

# INSPECTION REPORT

**St Hugh of Lincoln RC Primary  
School**

LEA area: Trafford

Unique Reference Number: 106353

Headteacher: Mr P Hennessey

Reporting inspector: Mr B Lord  
2791

Dates of inspection: 22 – 26 November, 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706811

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

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## Information about the school

Type of school	-	Infant and junior school (with nursery)
Type of control	-	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	-	4 – 11 (3 – 4 in the nursery)
Gender of pupils	-	Mixed
School address	-	Glastonbury Road Stretford Manchester M32 9PD
Telephone number:	-	0161 912 2906
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Appropriate authority:	-	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	-	Father Paul Brindle
Date of the previous inspection:	-	29 April – 3 May 1996

## Information about the inspection team

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr B Lord, Registered inspector, 4.5 days in school.	Science Design technology Music	Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management
Mr A Dobson, Lay inspector, 2.5 days in school.		Equal opportunities Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community
Mrs J Tracey, 4 days in school.	Mathematics History Geography	Curriculum and assessment Efficiency
Mrs M Leah, 4 days in school.	English The under fives	Special educational needs Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
Mr J Curley, 4 days in school.	Information technology Art Physical education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

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# Main findings

## WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Provides good quality education for children in the nursery, reception classes and Key Stage 1.
- Makes good overall provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils.
- Implements good arrangements for parents to assist in the school.
- Provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, including ample opportunities for boys and girls to take part in competitive sport.
- Provides a solid framework for pupils to develop numeracy and literacy skills.

## WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS WEAKNESSES

- I. There is too much unsatisfactory teaching in some Key Stage 2 classes, and insufficient really good teaching throughout Key Stage 2.
- II. Members of the senior management team and curriculum co-ordinators make insufficient checks on the quality and effectiveness of lessons, and are not effective in promoting high quality teaching.
- III. Pupils' written work is not marked with sufficient care.
- IV. Assessment data is not used effectively enough to improve the quality of teaching and the curriculum.
- V. Information technology education is unsatisfactory.
- VI. Pupils are not given enough homework.
- VII. Books, materials and equipment, including computers, are in short supply for some subjects and the school does not have a library. This results in pupils having insufficient opportunities to engage in independent study and research.

**The weaknesses are balanced by what the school does well and its plans for the future. The weaknesses will, however, form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school**

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

Overall improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory. This is because opportunities for effective action have been considerably reduced by procedures involving the appointment of a new head, staff absence, and severe budgetary problems. Difficulties have now been resolved and the school is well placed to make significant improvements in many aspects of its work.

Between 1996 and 1998 there was a steady improvement in standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science. The 1998 Key Stage 2 national test results were very good. The 1999 results were much less good, but this was mainly due to an unusually large number of pupils with special educational needs in the year group. Inspection evidence indicates that results at both the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 will be better in 2000 than they were in 1999, and that the school will meet the appropriate targets it has set. The school has successfully introduced teaching based on the national literacy and numeracy strategies. The high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching noted in the previous report has been reduced, but there is still too much. Schemes of work for most subjects have been produced or revised, but not all, for example those in music and information technology, have been fully implemented. Teacher appraisal systems have been improved and have benefited from the school's involvement in the "Investors in People" project. Procedures to make better use of assessment to check pupils' progress have been put in place but are not yet fully effective. Procedures to check on the quality of the curriculum and the effectiveness of lessons are still not operating satisfactorily. Teaching time allocation to subjects is better balanced. There are still some deficiencies in the effectiveness of the senior management team and the work of curriculum co-ordinators (teachers responsible for the oversight of individual subjects). Attendance has improved, but poor punctuality of a significant minority of pupils remains a problem.

The school's budget is now under much better control, and the considerable deficit which came to light shortly after the previous inspection is on target to be eliminated by the end of the next financial year. This will enable the unsatisfactorily small amount of money currently spent on resources for learning to be increased and the school's stock of books and equipment to be improved.

### STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS

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

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

The corresponding standards in 1998 were well above average in all three subjects. In interpreting the 1999 table it should be borne in mind that 25% of the year group were on the school's register of special educational needs. The corresponding figure for 1998 was 15%. Standards in information technology are below average, and pupils' musical skills are less well developed than in most schools. Standards in physical education are high. The quality of work in other subjects is similar to that usually observed for pupils' ages.

### QUALITY OF TEACHING

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
English	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Science		Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Information technology		Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Other subjects	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Two experienced teachers were absent during the inspection and their classes were taken by temporary teachers. 88% of the teaching observed was satisfactory or better, and 49% was good or better. The 12% of lessons where teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory were all in Key Stage 2. It was not possible to observe any information technology teaