stage 2, rigorous analysis of test results and more recently the monitoring of teaching and learning. The school's development planning has improved significantly. The school has also begun to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms, revised the curriculum and set clear achievable targets, bought the necessary equipment to support information technology across the school and made improvements to strategies to assess and record pupils achievements. Identified aspects of key issues which have not been improved sufficiently include raising the standards of information technology and providing a framework of the National Curriculum enabling all coordinators to fulfil their roles. Attendance has deteriorated since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	B	B	D	C
mathematics	C	D	D	C
science	E	D	E	D

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The table shows that in English and mathematics pupils' attainment was below the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. When compared with schools having a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals pupils' attainment was average. In science pupils' attainment was well below the national average and below average when compared with similar schools. Last year's standards were adversely affected by the fact that 11 out of the 18 Year 6 pupils were on the special educational needs register.

In the current Year 6 standards are broadly average in English and mathematics but below average in science and information technology. Standards are better at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1 because of better quality teaching in the two upper junior classes. The introduction of the National Numeracy and National Literacy Strategies is having a positive impact on standards. The school is only just beginning to address the issue of raising standards in information technology and standards are beginning to rise as the impact of having improved resources and an information technology support worker begin to have an effect. Standards in singing and dance lessons were above average as a result of specialist teaching. Design and technology is not being taught effectively and standards are well below average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils concentrate well, they are interested and involved in the life of the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are polite and courteous and show a high level of self-discipline.
Personal development and relationships	Very good relationships and good personal development.
Attendance	Below average.

Strengths

- Many good opportunities for personal development
- No antisocial behaviour or bullying observed

Weaknesses

- Lack of opportunity for independent research, for example through use of computers

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

Teaching is satisfactory overall. In 90 per cent of the lessons observed it was at least satisfactory, in 62 per cent it was good and in seven per cent it was very good. Ten per cent of teaching during the inspection was unsatisfactory. Teaching of children under five is good in the nursery class and satisfactory with some weaknesses in the reception class.

Teaching in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is inconsistent in quality. Teaching is generally good in two classes in upper Key Stage 2 but unsatisfactory in a mixed Years 2 and 3 class. Teaching of mathematics and English is satisfactory overall as is the teaching of pupils with special educational needs. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory overall. There are strengths in the teaching of singing and dance but there are weaknesses in the teaching of science. Although some class teachers are not confident in teaching information technology a support worker teaches computer skills well.

Strengths in teaching include good relationships and good control. In the unsatisfactory and weaker lessons (including literacy and numeracy) tasks are not well matched to pupils' abilities. Marking is unsatisfactory in some classes.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. A mixture of strengths and weaknesses. Good curriculum for children under five in nursery, satisfactory elsewhere.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Pupils receive their full entitlement. Sound individual education plans enable pupils to make satisfactory progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language but these pupils are supported satisfactorily by class teachers and some given effective support by a teacher from the local authority.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Good spiritual, moral and social development and very good cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. Monitoring and promotion of behaviour is good but unsatisfactory monitoring of attendance.

How well the school works in partnership with parents

Strengths

- Parents have positive views of school
- The work of Parent Teacher Association to provide quality information technology suite is to be commended

Particular Strengths and Weaknesses in the Curriculum and other Learning Opportunities

Strengths

- The curriculum for children under five in the nursery is good
- For pupils of statutory school age the curriculum effectively promotes pupils' intellectual, physical and most aspects of their personal development, and prepares them well for the next stage of their education
- The arts are promoted well. Celebration of cultural diversity within the school's curriculum is given very good emphasis
- A good range of visits and visitors enhances the curriculum. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good

Weaknesses

- The curriculum and resources for older children under five in the reception class are not matched sufficiently to children's needs
- Statutory requirements to teach information technology and design and technology are not met
- There are too few opportunities to develop pupils' initiative and independence, for example through writing, using the computer and investigations
- Detailed schemes of work are not available in some subjects
- Some planning is not accurate enough to meet needs of pupils in mixed age classes

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher promotes most effectively the welfare and happiness of pupils and staff and is respected by parents and the local community. The role of the coordinator is insufficiently clear. Job descriptions of most staff lack sufficient detail.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. There is a clear commitment to raising standards but insufficient strategies, routines and supporting documentation to ensure consistent improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. Whilst governors are supportive of the school they are not yet involved in the process of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning across the school and rely too heavily on the headteacher and deputy headteacher to identify areas for development. This is preventing them from making improvements in the areas of the curriculum where standards are unsatisfactory.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school makes a detailed analysis of assessment results, including comparisons with other schools it has only recently begun to look for reasons for below average standards in science and in writing.

The newly appointed governing body is very supportive and involved in the school but it is at a watershed as new governors assess their position. They are not yet fully aware of their roles and responsibilities and know very little about the 'new' principles of best value. The school invests wisely to meet staff's training needs. Good quality displays are helping to improve the learning environment for pupils. The new computer suite is good but school still needs equipment for control technology. Most staff, including support staff, lack clear, documented roles and responsibilities.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school, behaviour is good and pupils are mature and responsible. • Pupils make good progress at school and parents are well informed about pupils' progress • Teaching is good and teachers have high expectations. • Parents feel comfortable in approaching the school with questions or problems and works closely with parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents expressed concern that there were some weaknesses in teaching and older and higher attaining pupils were not being challenged in some mixed age classes.

Twenty parents attended a meeting prior to the inspection and 80 returned questionnaires. The inspection team agrees with most of the views and observations of parents. The team feels that there are strengths in relationships and pupils' behaviour but there are weaknesses in teaching in some classes.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is best described as average overall. In their final term in the nursery almost all of the children are in line to achieve the standards of development expected for their age. A quarter of the children achieve standards beyond that expected for four year olds in mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and in personal and social development. By the age of five just over half of the older children in the reception class achieve the learning goals¹ expected for children of this age. A quarter of the children achieve above the expected level and a quarter achieve below the expected level. This is confirmed by the school's assessment of children in their first term in the reception class.
2. In the 1999 Key Stage 1 national tests pupils' attainment in reading matched the national average but the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level was below the average. In writing pupils attained standards that were below the national average. However, the number of pupils achieving the higher level was close to the national average. When compared to pupils in similar schools standards in reading were above the national average and in writing they matched the national average. Trends in test results show that the performance of boys and girls was below the national average in reading and in writing. In the national tests for seven year olds in mathematics pupils' attainment was below the national average and well below average when compared with similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected level and the higher Level 3 was well below average. Girls outperformed boys. Teacher assessments of pupils' attainment in science were also below average. Only in investigative science at the end of Key Stage 1 were pupils' results broadly in line with national averages. Results also show that fewer pupils than nationally reach the higher levels at the end of both key stages.
3. Inspection evidence shows standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading are similar to those achieved in National Curriculum assessments in 1999. However, standards in writing, mathematics and science are below average. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are below average at the end of Key Stage 1.
4. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils read slowly and mostly accurately but have little confidence to read a range of books other than scheme books. In Year 3 pupils' standards in reading are unsatisfactory. This is due to irregular focused teaching of the strategies to support pupils in the skills necessary to extend learning. Older pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are more confident readers and enjoy the challenge of more difficult material. However, whilst pupils have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of library classification systems, few are given sufficient time to develop research and retrieval skills.
5. In writing half the pupils are achieving standards that are below those expected for pupils of this age. This is due to low teacher expectations, insufficient opportunities to write independently, pupils' inability to use their knowledge of letter sounds to spell words phonetically, poor quality marking and insufficient use of daily assessment to plan work that is matched to the needs of the pupils. Pupils are not encouraged to write using good letter formation and this affects their later attempts to join letters accurately. They are not confident about writing independently and spend too much time copying words and

¹ Desirable learning outcomes – these are goals for learning for children by the time they enter compulsory education at the age of five. They mainly refer to literacy, numeracy and personal and social skills. These will be replaced with the Early Learning Goals in September 2000.

sentences from worksheets and textbooks and this provides too few opportunities to develop skills in spelling and punctuation. Inconsistent teaching of spelling and punctuation hinders the development of pupils' writing skills resulting in standards which are too low. The standard of presentation is poor.

6. Around three quarters of the Year 2 pupils are likely to attain the nationally expected level in mathematics but very few pupils will attain the higher level on current work seen and around a quarter of the Year 2 group will attain below national expectations. There is very little evidence of pupils using and applying mathematics and the recorded work provided for scrutiny was very limited in range, quantity and quality. Attainment in the aspect of shape, space and measure was below that normally expected of seven year olds. In science above-average pupils make unsatisfactory gains in learning in investigative and experimental science. This is due to low expectations, insecure subject knowledge, inappropriate organisation and too rigid a structure to lessons, which restrict scientific enquiry.
7. In the National Curriculum assessments in 1999 the percentage of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 reaching the expected level and above was below the national average in English and mathematics. When compared to similar schools pupils achieve standards that are average for their age. Eleven of the 18 pupils were on the special needs register and not expected to attain the national expectation. The school met its 1999 target for English and mathematics and many pupils on the special needs register achieved well despite not attaining the expected level. Overall boys perform better than girls do. Trends in test results show that over a four year period pupils achieve standards that are close to the national average. Pupils' attainment in the national tests in science were well below the national average. Two-thirds of pupils reach national standards in comparison with three-quarters of all Year 6 pupils nationally. Results also show that fewer pupils than nationally reach the higher levels. Pupils' performance in the science tests at the end of Key Stage 2 was below average in comparison with similar schools. Both boys and girls perform at similar low levels when compared to national averages at the end of Key Stage 2.
8. Inspection evidence shows that standards in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 are in line with national expectations and 25 per cent are achieving above. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are average. In the present cohort of Year 6 pupils five out of 17 pupils are on the special educational needs register (three pupils at Stage 2 and two pupils at Stage 3²). The target of 70 per cent of pupils expected to achieve level 4 is demanding but is within reach. This is a result of good teaching in upper Key Stage 2, rigorous analysis of test results and more recently the monitoring of teaching and learning. This reflects the increased target which the school has set for itself. Evidence from the inspection indicates that pupils are performing below national expectations in science.
9. Standards of all work of Year 3 pupils are unsatisfactory and too low. In Years 4, 5 and 6 standards in literacy, particularly in writing, improve significantly as pupils receive more effective, focused teaching and high expectations by two teachers. Learning in these two classes enables pupils to achieve the standards expected nationally by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils write for a range of purposes and spelling and punctuation is taught regularly. Handwriting and the presentation of work in upper Key Stage 2 are good and often very good. In Years 5 and 6 pupils apply their numeracy skills well in other subjects of the curriculum. For example, they apply their skills with coordinates when working in geography to locate places on a map. Very little is seen in other classes. However,

² Stages of special educational needs range from Stage 1, when limited additional support is provided for pupils entirely from within the school, to Stage 5, which ensures that a pupil has a statement outlining his or her needs and shows what additional and specific support that pupil will receive. Stages 3, 4 and 5 involve external specialists as well as staff within the school.

information technology is not used well to support pupils' literacy or numeracy skills. For example, the use of information technology to edit and redraft work is not used effectively to present work and pupils' data-handling skills using computers are below average. In science pupils in Key Stage 2 make unsatisfactory gains in learning in investigative and experimental science. Pupils have insufficient opportunity to plan experiments and to obtain and consider evidence. In information technology pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with national expectations but pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 attain below the national expectation. Since the last inspection there has been significant development in the provision for information technology which has resulted in the development of a computer suite with a good range of computers and the employment of a support assistant to develop pupils' computer skills. However, this development has only been securely in place since January and the impact is yet to be seen. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have not made enough progress in their skills, knowledge and understanding of how to communicate and handle information through information technology. Neither do pupils meet the national expectations in using information technology based models and simulations to explore patterns and relationships or in the aspect of controlling and measuring. They are unable to use information technology to sense physical data such as temperature, light and movement because they do not have suitable equipment. Moreover, most pupils do not have sufficient opportunity and guidance to write a set of commands, for example to draw a shape on screen. There is very little evidence of pupils using information technology skills effectively to support their learning in other subjects.

10. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils achieve beyond the national expectation for their age in art and standards in music are in line with those expected for pupils aged 11 years. In Key Stage 2 pupils sing tunefully and melodically and a visiting pianist is instrumental in the achievement of pupils' high standards of singing across the school. Most pupils make good progress in physical education and by the age of 11 they develop skills in a range of activities which are appropriate for their age. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress throughout both key stages in developing their design and technology capability. This is because very little design technology is completed throughout the school, with both design and making components currently not taught throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. Attainment is below expected levels in geography due to a limited range of geographical activities and also below the levels expected in history because pupils' developing awareness and understanding of history is communicated in too narrow a range of ways.
11. Attainment is below national levels for pupils on the special needs register and those for whom English is an additional language. However, the sound provision, teaching and support and work which is usually matched to their needs ensures that all pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress over time.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. The attitude and behaviour of pupils to school and to their learning are good. Standards have been maintained in this aspect of school life since the last inspection.
13. In lessons the behaviour of pupils is always satisfactory and often good. This has a positive impact on their learning. Pupils enjoy being fully involved in their lessons and are keen to discuss their views. For example, in a Years 5/6 history lesson they spoke with confidence about the Aztecs and in a Year 1 science lesson they were actively involved in discussing materials. When they are in the dining hall or playground or moving around school between lessons their behaviour is also good. There are no exclusions from school.
14. Relationships between pupils and one another and between pupils and adults are very good. Pupils collaborate very well in the classroom and enjoy working together on such

topics as Henry VIII or performing in class assembly in front of their parents. Pupils play sensibly together in the playground and there was no evidence of any unsociable behaviour or bullying. They are polite and well mannered towards visitors and are happy to engage in conversation.

15. There are a number of good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in school. In addition to acting as class monitors, there are opportunities for older pupils to become prefects or work in the school office. Overall these responsibilities have a positive impact on their personal development. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to carry out individual research in school, for example through research on the internet or computer CD ROM.
16. Attendance is unsatisfactory and it has declined steadily since the last inspection. It is now well below the national average. The level of unauthorised absence is well below national average. Most pupils arrive on time.
17. Pupils with special educational needs demonstrate positive attitudes to their work. Most are keen to learn, try hard with their work and enjoy succeeding. Most behave sensibly. They respond well to praise and encouragement, which enhances their occasionally low self-esteem. This positive view of pupils' attitudes and behaviour is supported by parents' response to the questionnaire and their comments at the parents' meeting.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. Overall the teaching is sound and 90 per cent of all lessons observed are at least satisfactory. Of this 55 per cent is good and seven per cent is very good. There is 10 per cent unsatisfactory teaching in lessons. However, the judgement of teaching includes more than just lessons and there is significant evidence of unsatisfactory practice in one class in particular and other classes to a lesser extent. During the inspection the usual teacher of the mixed Years 2 and 3 class teacher was absent and a very effective temporary teacher was teaching the class. The evidence for most of the unsatisfactory teaching was found in work done prior to the inspection in this class. Based on the evidence available in the previous report the quality of teaching in the school is similar in that there are both significant strengths and weaknesses.
19. The quality of teaching of children under five in the nursery is good. The work for these children is planned well and the teacher and nursery nurse work closely together so that teaching objectives and assessments made of pupils' work are shared. They monitor children's development well and plan exciting activities that are matched to the needs of the children. The staff have worked hard to create a stimulating environment with well organised resources, which motivate the children to learn. However, whilst planning in the reception class is based on the six areas of learning, opportunities to learn through exploration and investigation are insufficient. Activities are unimaginative, provide few opportunities to extend children's language and this hinders individual development and learning.
20. Teaching is unacceptably variable in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Eighty five per cent of lessons observed in Key Stage 1 are at least satisfactory including 46 per cent good and eight per cent very good. But teaching is unsatisfactory in 15 per cent of lessons. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory in 91 per cent of lessons: 64 per cent is good and nine per cent is very good. Nine per cent is also unsatisfactory. High quality teaching is commonplace in the mixed Years 5 and 6 class and also in the mixed Years 4 and 5 class. Pupils make especially good progress in these classes. However, the evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' work in other year groups shows a number of unsatisfactory

elements in the work provided for pupils, particularly in a mixed Years 2 and 3 class. Here, teaching has been unsatisfactory and pupils' progress has been slow.

21. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory overall. There are strengths in the teaching of art and history, and dance and singing are taught effectively by teachers with specialist skills. There are weaknesses in the teaching of science and information technology which has a negative impact on pupils' progress. For example, teachers rarely use the computers to support the curriculum and do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to experiment in science. However, the school has gone some way to addressing this problem by employing an effective computer support worker who is beginning to develop pupils' information technology skills.
22. The teaching of literacy skills is satisfactory overall but ranges from good to unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is unsatisfactory. Whilst the quality of teaching by a temporary teacher in lower Key Stage 2 was good during the inspection, scrutiny of work and discussion with pupils indicate that the quality of teaching in this area of the school would normally be unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching in both classes in upper Key Stage 2 is good. In Key Stage 1 teachers have low expectations of what pupils can achieve and planned activities are not matched to the needs of the pupils. Important skills such as reading strategies, spelling patterns, punctuation and independent writing are not taught systematically. In these lessons pupils do not understand the work they have been given and they lose interest in their work.
23. Teaching of numeracy skills is satisfactory overall but there are shortcomings in one class in particular. Most teachers take into account pupils' need for clear explanations interspersed with practical activity. In the best mathematics lessons as in a Years 5 and 6 lesson the teacher develops mental mathematics skills well and makes the best of opportunities to discuss a variety of strategies. In the better numeracy lessons skilful teaching ensures that all pupils can take part and make progress. Pupils know that their contributions are valued. They are enthusiastic in their response and expand on their answers fluently, encouraged by the open-ended yet probing nature of the questions asked. For example, teachers would ask "How else could you do...?" However, scrutiny of work shows that pupils in the mixed Years 2 and 3 class are not given work which is matched to their needs. Higher attaining pupils and lower attaining pupils are given the same work. Much of this is pitched too low and is very poorly marked.
24. All teachers know their pupils well and have warm and supportive relationships with them. Pupils are happy and secure in their teachers' presence. Although teachers set realistic and challenging targets for the 'average' group who make up the majority of pupils, planning throughout the school is not detailed enough to provide interesting and suitably demanding work for all abilities in the mixed age classes. Some pupils find work much too easy and others cannot cope with the work. Expectations of the higher attaining pupils are often too low in a number of classes, especially in Key Stage 1. Planning does not indicate the National Curriculum levels of pupils' work and this makes it difficult for teachers to assess what different groups of pupils are expected to achieve. Some teachers confuse what the pupils are expected to do with what they are expected to learn. In the best lessons the teacher's planning is good and their high expectations are clearly communicated to the pupils through the use of demanding yet enjoyable activities. For example, in all lessons in Years 5 and 6 pupils knew the purpose of the lesson from the outset. As a result they concentrated extremely well, made good progress and were left with a sense of achievement when the lessons ended.
25. Most lessons are well organised and teachers use time and resources efficiently. Most teachers manage and control their pupils well, a task made easier by the good relationships that exist in the school.

26. Although only four unsatisfactory lessons were observed, a number of weaknesses exist in the quality of teaching in a significant number of classes in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2. Some teaching is not as effective as they should be. The feature common to all is that some pupils are not challenged appropriately because work is not well matched to the pupils' different needs and pupils are sometimes told to do things rather than being encouraged to think for themselves. The quality and quantity of recorded work produced are unsatisfactory. Marking is unsatisfactory especially in Key Stage 1. Pupils' work is not always marked regularly and although some teachers use encouraging remarks they are often unjustified and unhelpful in helping pupils to improve their work. Around half of the teachers simply tick or cross work, or allow pupils to mark their own work without checking it. Too often teachers accept very untidy work without comment. Marking in Years 4, 5 and 6 is much more constructive and helpful.
27. Teaching is satisfactory for pupils with special educational needs. However, planning in lessons is not always sufficiently well targeted to take account of pupils' needs. However, pupils with special educational needs are supported quite well. Work is geared to achieving precise targets identified in individual education plans, with mostly clear time scales indicated. Teachers evaluate gains in learning towards the achievement of targets and keep records for all pupils, which are regularly updated. The very few pupils who speak English as an additional language are well known to teachers who take care to ensure that instructions are carefully given and repeated if necessary. Additional teaching from the local education authority support team ensures pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their use of English.
28. The amount and types of homework are satisfactory overall and supports pupils' learning. There is some very good homework and additional support at the end of Key Stage 2 but this is not so in some other classes. Ninety one per cent of parents commented favourably about the work that pupils do at home.
29. The quality of learning is satisfactory overall. It is often good in Years 4, 5 and 6 but unsatisfactory at times in Key Stage 1 and in Year 3. Most pupils make satisfactory gains in the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, especially when basic skills and techniques in, for example, literacy and numeracy are taught explicitly, systematically and thoroughly. This is the case in Years 4, 5 and 6 but less so in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 1 pupils are not sufficiently taught good learning habits, for example a need for well-presented work, and pupils respond to this low expectation by producing work which is untidy and lacking in effort. In the demanding lessons pupils employ a good range of learning skills, listening attentively, handling resources sensibly, responding well to adults and recalling, using and practising previously learned information in new contexts. In Years 5 and 6 pupils ask purposeful questions and develop an understanding and appreciation of complex issues. Most pupils work well together helping each other to succeed. They have positive attitudes, sustain concentration and are keenly motivated to learn. Their orderliness and good behaviour contribute positively to the standards achieved and to their competence as learners.

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

30. The curriculum for children under five in the nursery is good. Children entering the nursery settle quickly into the supportive, friendly and interesting environment and make good gains in their learning. The teacher and nursery nurse are dedicated to meeting the children's social and academic needs and provide a broad and balanced curriculum that is appropriate for the age and stage of the children's education. Children with special educational needs and those with English as a second language are well supported.

Older children under five are taught in a mixed age class of reception children aged four and five years and Year 1 pupils aged five and six years. Whilst the children are secure and well cared for and make steady gains in their learning, appropriate provision for the age and stage of learning is less secure. The curriculum and resources are not matched sufficiently to children's needs. Their introduction to the National Curriculum programmes of study is planned insufficiently to ensure continuous progression.

31. For pupils of statutory school age the quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school for its pupils are sound, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Although the curriculum is broad, balanced, relevant and places appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy, it does not fully meet the statutory requirements due to aspects of information technology and design and technology not being taught. It effectively promotes pupils' intellectual, physical and most aspects of their personal development and prepares them well for the next stage of their education. The arts are well promoted within the school's curriculum. Pupils are given regular opportunities to take part in music, art, drama and dance activities both within school hours such as in class assemblies and through after school events such as the performances of plays. However, the curriculum is insufficiently structured to provide appropriate levels of challenge to enable more able pupils to make the best possible progress because work is often not matched carefully to their needs. The curriculum provides too few opportunities for pupils to develop initiative and independence, for example through writing and investigations.
32. There is general adherence to the requirements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, with high levels of consistency and satisfactory quality evident across the school. Generous time allocations to subjects in Key Stage 1 and appropriate time allocations in Key Stage 2 enable most aspects of the curriculum to be satisfactorily addressed. A celebration of cultural diversity within the school's curriculum is given very good emphasis. An improvement since the last inspection is that health education is now given appropriate emphasis. This includes drugs education, which emphasises the benefits of a healthy lifestyle while also addressing issues relating to drug misuse. The governing body has now introduced the required rigour in its approach to curriculum review, frequently discussing, amending and adopting revised curriculum policies. However, its clear policy on sex education needs to be regularly communicated to parents to allay confusion about the school's position. There is a good whole school policy for homework, which is shared with parents.
33. The school is in the process of adopting national guidelines for schemes of work in all subjects. However, the current position is that detailed schemes of work, which are personalised to the needs of the school, are not available in some subjects. This hinders the process of ensuring that work for all pupils of different abilities carefully builds on what has gone before. There are deficiencies in planning as at the time of the last inspection. Medium and short term plans are thorough and detailed and increasingly include clear and focused learning objectives, which are shared with pupils, to enable teachers to assess accurately what pupils know and understand. However, though plans provide essential coverage of statutory requirements in most subjects they do not provide the necessary structure to enable pupils to develop important skills, acquire knowledge and build on levels of understanding in logical sequence. They do not provide sufficient structure to ensure that pupils in mixed age classes are always given work which is appropriately challenging for them whatever their abilities.
34. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. A range of activities take place which extend and enrich the curriculum, such as, football, netball, basketball, keep fit, drama, singing and recorders. A good range of educational visits, including two annual residential visits for older pupils to the Robin Wood Centre and Castleton and numerous

field trips, successfully broaden pupils' experiences. Visitors such as authors, theatre groups and the blind lady who brought her guide dog to talk to nursery pupils during the inspection make further contributions to curriculum enrichment.

35. Pupils with special educational needs receive their full entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum. The school implements successfully the Code of Practice³ with regard to the identification, assessment and monitoring of pupils with special educational needs. The school has compiled sound individual education plans with mostly specific targets to enable pupils with special educational needs to make satisfactory progress.
36. The school's arrangements for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good overall. All areas make positive contributions to the personal development of pupils, including those with special educational needs.
37. Spiritual development helps to underpin the work of the school and is well promoted. It is given a high profile in documentation such as in the school's mission statement, through religious education, assemblies and some lessons. Planned curriculum opportunities enable pupils to experience the joy and excitement of learning. For example, Years 5 and 6 pupils gasp in astonishment when they see patterns and shapes resulting from cutting folded paper and Years 1 and 2 pupils are enthralled when they re-enact through dance a butterfly hatching from a chrysalis. Pupils are given increasing opportunities to express moods, feelings and ideas through art, music, drama and poetry. They write prayers, for example, to offer thanks to those who help them. Assemblies reinforce collective responsibility and shared values, while stories and prayer allow pupils to consider relevant themes such as the importance of love. Aesthetic displays involving the use of drapes, colour, artefacts and personal mementoes help pupils to experience the joy of learning, thereby contributing to their spiritual development.
38. The moral dimension of pupils' learning is well promoted. All adults in school provide sound moral leadership and give pupils a clear sense of direction about moral issues. All work hard and successfully to reinforce good standards of behaviour, to provide a positive environment and to develop mutual respect and understanding. The school develops very well in most pupils a moral stance based on a sense of right and wrong, good self-discipline, consideration for others and care for their school. Most pupils set good examples with regard to courtesy, for example opening doors for others and greeting visitors politely. Clear principles and values are demonstrated through school and class rules, which are suitably emphasised. Carefully thought out school routines, which are known by all, help to constantly reinforce agreed procedures. Pupils are encouraged to behave well and work hard through a variety of strategies such as through the use of various rewards and prizes and praise is used often as an important motivator by all staff. The "golden board" of pupils' valued work enables the school to frame best efforts to enhance the self-esteem of those pupils whose work is prominently displayed. Assemblies are effectively used to establish collective moral and social values, often through well-chosen stories, and highlight the importance of caring and sharing. The school fosters values such as, honesty, fairness and respect for truth, justice and other people's property. The consistent and positive approaches to the moral development of pupils result in mostly high standards of behaviour and good attitudes to learning.
39. The school provides a good range of opportunities to promote social development, which encourages a great sense of community spirit among its pupils. Teachers serve as good role models for relating positively to others. There are good opportunities for pupils to

³ Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

work together in lessons and improve their self-confidence, for example when pupils carry out scientific investigations. Co-operative attitudes are also fostered through class assemblies, school productions such as Shakespeare's "Pericles" and residential visits to the Robin Wood Centre and to Castleton for older pupils. There are many opportunities in most classrooms for pupils of all ages to take responsibility. For example, some older pupils act as librarians, taking their responsibilities very seriously. The house system provides additional opportunities for older pupils to exercise responsibility and initiative, helps promote a "family" feeling and develops a strong sense of identity with the school. Visits such as to Castlefield and Manchester Museums and the Trafford Centre to sing at Christmas and visitors such as theatre groups and senior citizens make positive contributions to personal and social development. Pupils develop an understanding of citizenship by raising money for specific causes such as for Cafod and the Rainbow Family Trust. However, opportunities to develop citizenship through educational links with the business community are under-developed. The good provision of extra-curricular activities enables some pupils to expand their personal interests and experiences.

40. The cultural development of pupils is very good. The school works hard and successfully to celebrate the culture of the area through its involvement in the local community. For example, pupils performed Shakespeare's "Pericles" at the Manchester Arts Festival to an appreciative audience. Pupils benefit from members of the local community such as grandparents and representatives of the services who occasionally visit school developing pupils' awareness of their own culture. Pupils' cultural experiences are extended through a study of famous artists such as Monet and Van Gogh, through occasional visits to museums and art galleries and by talking to authors. Pupils are provided with opportunities to experience other cultures such as through the Ashkenazi Art project, which has raised the cultural awareness of older pupils. The contribution of music to the cultural development of pupils has improved since the last inspection. For example, Years 4 and 5 pupils have listened to Tudor music and Years 5 and 6 pupils have performed Aztec dancing and experienced African music. However, there are still too few opportunities to appraise the work of composers. The school gives appropriate attention to the increasingly multicultural nature of society through a celebration of the diversity and richness of other cultures. The teaching of different faiths is addressed through religious education and assemblies. There is an adequate range of resources to support the cultural development of pupils. For example, there are some African artefacts, a small range of ethnic instruments and a selection of reading material to enable pupils to learn about other cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The school continues to care well for its pupils. This care is underpinned by the very good knowledge that staff have of their pupils and the very good quality of relationships within the school community.
42. A number of comprehensive procedures are in place for both child protection and health and safety, which result in a safe and secure and environment for children to learn. However, the governing body does not ensure that the procedures for health and safety are rigorously underpinned by more formal record keeping and monitoring.
43. Teachers maintain effective records of pupils' attainments and progress both in and out of school. This information ensures that teachers can monitor their pupils effectively and provide appropriate support to maximise academic and personal development.
44. The school's arrangements for the monitoring and support of academic performance are satisfactory. The school has therefore made sound progress in addressing this key issue

from the last inspection when assessment was judged to be unsatisfactory. Links are now made between planning, assessment, teaching and learning to help raise attainment.

45. Assessment and recording procedures have been introduced, which successfully help to track pupils' progress. Detailed assessments covering all areas of learning are compiled in the nursery. However, these are not used in the reception class to effectively build on previous learning for children under five. Statutory and optional national tests, teacher assessments in the core subjects each term and reading and spelling tests are all used to help give teachers a clear picture of what pupils know, understand and can do. Literacy and numeracy co-ordinators review assessment procedures annually to ensure that the information gained helps to contribute to pupils' continuing improvement. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is also carefully tracked. School performance data in national tests is now analysed and interpreted, with gained information helping to overcome identified deficiencies and help teachers to track progress as pupils move through the school. The planned introduction of a computer-based scheme to help track pupils' progress will help to facilitate this process.
46. There are strengths and weaknesses in the use of assessment to inform future planning, although it is satisfactory overall. All teachers know their pupils' strengths and weaknesses, recognise their needs and respond appropriately to them to help raise attainment. The results of national tests and core subject assessments are used to inform future planning. However, assessments are not regularly and consistently carried out against precise learning objectives and so teachers do not modify their plans in the light of knowledge gained. As a result pupils of different abilities are often given the same work, which are at inappropriate levels for some pupils. This restricts gains in learning, especially for more able pupils, but sometimes for less able pupils too. The school's marking policy, which emphasises the need for consistency, continuity and integrity and the promotion of high self-esteem among pupils is not closely followed. Marking rarely refers to lesson objectives to help ensure that pupils make the best possible gains in learning, and is rarely used as an effective assessment tool. Pupils are rarely involved in assessing their own work to help develop ownership in their own learning.
47. The school successfully implements the Code of Practice with regard to the identification, assessment and monitoring of pupils with special educational needs. The school has compiled sound individual education plans with mostly specific targets to enable pupils with special educational needs to make satisfactory progress.
48. The school has good procedures to ensure that pupils are well prepared to move into their secondary school.
50. The procedures for promoting and monitoring behaviour are good. The school has high expectations for the behaviour of its pupils and there is a consistent application of rewards and sanctions by all staff. This has a positive impact in that pupils have a very good idea of right and wrong and respond accordingly. The school also has effective procedures to ensure that the midday assistants are also fully involved in the implementation of the policy. This has a positive impact in that the quality of supervision at lunch and in the playground is effective. The procedures to monitor and promote attendance are unsatisfactory. The school does not take sufficient action to identify and react quickly to emerging absence trends.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. The school has consolidated and maintained its partnership with its parents and friends and this has a positive impact on many aspects of school life. Although no parents were seen assisting in class during the inspection, their input through the Parent Teacher

Association has provided many additional facilities in the new Information technology suite and this has had a very positive impact on the quality of the teaching area. Additionally, friends from within the parish come into school and assist pupils to progress with their reading.

52. Parents have positive views about school. They find it welcoming and responsive to their ideas and concerns. They appreciate the part that the school plays in life of the Church. They also consider that school reports are informative and can recognise their own children from comments made.
53. The support provided by parents to reading and other homework is satisfactory.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The headteacher and governing body continue to provide satisfactory leadership and management of the school. They have been effective in providing satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. For example, they have raised standards in writing by the end of Key Stage 2, begun to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms, revised the curriculum and set clear achievable targets, bought the necessary equipment to support information technology across the school and made improvements to strategies to assess and record pupils achievements. Identified aspects of key issues which have not been improved include raising the standards of information technology and providing a framework of the National Curriculum enabling all coordinators to fulfil their roles.
55. The headteacher promotes most effectively the welfare and happiness of pupils and staff and is respected by parents and the local community. The newly appointed governing body is very supportive and involved in the school and has helped to establish a stable caring community and good learning environment for the pupils. As a newly formed governing body it is at a watershed as new governors assess their position. Some governors are currently uncertain of their roles and responsibilities. However, there are effective nominated governors to oversee the implementation and development of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy and for special educational needs. Most governors have received training to raise their awareness of the role. Whilst there is a clear commitment to raising standards the school has yet to set in place the necessary strategies, routines and supporting documentation to ensure consistent improvement. For example, procedures for monitoring pupils' attendance are underdeveloped and aspects of the National Curriculum such as design and technology and some elements of information technology are not being taught. In this respect the governing body is not fulfilling its legal responsibilities. The governing body has recently set up a committee system but at the time of inspection had not determined a clear outline of their terms of reference.
56. The school has a clear mission statement supported by a set of aims which place an emphasis on developing each individual pupil. Both the mission statement and the aims of the school have been in place for several years and although they are appropriate, they have not been reviewed in order to focus and reconsider the educational direction of the school. This prevents new governors and staff from having a clear overview of the purpose of the school and considering why the school is not achieving excellence.
57. The school development plan is well developed and is an effective management tool. It is carefully devised by the headteacher in consultation with the deputy headteacher and staff. Priority areas for development are identified and then presented to the governing body for discussion. However, involvement by the governing body at this stage is minimal and although it is reviewed at termly meetings, important aspects are overlooked.

For example, the nursery, its children and their progress are not included. The training of teachers is closely linked to the priorities in the development plan but the school does not have systems in place for evaluating the quality of training received.

58. The coordinators of the core subjects of English, mathematics and science have begun to analyse the results of national tests and undertaken classroom monitoring in all classes in order to identify strengths and weaknesses. They have identified shortcomings in the quality of teaching and the quality of marking and are beginning to address these important issues. This recent initiative is helping to improve standards but it is in the early stages of development and the full impact of monitoring was not seen during the inspection. As a result of monitoring and analysis of test results the school has set realistic targets for literacy and numeracy and in 1999 the school achieved beyond the target it set for itself in English. Monitoring by the headteacher is satisfactory. However, overall the role of the coordinator is insufficiently clear. Job descriptions of most staff are not written precisely for the individual teacher and lack detail about expected responsibilities and targets and realistic time scales in which to achieve them. Whilst governors are supportive of the school they are not yet involved in the process of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning across the school and rely too heavily on the headteacher and deputy headteacher to identify areas for development. This is preventing them from making improvements in the areas of the curriculum where standards are unsatisfactory.
59. The headteacher, classroom assistants and staff ensure effective provision for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as a second language. Whilst pupils are withdrawn for additional support in literacy this does not prevent them from being fully integrated into the life of the school. Issues relating to special educational needs are managed soundly by the special educational needs coordinator, although her various responsibilities are not documented so that all know what her role involves. She maintains records appropriately, oversees early identification, ensures regular communication with staff and governors, monitors records, communicates with parents, organises review meetings when required and maintains and updates the special needs register. A named governor for special educational needs has a good overview. She meets regularly with the coordinator and feeds back all information to the full governing body.
60. There is sufficient teaching staff for the numbers of pupils on roll and they are suitably qualified to teach all the subjects of the National Curriculum. The lack of breadth of initial subject expertise has been largely compensated for through the school's significant investment in professional development to meet identified training needs. However, there is a lack of expertise in science, which needs addressing to overcome current weaknesses in teaching in the subject. The good mix of experienced and younger staff work well as a team and are committed to the school and its pupils. The deployment of teachers for the benefit of pupils is satisfactory. There is an uneven and inequitable distribution of subject responsibilities, which results in some staff being unnecessarily burdened at the expense of others.
61. Professional development is given a suitably high profile. It is linked to the school development plan while also catering effectively for individual professional needs. This represents an improvement on the last inspection. Appraisal for teachers takes the form of annual professional interviews at which individual professional needs are identified and met where possible. The profile of appraisal has improved since the last inspection. Although there is no formal induction policy for teachers who are new to the school, an effective mentoring system ensures that they are well supported. This quality of support extends to initial teacher training. Students are well supported by permanent staff and good documentation, enabling the school to be an effective provider of in-service training.

62. The school has made a significant investment in education support staff who are generally used effectively to help benefit pupils. All make a positive contribution to school life and almost all are valued members of the school community. However, their skills, abilities and interests are not always fully used to support pupils' learning. Administrative staff ensure that the office is run efficiently and that daily routines and procedures are clearly established. Lunchtime supervisory and catering staff promote generally good attitudes and behaviour from pupils. The caretaker and cleaners help provide a bright and cared for environment throughout the school.
63. The accommodation of pleasantly sited and attractive buildings meets the needs of most pupils and enables the curriculum to be taught effectively, despite a lack of space in areas housing the largest classes. However, there is no wheelchair access for the severely disabled, although one is planned. Good quality displays adorn classrooms and corridors helping to improve the learning environment for pupils. The school grounds are spacious, enabling games to be effectively taught.
64. Resources throughout the school are satisfactory for the curriculum provided and the age range of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and English as an additional language. Strengths in resource provision include number and range of books, which have been significantly extended with recent funds targeted for this purpose. There are now sufficient resources to implement the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Facilities for information technology, with the provision of a new computer suite, are good. This represents a substantial improvement since the last inspection when shortages in hardware were identified. However, there is insufficient software to develop skills both within the subject and across other subjects. Serious deficiencies in tools and materials for design technology and in equipment for control technology identified in the last inspection still exist. The number and range of musical instruments has improved slightly since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. The school has a good range of resources for art, which is given a high profile in school.
65. There are effective financial procedures and spending priorities identified in the school development plan which are linked suitably to the school budget. The governing body works well with the headteacher, both in the setting of the initial budget and in its half-termly review. However, the new governing body has not yet set up procedures to monitor and evaluate the success of financial decisions particularly with regard to staffing and the curriculum. Day-to-day administration procedures are efficient. Specific grants allocated to the school, such as the one to support the National Grid for Learning, have been used effectively to purchase equipment, set up a computer suite and to train staff in the skills, knowledge and understanding of information technology. This spending has been completed recently providing insufficient evidence during the inspection of its impact on pupils learning. Funds for pupils with special educational needs are efficiently managed and allocated effectively. Non-teaching staff have been trained to deliver the Additional Literacy Strategy and this is helping to improve standards, particularly in reading.
66. Overall the school makes generally satisfactory use of the resources available but is not yet fully aware of the principles of best value. Whilst the school makes a detailed analysis of assessment results, including comparisons with other schools it has only recently begun to look for reasons for below average standards in science and in writing. Targets have been set and classroom monitoring by co-ordinators is beginning to bring about improvements. Curriculum initiatives such as the computer suite are good but have yet to have an impact on standards. However, not all aspects of the National Curriculum are being covered and as a consequence the school can offer only satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67. The governors, headteacher and staff should address the weaknesses identified in this report, including those issues from the previous inspection that have not been fully resolved. They should:
1. raise the attainment of **all** pupils but especially higher attainers and pupils in Key Stage 1 in English and mathematics by improving the quality of teaching in those classes where it is currently unsatisfactory and: (Paragraphs 3-6, 9, 20, 22, 77 and 88)
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve; (paragraphs 24, 31, 82, 89, 91 and 110)
 - ensuring that work is marked conscientiously and helps pupils to improve; (paragraphs 26, 29, 82, 93 and 101)
 - ensuring that **all** teachers always provide sufficient challenge in the work that is set; (paragraphs 23, 31 and 33)
 - ensuring that the basic skills in literacy are taught more specifically in Key Stage 1, for example reading strategies, spelling patterns, punctuation and independent reading and writing; (paragraphs 22, 29, 79, 80 and 82)
 - ensuring that the whole school curriculum plan specifies the progressive development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding for pupils of different ages in mixed-age classes; (paragraphs 24, 26, 33, 46, 93, 110 and 115)
 2. raise standards in science by: (paragraphs 6-8, 21, 95, 96, 98, 99 and 101)
 - reviewing approaches to the teaching of experimental and investigative science in order to raise standards by:
 - placing much greater emphasis on pupils' involvement in learning the skills of scientific enquiry, especially at Key Stage 2, by enabling pupils to plan experiments and obtain and consider evidence for themselves, reducing their dependence on a too rigid structure for their investigative work;
 - improving the organisation of activities through which investigative science is taught to ensure the skills of scientific enquiry are suitably emphasised and that the amount of copying is significantly reduced;
 - improving teachers' knowledge and understanding of how to teach effectively this component of the curriculum, especially at Key Stage 2;
 3. raise standards in information technology by:
(paragraphs 9, 21, 31, 80, 83, 90, 105, 111, 116-119, 121, 122 and 126)
 - developing teachers' planning in information technology to ensure that pupils build steadily upon their skills and understanding;
 - increasing the amount of time pupils spend working at computers;
 - making better use of existing resources and improving them coherently;
 - improving teachers' subject knowledge;
 - ensuring that better use is made of pupils' information technology skills across the curriculum.
 4. improve the leadership and management by: (paragraphs 54-58)
 - increasing the oversight and participation of governors in key areas such as: the effectiveness of management; teacher performance; curriculum; development planning; budget making; the health and safety requirements; and general compliance with statutory requirements;
 - ensuring that the individual performance of all staff, including the headteacher, are guided by clearly specified and agreed job descriptions and the standard of performance which is expected;

- developing and communicating effectively a clear vision for the school by:
 - i) ensuring that the school development plan is linked to the post-inspection action plan;
 - ii) monitoring the progress towards meeting the priorities, targets and spending decisions;
 - iii) ensuring that developments are supported by precise financial planning;
 - iv) improving the school ethos by showing a commitment to raising attainment in the school aims;
- involving more effectively the senior management team and subject coordinators in monitoring the quality of teaching and standards of pupils' work so that:
 - i) strengths and weaknesses are identified;
 - ii) action is taken to improve quality and standards and best practice is shared throughout the school.

In drawing up the action plan, the governors should consider the following less important shortcomings and establish procedures to improve:

- health and safety procedures, including the logging of accidents; (paragraph 42)
- the monitoring of attendance; (paragraphs 16, 50 and 55)
- the provision for the teaching of design and technology; (paragraphs 10, 31, 55 and 106-107)
- provide more opportunities for children under five in the reception class to participate in more exploratory and investigative learning. (paragraphs 19, 30, 68, 70, 71 and 75)

The school had identified issues of teaching quality, standards in information technology and the use of coordinators prior to the inspection. Clear progress is already being made in dealing with these issues.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	42
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	7	55	28	10	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	142
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	63

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	39

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.8
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	1999	10	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	15	14	13
	Total	22	21	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (95)	81 (86)	77 (86)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	15	14	15
	Total	22	21	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (90)	81 (95)	85 (100)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	8	10	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	5	6
	Girls	6	5	6
	Total	11	10	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	61 (59)	56 (40)	67 (64)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	5	6
	Girls	5	4	5
	Total	10	9	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	56 (55)	50 (57)	61 (55)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	78 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	9
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	128
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28.4
Average class size	24.6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	56

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	236,959
Total expenditure	235,911
Expenditure per pupil	1,532
Balance brought forward from previous year	1,173
Balance carried forward to next year	2,221

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 46%

Number of questionnaires sent out	174
Number of questionnaires returned	80

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	33	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	50	5	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	46	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	33	13	3	5
The teaching is good.	55	39	3	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	39	3	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	28	3	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	30	0	0	9
The school works closely with parents.	55	38	5	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	59	30	5	1	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	43	0	1	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	53	35	6	1	5

Other issues raised by parents

- Concern was expressed that the school does not do as much preparatory work for exams as other local catholic schools and that this might disadvantage the children.
- In mixed age classes, is work set at appropriate levels for the abilities and ages of all children?
- Are there sufficient extra-curricular activities and is there sufficient competitive sport?
- When the school's sex education policy was drawn up were the views of parents taken into account?
- Are children on the SEN register given sufficient support early enough?
- Does the school always deal appropriately with incidents of bullying?

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

68. Provision for children under five in the nursery is good. The nursery is organised very efficiently and managed and resourced well. In their final term in the nursery almost all of the children are in line to achieve the standards of development expected for their age. A quarter of the children achieve standards beyond that expected for four year olds in mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and in personal and social development. By the age of five just over half of the older children in the reception class achieve the learning goals expected for children of this age. A quarter of the children achieve above the expected level and a quarter achieve below the expected level. This is confirmed by the schools assessment of children's performance in tests during their first term in the reception class.
69. Children in the nursery and reception classes are happy to leave their parents and eager to explore all the activities planned for the day. They work and play together in harmony, learn to take turns and share and demonstrate good self-control. For example, during water-play nursery children confidently talk about the story 'Mr Gumpy's outing' and take turns to put the correct sequence of animals into Mr Gumpy's boat. They giggle with each other as they make the sound of the animal and shriek with enjoyment when the boat becomes too full with animals and they all fall into the water. The children count the animals accurately, guided carefully by adults who share in the children's enjoyment.
70. Children under five in the nursery and in reception class listen attentively. They talk about activities in detail, explaining confidently in role-play why builders wear hard hats, put cement between bricks and follow a plan to know exactly where to leave holes for windows and doors. Children enjoy stories and higher attaining children use picture cues to sequence and retell the main events of a story. In the reception class children recognise several high frequency words such as 'the', 'and' and 'I' and use them in their reading. Across the nursery and reception classes children associate sounds with letters, but most are at the very early stages of developing more formal reading skills. In the nursery children are encouraged to write independently and show increasing confidence. For example, they write their names, experiment and write words on a white board and complete sentences such as 'The boat tipped over' under their pictures. Interesting topics such as the one on senses, together with teachers' skills in developing early reading and writing skills, have a marked impact on children's good achievements. Children with special educational needs and those with English as a second language are well supervised and activities such as role-play using the mobile telephone ensure good progress. Opportunities to extend speaking skills are less well advanced in the reception class and this has an impact on their achievements in listening to letter sounds and using them to read and to spell words in writing.
71. In mathematics children recognise simple shapes and name them, count to at least 20 and know suitable language such as before and after. For example, they play games using number fans and confidently show the teacher the number before eight and the number after six. The children enjoy the 'spinner game' and use their knowledge and understanding of numbers to make towers. Older children in the reception class show an awareness of addition and most add small numbers together to make the number 10. Children in the nursery make good progress through the involvement of challenging tasks. These activities are less interesting and challenging in the reception class and more focused on the completion of worksheets.

72. In knowledge and understanding of the world children are aware of seasonal changes. They know why ice melts when brought into the nursery and understand that the snow outside will not last long when the sun comes out. They use their senses to feel the cold snow, to smell lemon scented pens and to feel a Braille reading book brought into the nursery by a blind person. Nursery children are given exciting experiences to explore the local environment as they take a number walk in the area in which they live. They use the computer confidently to dress teddy and to put frog together and give appropriate signals to operate a programmable toy.
73. Children in the nursery and in the reception class have many opportunities to explore colour and most gain considerable skills in handling paint and collage materials. For example, children in the nursery paint careful observations of snowdrops whilst children in reception explore ideas for a monster. They use scissors well to cut out octopus legs and use their imaginations to make brightly coloured pictures of rough, smooth and soft materials to develop the topic on senses. Pupils' listening skills are good and are further developed through musical activities using percussion instruments and singing rhymes from memory such as the one about a crocodile.
74. In physical development children in the nursery are provided with opportunities to cut and fold, to build with construction kits, to explore materials, including sand and water, to climb, to ride, push and to pull and to make footprints outside in the new white snow. Opportunities for children under five in reception class are less rich. However, there are good opportunities for both groups of children to use the school hall. They hop, skip and run and show good awareness of balance and space. All children achieve increasing control of their movements when building, writing and colouring.
75. The quality of teaching in the nursery is good. The quality of teaching in the reception class is satisfactory. In the nursery the teacher and nursery nurse work well together as a team and both have high expectations of attainment and behaviour. Activities are well planned using strategies that are exciting yet focused to develop children's achievements in one of the six areas of learning. For example, following a visit by a blind person and guide dog, children explore aids to support sight such as glasses, goggles, telescopes and binoculars. They are encouraged to share ideas and to use language such as magnify, blurred, clear and enlarge. Assessment is used very effectively to check children's progress as they work. It is built into daily routines and is used to inform teachers' planning. An awareness of children with special educational needs and those with English as a second language is good. Celebrations of festivals such as the Chinese New Year enable all children to gain an understanding of different cultures. Whilst planning in the reception class is based on the six areas of learning opportunities to learn through exploration and investigation are insufficient. Activities are unimaginative, provide few opportunities to extend children's language and this hinders individual development and learning.

ENGLISH

76. In the National Curriculum assessments in 1999 the percentage of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 reaching the expected level and above was below the national average. When compared to similar schools pupils achieve standards that are average for their age. Overall boys perform better than girls but this is not unusual. Trends in test results show that over a four year period pupils achieve standards that are close to the national average. Pupils' attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 matches the national average but the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level was below the average. In writing pupils attain standards that are below the national average. However, the number of pupils achieving the higher level was close to the national average. When compared to pupils in similar schools, standards in reading are above the national

average and in writing they match the national average. Trends in test results show that the performance of boys and girls was below the national average in reading and in writing.

77. Inspection evidence shows that standards have improved since the last inspection in all aspects of English by the end of Key Stage 2: pupils are achieving at least in line with national expectations and 25 per cent are achieving above. This is a result of good teaching in upper Key Stage 2, rigorous analysis of test results and more recently the monitoring of teaching and learning. This reflects the increased target which the school has set for itself. In Key Stage 1 standards in reading are similar to those achieved in National Curriculum assessments in 1999. However, standards in writing are below those seen during the last inspection. In writing half the pupils are achieving standards that are below those expected for pupils of this age. This is caused by low teacher expectations, insufficient opportunities to write independently, pupils' inability to use their knowledge of letter sounds to spell words phonetically, poor quality marking and insufficient use of daily assessment to plan work that is matched to the needs of the pupils.
78. On entry to the school pupils' attainment is in line with that expected for children of that age. The youngest children quickly develop confidence in speaking and learn to listen attentively to the teacher and to others. They respond to questions well, such as those about rough and smooth objects and use good standards of English to describe their findings. At Key Stage 2 most pupils are able to state their ideas clearly with a reasoned argument. The inclusion of drama work in upper Key Stage 2 provides interesting and challenging opportunities for pupils to speak to a range of audiences. For example, pupils speak confidently about their part in the production of Shakespeare's 'Pericles', demonstrate good skills as they describe the feelings of monks captured by soldiers and show an understanding of how moods and feelings are conveyed as they present a class assembly. Higher attaining pupils confidently answer and respond to telephone conversations as they oversee the school office at lunchtime.
79. Pupils' attainment in reading is satisfactory throughout the school. Younger pupils in the reception class are interested in picture books and most use picture cues well to retell a story. In Year 1 half the pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of initial letter sounds and can blend consonant, vowel consonant to help them with unfamiliar words. These pupils are developing their sight vocabulary of high frequency words and use them well when reading scheme books. However, too many are unable to use suitable strategies to support their reading and to understand what they have read and take meaning from it. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils read slowly and mostly accurately but have little confidence about reading a range of books other than scheme books. In Year 3 pupils standards in reading are unsatisfactory. This is due to irregular focused teaching of the strategies to support pupils in the skills necessary to extend learning. For example, pupils read a text but cannot make inference about the main characters. Older pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are more confident readers. They enjoy the challenge of more difficult texts and by the end of the key stage are beginning to read with expression and make good deductions about characters and the plot. For example, pupils in Year 6 analyse a speech by Shylock from the play 'The Merchant of Venice' and effectively review the purpose and success of rhetorical questions. Good focused teaching enables pupils to understand the text and to re-write the passage using their own words successfully. Overall, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of library classification systems but few are given sufficient time to develop research and retrieval skills.
80. By the end of Key Stage 1 levels of attainment in writing are below the national average. This represents a fall in standards since the last inspection. Pupils are not encouraged to write using good letter formation and this affects their later attempts to join letters

accurately. Whilst pupils complete comprehension exercises to a satisfactory standard they are less confident in writing independently. Too often pupils copy words and sentences from worksheets and textbooks without having the opportunities to develop skills in spelling and punctuation. Writing of this nature is used across the curriculum to support other subjects. In lower Key Stage 2 these trends in writing are continued. Inconsistent teaching of spelling and punctuation hinders the development of pupils' writing skills resulting in standards which are below those expected for pupils aged eight years. In Years 4, 5 and 6 standards improve. Pupils write for a range of purposes including poetry, stories, letters and instructions. Spelling and punctuation are taught regularly which impact significantly on pupils' standards of writing across the curriculum. Handwriting and the presentation of work in upper Key Stage 2 are good and often very good. This is due to effective focused teaching and high expectations by two teachers. Learning in these two classes enables pupils to achieve the standards expected nationally by the end of Key Stage 2. In other year groups the standard of presentation is poor, punctuation is not used consistently and the standard of spelling is below that expected for pupils' age. The use of information technology to edit and redraft work is not used effectively to present work in a variety of formats.

81. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as a second language make satisfactory gains in learning. Good individual educational plans give clear guidance and set targets that are modified when they are achieved. Although non-teaching assistants are not involved in planning for pupils with special educational needs they provide effective support which contributes significantly to pupils learning.
82. The quality of teaching is overall satisfactory. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is unsatisfactory. Whilst the quality of teaching by a temporary teacher in lower Key Stage 2 was good during the inspection scrutiny of work and discussion with pupils indicates that the quality of teaching in this area of the school would normally be unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching in both classes in upper Key Stage 2 is good. In Key Stage 1 teachers have low expectations of what pupils can achieve and planned activities are not matched to the needs of the pupils. Important skills such as reading strategies, spelling patterns, punctuation and independent writing are not being taught systematically. In these lessons pupils do not understand the work they have been given and the pace of the lesson is too slow. On these occasions pupils lose interest in their work and become restless, but behaviour is never less than good. The quality of marking in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2 is weak. Pupils are allowed to present work that is untidy and careless and teachers fail to correct obvious errors or provide developmental comments to help them to improve. In upper Key Stage 2 teachers planning identifies clear learning objectives and lessons progress at a brisk pace. Classroom control is good; materials are well prepared and varied and teachers present lessons with flair and enthusiasm. The use of good questioning extends pupils' learning. As a result pupils concentrate well and are provided with further opportunities to learn independently and in collaboration with their colleagues. Marking is good, providing well structured comments to help pupils to improve. Homework is used effectively across both key stages to support reading and spelling.
83. Literacy is used satisfactorily to support other areas of the curriculum such as science and history. In science pupils record investigations they have carried out and in history pupils write about the six wives of Henry VIII. Poems and prayers to celebrate the millennium are good. However, on several occasions teachers do not allow pupils to write independently and this detracts from the challenge of the activity. Information technology is insufficiently used to support pupils' work in English.
84. Within the last six months the coordinator has been given time to monitor classroom practice and has already identified several areas for improvement. A rigorous analysis of

test results and strengths and weaknesses of classroom practice is already helping to improve standards by the end of Key Stage 2.

MATHEMATICS

85. In the 1999 national tests for seven year olds pupils' attainment was below the national average and well below average when compared with similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected level and the higher Level 3 was well below average. Girls outperformed boys. In the 1999 national tests for the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment was below the national average but average when compared with similar schools. Although 56 per cent of pupils attained the expected level and 17 per cent reached the higher level, the figures are affected by the nature of the cohort. Eleven of the 18 pupils were on the special needs register and not expected to attain the national expectation. The school met its 1999 target for mathematics and many pupils on the special needs register achieved well despite not attaining the expected level.
86. The new mathematics coordinator has analysed the results of the national tests and other assessments and has correctly recognised weaknesses in the curriculum and in teaching. Prior to September teachers relied too heavily on a published scheme and on developing the pupils' basic skills in addition, subtraction and multiplication. However, pupils did not build systematically on their learning and often repeated work unnecessarily with lots of simple sums which did not extend them. The curriculum in both key stages was too narrow and pupils made unsatisfactory progress, for example in developing the skills of measuring, using money and applying their mathematical knowledge in practical situations. In Key Stage 1 some teachers have low expectations and teachers also lacked confidence in teaching mathematical skills. Too little practical work was done to consolidate pupils' understanding. There was also a lack of sufficient mathematical equipment.
87. As a result of these findings and the low attainment significant action has been taken in order to raise standards although it is too early to measure the impact. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy effectively and is receiving intensive support and advice from the local education authority. With the much-appreciated support of a numeracy consultant there has been good training to develop teachers' skills in teaching mental and oral mathematics, practical sessions and much help in planning and assessment. Most teachers have improved their classroom practice and standards are expected to rise. Only in one class was teaching of significant concern and this was recognised by the school prior to the inspection as a result of effective monitoring.
88. Inspection evidence shows pupils' attainment is currently below average at the end of Key Stage 1 but average by the end of Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1 this is a decline from standards attained in the previous inspection when standards were judged to be in line with expectations but similar standards to the previous inspection were seen in Key Stage 2. In the present cohort of Year 6 pupils five out of 11 pupils are on the special educational needs register (three pupils at Stage 2 and two pupils at Stage 3). The target of 70 per cent of pupils expected to achieve level 4 is demanding but is within reach.
89. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils count in tens with numbers to 100 and arrange numbers to 100 in order. They confidently use correct mathematical language such as 'more than', 'less than' and 'doubling'. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of two-dimensional shapes but do not recognise the more complex ones such as hexagons and pentagons. They have a satisfactory knowledge of money up to one pound. However, inspection evidence indicates that, although around three quarters of the pupils are likely to attain the nationally expected level, very few, if any, pupils will attain the higher level and around a quarter of the Year 2 group will attain below national expectations. There is

very little evidence of pupils using and applying mathematics and the recorded work provided for scrutiny was very limited in range, quantity and quality. Attainment in the aspect of shape, space and measure was below that normally expected of seven year olds.

90. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils have a good basic knowledge of number and a good recall of facts, including multiplication tables. Mental strategies are used together with their knowledge of number to solve problems with the minimum of recording. Pupils can explain their methods with increasing accuracy using correct mathematical language. They work in decimals and understand place value. Most pupils have a good grasp of negative numbers. Higher attaining pupils multiply decimals using two digit numbers while lower attaining pupils work on simpler calculations. Pupils understand equivalent fractions and can reduce a fraction to its lowest form. The highest attaining pupils can work with mixed numbers (those containing a whole number and a fraction) and have mental strategies for adding them together. Most pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of shape. They correctly identify acute, obtuse and reflex angles and can name a good range of two and three-dimensional shapes. In Years 5 and 6 pupils apply their skills well in other subjects of the curriculum. For example, when working in geography they apply their skills with coordinates to locate places on a map. Very little is seen in other classes. However, information technology is not used well to support mathematics and pupils' data-handling skills using computers are below average, although they are improving now that the computer suite is being used.
91. Pupils' learning is satisfactory overall but very uneven. Pupils of all abilities make very good progress in the Years 5 and 6 class and they make good progress in the Years 4 and 5 class. However, pupils in Key Stage 1 make better progress in number than they do in other areas of the mathematics curriculum, for example in applying their mathematical skills. Higher attaining pupils do not make sufficient progress at the end of Key Stage 1 and early in Key Stage 2.
92. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are generally good across both key stages. Most pupils are keen to become involved in the mental sessions which begin numeracy lessons, participating with both enthusiasm and enjoyment. They usually work well on their set tasks showing good concentration. Most listen well during the final recap of the lesson, confidently sharing their work when required to do so.
93. Teaching overall is satisfactory across both key stages but unacceptably variable. All lessons observed were at least satisfactory and over half of the lessons were good. However, the judgement on teaching involves more than just the lessons observed and includes scrutiny of work pupils have been given prior to the inspection. There is considerable inconsistency in the quality of teaching. Most staff have appropriate subject knowledge to enable pupils to make effective progress. All but one of the teachers have familiarised themselves well with the National Numeracy Strategy but the Years 2 and 3 class has been seriously disadvantaged by weaker teaching. Particular strengths in the best lessons are the high quality questions which develop pupils' understanding, the effective methods and organisation which ensure that no time is wasted and the thorough planning which includes specific learning outcomes to assist with accurate assessment. In the best lessons teachers have high quality relationships and value pupils' contributions. Weaknesses mainly concern the failure by some teachers to consistently plan work at appropriate levels for the different ages and abilities of pupils in the class. This has led to unsatisfactory teaching where the lower attaining pupils in one year group are given exactly the same work as the higher attaining pupils in the older year group. Another common weakness in a significant number of classes is poor marking which does not help pupils to improve. Some marking is incorrect and some pupils' books have many pages of untidily presented, unmarked work.

94. The subject is now led well and there are very clear plans for its development. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced well by almost every teacher and there is now a whole school approach to planning work for mixed age classes. The curriculum provides a basis for the systematic development of knowledge, skills and understanding and staff have been well guided in its use. Teaching, standards of pupils' work and the mathematics curriculum being offered in all classes are monitored effectively and weaknesses have been identified and are being addressed. The headteacher has recently begun to set individual targets, especially for older pupils and the school is striving to improve standards in the subject. The recently reorganised and audited resources are sufficient to meet National Curriculum and National Numeracy Strategy requirements.

SCIENCE

95. Results of the most recent teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 and national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 show that attainment is below national levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and well below national standards by the end of Key Stage 2. In the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 only two-thirds of pupils reach national standards in comparison with three-quarters of all Year 6 pupils nationally. Only in investigative science at the end of Key Stage 1 are pupils' results broadly in line with national averages. Results also show that fewer pupils than nationally reach the higher levels at the end of both key stages. Pupils' performance in the science tests at the end of Key Stage 2 was below average in comparison with similar schools. Both boys and girls perform at similar low levels when compared to national averages at the end of Key Stage 2. The gap between the school's end of Key Stage 2 test scores and the national picture has widened in the 1999 tests when compared to 1998. Evidence from the inspection indicates that pupils are likely to be performing below national levels by the end of both key stages rather than well below national standards at the end of Key Stage 2. This relative improvement in Key Stage 2 is mainly due to a change in the nature of the Year 6 cohort. In 1999 11 out of 18 pupils were on the special educational needs register. However, it is also partly attributed to the impact of a newly appointed Year 6 teacher, the increasing emphasis on analysing test data which helps to inform targets for development and the higher profile given to monitoring pupils' progress. However, test results represent a deterioration in standards since the last inspection when standards were judged to be broadly in line with national levels.
96. Pupils of average and below average ability, including those pupils with special educational needs, make satisfactory gains in learning in most areas of science as they move through Key Stage 1. Pupils of average and below average ability make sound gains in learning in life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes as they move through Key Stage 2. However, above average pupils in Key Stage 1 and all pupils in Key Stage 2 make unsatisfactory gains in learning in investigative and experimental science. This is due to low expectations, insecure subject knowledge, inappropriate organisation and too rigid a structure to lessons, which restrict scientific enquiry. In Key Stage 2 pupils have insufficient opportunity to plan experiments and to obtain and consider evidence. Higher attaining pupils in both key stages often do not make the progress of which they are capable. This is because planning is insufficiently structured to ensure that work given to them is appropriately challenging and weekly assessments rarely inform future planning so that work carefully builds on what has gone before. All pupils make some progress in the development of scientific enquiry, but at a rate slower than required, especially in Key Stage 2. Year 1 pupils investigate which materials are attracted to magnets, drawing simple conclusions such as "it attracts because it is made from metal" and recording their results on a simple worksheet. By Year 3 pupils observe how different liquids cause teeth to decay, predict a likely outcome

and indicate how the test will be kept fair. By Year 5 pupils investigate how micro-organisms grow on food, provide explanations for their observations and explain what they have discovered from their work.

97. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils identify the properties of different fossils, compare and classify different soil samples, discover that light travels in straight lines and learn how shadows are formed. They are beginning to develop a scientific vocabulary. They are beginning to describe similarities and differences between materials. They recognise and name a range of sources of light and sound.
98. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils understand how gases differ from solids and liquids, begin to describe different methods for separating simple mixtures and recognise that sound becomes fainter due to distance. They begin to use keys based on observable features to assist identifying and grouping living things and identify ways that animals suit their environment. However, most are unable to make generalisations about physical phenomena such as what effect the apparent motion of the sun has on a shadow cast by a stick. In experiments most pupils are unable to demonstrate by the way a task is performed how to alter one variable without affecting the others, to take account of identified patterns when drawing conclusions or to compare their own conclusions with scientific knowledge. These are requirements for pupils to reach the nationally expected level.
99. Teaching is sound across both key stages, but varies from good to unsatisfactory. Good science teaching was observed in Key Stage 1. Features of good teaching include secure subject knowledge, high expectations, appropriate emphasis on scientific enquiry, good management of pupils and good use of resources including support staff which make a clear contribution to learning. Unsatisfactory features of teaching in almost all classes include inappropriate organisation to teach the skills of scientific enquiry, which restricts learning, a lack of scientific focus, slow pace or inappropriate use of time, a lack of rigour and challenge in investigative work and missed opportunities to develop scientific understanding. Teachers over-direct pupils when they are required to record their investigations, resulting in too much copied work following a too rigid recording framework. This prevents pupils from developing initiative, independence and confidence, which limits progress in scientific enquiry. The over direction in the recording of their work limits pupils' development of literacy and numeracy skills, although a some good practice was seen in upper Key Stage 2.
100. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good at both key stages. Most are interested in the work set, listen attentively, answer appropriate questions to help develop scientific understanding, follow instructions carefully showing appropriate concentration and behave well. However, many lack confidence in the subject and find it difficult to apply developing skills of scientific enquiry to new investigations.
101. Science is well represented in both key stages, with all components covered, but to lower than required levels. However, monitoring of teaching and learning has begun to help raise standards. National test results and teacher assessments are now carefully analysed to help inform future planning so that identified weaknesses can be overcome. The subject action plan clearly identifies areas for development. There are good links in science with the school to which most pupils transfer. However, limitations in planning hinder the process of teaching important scientific skills in a logical sequence at appropriate levels and make it more difficult to match tasks effectively to the different ability groups to ensure that activities are suitably challenging. There is little evidence of the use of information technology, for example to compile databases or tabulate results of investigations. Marking in science is unacceptably varied. Although most marking is encouraging and positive, it is rarely used to help move pupils forward in their

understanding. Resources are sufficient for the requirements of the curriculum, although resources to help teach the “life processes” component are barely adequate. They require auditing to ensure that all staff know what is available. Resources are easily accessed and are of satisfactory quality.

ART

102. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils achieve beyond the national expectation for their age. This reflects an improvement since the last inspection.
103. In Key Stage 1 pupils express themselves artistically with confidence and increasing skills and accuracy. They mix paints effectively to create illustrations of monsters and are developing a growing awareness of the work of famous artists. For example, they draw pictures in the style of Lowry, using pastels to create the mood of an industrial Lancashire landscape. Pupils link mathematics and numeracy skills with art lessons as they develop shape pictures imitating the style of Mondrian.
104. In Key Stage 2 pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of line effectively. Observational drawings reveal that they pay good attention to detail when representing things such as shells. They listen carefully to important teaching points such as the use of shape and light and make preliminary drawings before concentrating on the picture as a whole. Aspects of literacy are emphasised effectively such as ‘whorl’ the noun used for shapes on a shell and ‘whirl’ the verb to move. Pupils are given good opportunities to use a range of materials such as textiles to create effective collage pictures of Tutors, paint to make leaf prints, marbling to illustrate movement and papier-mache to construct masks for a topic on the Aztecs. However, a major contribution to pupils’ development and understanding of art is illustrated in pictures created for ‘The Ashkenazi Project’. This project is based upon the evacuation of the Jewish community into Manchester. Pupils use tissue paper, glue, paint and textiles to produce sensitive illustrations which reflect the mood and feelings of the people.
105. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The coordinator has good subject knowledge, is enthusiastic and keen to support colleagues throughout the school. Pupils are highly motivated by their work and make good progress in understanding new processes and materials which they choose to work with. Lessons are well organised and managed and they have a clear purpose. Pupils are encouraged to be constructively self critical and this helps to heighten their achievement. Each term pupils complete an observational drawing which is used for assessment purposes. Pupils are proud of their efforts and speak confidently about how they can improve their skills before the next assessment. The subject is used very effectively to support most areas of the curriculum and through display contributes significantly to the learning environment across the school. However, there is very little evidence of information technology playing a part in art lessons.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

106. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress throughout both key stages in developing their design and technology capability. This is because very little design technology is completed throughout the school, with both design and making components currently not taught throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. Statutory requirements relating to the subject are not therefore being met. Standards and the subject’s secure place in the curriculum have therefore deteriorated since the last inspection.
107. However, there is evidence in the nursery of design technology, where pupils make simple models using a variety of materials. There is currently no action plan to raise the

profile of the subject throughout school, although the new co-ordinator is aware of current limitations and priorities required to secure needed improvements. These priorities include the adaptation of national documentation to establish a scheme of work in design technology linked with art, improving overall staff confidence and competence in the subject and improving resource provision, which is currently unsatisfactory.

GEOGRAPHY

108. Pupils make sound gains in learning in geography as they move through both key stages, but through a limited range of geographical activities. Attainment is below national standards by the end of both key stages. Evidence for these judgements was obtained from a scrutiny of pupils' past and present work, documentation, discussion with staff and pupils and three geography lessons.
109. Pupils gradually become aware that the world reaches beyond their locality, develop geographical skills and slowly acquire knowledge and understanding of different places. Mapping skills are given appropriate emphasis in both key stages. Reception pupils are introduced to symbols and a key when representing geographical features on an imaginary island. Year 1 pupils respond to questions about geographical features surrounding the school by observing a map of the locality, learn to annotate a simple map and to plan a route. During a walk in the immediate vicinity of the school Year 2 pupils identify different types of housing. By Year 3 pupils can identify north and south poles, the equator and the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn on a globe. Year 4 pupils understand two-figure co-ordinates and are introduced to Ordnance Survey maps in work about Edale. Year 5 pupils complete maps of the Great Orme and study buildings on the sea front during and following a visit to Llandudno. Year 6 pupils study detailed maps of Llandudno and make comparisons with Sale. However, by the time pupils leave the school most pupils have a too limited a geographical vocabulary, do not fully understand the importance of location in understanding places and have had little opportunity to describe geographical patterns. They have had little opportunity to describe how people can cause damage and improvement to the environment. These are requirements of the national standard by the end of Key Stage 2.
110. There is insufficient evidence to make judgements about the quality of teaching and pupils' attitudes to learning. In the three lessons observed both sound and unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Strengths in teaching include secure subject knowledge, appropriate questioning to develop geographical understanding, effective organisation which promotes learning and good choice of resources which contribute to progress. Weaknesses, for example in Years 2 and 3, include low expectation and levels of challenge, imprecise planning which results in insufficiently clear learning outcomes, tasks which are not well matched to different abilities and slow pace. Most pupils listen carefully, respond positively to work set when appropriately challenged, answer questions enthusiastically and are interested in improving their geographical understanding.
111. Geography is secure within the school's curriculum, although some components are superficially represented. The action plan includes two priorities, including a needed audit of resources and indicates realistic time scales for achieving them. However, there is scope for further development of the locality as an essential geographical resource. Information technology is insufficiently used to handle, classify and present evidence. There is no formal assessment of gains in learning to help inform future planning. The subject contributes very little to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

HISTORY

112. Pupils make satisfactory gains in learning in limited areas of history as they move through the school. They make sound progress in learning about life in the past through a study of selected periods of history, but to levels below what is required nationally by the end of Key Stage 2. However, too little attention is paid to the development of understanding of the passage of time, such as through sequencing activities and the use of timelines. The identification of different ways of depicting the past, though evident, is under-emphasised. Different sources of evidence, such as artefacts, books and buildings, are used appropriately to help bring the subject alive for pupils to facilitate learning. However, the use of the locality is under-used as a rich resource for developing important skills in history. Pupils' developing awareness and understanding of history are communicated in too narrow a range of ways. For example, information technology is rarely used to communicate findings or to provide information. There are few examples of extended writing in the subject, such as to indicate different viewpoints or report on famous events. Pupils do not have a sufficiently wide historical vocabulary by the time they leave the school. Little work in history was observed in Key Stage 1. However, there was a satisfactory quantity of evidence in Key Stage 2 from which to make secure judgements.
113. There is a satisfactory emphasis in pupils' work in Key Stage 2 on extending historical knowledge and understanding. Year 3 pupils, as part of a study of the Egyptians, begin to show understanding of aspects of the past beyond living memory. Year 4 pupils discover the extent of the influence of the Vikings, study place names and visit the Jorvik Centre to reinforce and extend their knowledge of the Vikings. Year 5 pupils, in a study of the Victorians, learn about the stark contrast in living standards between the rich and poor and the grim and often dangerous life for children working in the mills. They study the Tudors, discover why Henry VIII had so many wives, focusing especially on one of his wives, Anne of Cleves. In work about the Aztecs Year 6 pupils map the extent of the Aztec Empire, research different aspects of life under their rule and experience an Aztec meal, making comparisons with food eaten today.
114. There is insufficient evidence to make judgements about standards of teaching and attitudes to learning in history as too few lessons were seen. However, in two lessons observed in Key Stage 2 teaching was good and pupils' response was very good. In these lessons good features of teaching included high expectations, which ensured appropriate levels of challenge, brisk pace and good use of resources to maintain interest and involvement, secure subject knowledge, good use of support staff, and good questioning and clear explanations to develop historical understanding. In both lessons pupils listen well to their teachers and each other, demonstrate high levels of concentration and show enthusiasm towards the subject.
115. History is well represented within some subjects of the school's curriculum at Key Stage 2 although there are missed opportunities to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and information technology skills. There are good links with other subjects in history. For example, with art where older pupils in Key Stage 2 use paint and materials to recreate pictures of Henry VIII and his wives and pupils make Aztec masks, and with geography where pupils study maps of England to discover the names of towns and villages with Anglo-Saxon origins. There is evidence of the use of source material such as logbooks to help develop an understanding of history. A limited number of well presented displays help to motivate pupils and enhance their self-esteem when their work is attractively exhibited. Visits to Llandudno, for example, where pupils discover the history of the pier help to bring the subject alive for pupils. An action plan with objectives and time scales ensures that the subject is continuing to develop. There is little formal assessment of progress in history. Work is rarely matched to pupils' different abilities to ensure that all pupils receive appropriate levels of challenge to enable them to make the best possible

progress. Resources are sufficient to deliver the school's curriculum. They are easily accessed, of satisfactory quality and are used quite well to develop knowledge and understanding.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

116. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with national expectations but pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 attain below the national expectation. Progress overall is now satisfactory but has been unsatisfactory. Since the last inspection there has been significant development in the provision for information technology which has resulted in the development of a computer suite with a good range of computers and the employment of a non-teaching assistant to develop pupils' computer skills. However, this development has only been securely in place since January and the impact is yet to be seen. The improvements have not been totally effective due to a lack of confidence and commitment by some teachers. This leads to missed opportunities in developing pupils' skills through other subjects and for much of the time the computer suite is not used.
117. Only one lesson of direct teaching of Key Stage 1 pupils was observed during the inspection. Other than this no pupils were seen working on the computers and scrutiny of work indicated very little work had been recorded across the curriculum. However, teachers' planning shows that the full curriculum is now being taught at Key Stage 1 but too little time is allocated to pupils to develop their skills knowledge and understanding as fully as they could. By the age of seven pupils are beginning to use the keyboard and mouse and they develop a growing understanding of the use of a computer. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 log on and open a file. They choose a picture of a house from a clip art program and select and drag the picture around the screen using the mouse accurately. Teachers' planning shows that pupils have operated a programmable toy and there has been a little word processing.
118. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have not made enough progress in their skills, knowledge and understanding of how to communicate and handle information through information technology and by the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment is below national expectations. Neither do pupils meet the national expectations in using information technology based models and simulations to explore patterns and relationships. Another weakness in the information technology curriculum is controlling and measuring. In this aspect of information technology pupils are also below national expectations. They are unable to use information technology to sense physical data such as temperature, light and movement because they do not have suitable equipment. Moreover, most pupils do not have sufficient opportunity and guidance to write a set of commands, for example to draw a shape on screen.
119. There is very little evidence of pupils using information technology skills effectively to support their learning in other subjects. Although they produce bar, line and pie graphs this is the teaching of a skill and not used to support mathematics; they rarely use information on a CD-ROM to provide information in geography, history and music. The use of information technology in other subjects is a weakness.
120. Pupils' response in information technology lessons is good when they are given the opportunity. They are well behaved and listen carefully to their teacher or adult helper. Through their high levels of concentration and perseverance pupils display a determination to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils appreciate the support they are given and they are sufficiently confident to ask questions when unsure about the task. Pupils treat all equipment with great care.
121. No teachers were seen teaching information technology but on the evidence of pupils'

work the quality of teaching is judged unsatisfactory overall. The quality of teaching by the support assistant is good. A small number of teachers have developed their own knowledge, skills and understanding considerably over the past year and they are generally much more confident in their own knowledge than they were previously. However, some teachers have not improved their own skills. The school has adopted new planning which aims to teach skills in a systematic way. However, because pupils are so far behind the levels expected pupils in Year 6 are being taught exactly the same skills as pupils in Year 3 and it will take time for pupils' skills to reach the expected level. Lessons are now well planned with a clear identification of what skills pupils are expected to learn. The lessons are well organised with pupils being given good opportunities to work individually on computers. Teachers and pupils benefit greatly from the skills, enthusiasm and commitment of the computer support worker who was responsible for much of the direct teaching of information technology skills seen during the inspection.

122. The co-ordination of information technology is unsatisfactory. Too little has been done too late. The school recognises the need for staff training and the need to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. There has not been sufficient curriculum development to ensure that the curriculum was improved. For example, the school has not identified the need to develop provision for control technology at Key Stage 2. Ongoing assessment is unsatisfactory. Teachers do not formally monitor pupils' skill development during lessons but occasional samples of pupils' work are kept as a record of attainment. Resources are satisfactory overall although there is insufficient computer software to support pupils learning in science, for example sensors. The school is aware of this and aims to resolve the deficit in the near future. Much thought was given to developing the resources for information technology and the decision to create a suite of modern computers to allow more direct teaching of skills has met with great success. Unfortunately the present provision for pupils to develop skills is not being used sufficiently.

MUSIC

123. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards of achievement are in line with those expected for pupils aged 11 years. This shows that standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
124. Pupils in Key Stage 1 sing tunefully and recall several songs and rhymes from memory. They listen well to piano and guitar responding effectively to beat and rhythm. Pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding of percussion instruments are less well developed. Whilst they have a little knowledge of the names of instruments they have few opportunities to practice skills in shaking, tapping and beating.
125. In Key Stage 2 pupils sing with confidence showing good awareness of others as they sing rounds. They show good understanding of elements such as dynamics and pitch and apply this in their singing. The school choir is particularly good. They sing tunefully and melodically in front of small and large audiences demonstrating their obvious delight in this activity. A visiting pianist is instrumental in the achievement of pupils' high standards of singing across the school. In music lessons pupils clap out rhythms to poems such as 'It's your fault, Billy' and accompany their rhymes using well chosen untuned instruments to illustrate characters. By the end of the key stage pupils know how to use an eight pulse grid and they confidently adapt this to complement their work based on a Jewish Klezmer. A small group of recorder players play competently in morning assembly demonstrating good skills in reading a musical score.
126. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. During singing lessons the quality of teaching is good. Pupils enjoy singing particularly when they are supported by teachers with good

subject knowledge and an enthusiasm to persevere when tasks are more demanding such as singing rounds. Good learning was also noted when pupils were motivated and encouraged to compose a simple pulse grid. The teacher was enthusiastic and the activities planned met the needs of the pupils. Whilst singing across both key stages is good there are fewer planned activities for pupils to appraise and compose their own music. This detracts from pupils' achievements. Overall there is insufficient guidance to help teachers to plan activities that build systematically onto pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding of music as they progress through the school. However, most teachers work hard to introduce music into weekly planning. This ensures pupils receive a satisfactory curriculum. The use of information technology to support music is in early stages of development and has not yet been introduced into the school's curriculum.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

127. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in physical education and by the age of 11 they develop skills in a range of activities which are appropriate for their age.
128. Pupils in Key Stage 1 increasingly develop their awareness of space. During dance lessons pupils move around the hall varying their speed and direction whilst avoiding others as they reflect well the mood of music and stories. In a very good lesson in Years 1 and 2 pupils curl and stretch, move high and low, fast and slow and into different shapes as they perform a dance about the life of a butterfly. As pupils move through Key Stage 2 they become increasingly confident in a range of physical activities. In gymnastics Years 4 and 5 pupils make good progress in developing their poise and gymnastic technique. They use their previous skills as a basis for composing sequences of movements which involve balances, jumps and rolls. Some higher attaining pupils move very smoothly from one movement to another. Pupils' performances in dance lessons are good as a result of specialist teaching. Impressive country dancing and an interpretation of a 'Wedding dance' showed pupils' talents to good effect. The school teaches swimming throughout Key Stage 2. By the end of their time in school most pupils have had swimming lessons for four years and almost every pupils can swim at least 25 metres. No games lessons were observed during the inspection week.
129. Pupils' response to physical education lessons is good overall. In dance lessons they behave very well, concentrate hard on their tasks and thoroughly enjoy the lesson. This has a significant impact on their progress. In most classes, pupils pay good attention and try hard to improve their performances. Relationships are good, with pupils showing high levels of care and respect for each other and working well in pairs and small groups.
130. The teaching of physical education is good overall; one lesson observed during the inspection being very good, two lessons were good and the other two were satisfactory. Teachers generally plan and prepare their lessons well and the activities provided for pupils are usually fun and interesting. This promotes pupils' motivation. Through changing into appropriate clothing and through demonstration and joining in with the activities some teachers provide good role models for the pupils. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their skills to others in the class. In the very best lessons such as in a Years 1 and 2 and a Years 5 and 6 lesson the teachers display very good relationships with their pupils, expectations of behaviour and attainment are high and pupils are given good opportunities to demonstrate their skills to others.
131. The previous inspection report identified weaknesses in the school's written guidance and there has been satisfactory progress made in this respect. The curriculum for physical education is broad and balanced and provides an appropriate range of activities to develop pupils' physical skills. There is an appropriate policy and scheme of work to

support the curriculum, although the school recognises the need to improve this to ensure a more systematic development of skills. Within the physical education curriculum boys and girls are provided with equal opportunities to develop skills in a variety of activities and pupils with special educational needs are given good opportunities to be involved appropriately. A range of extra-curricular sporting activities are offered to pupils in both key stages and include basketball, netball and football.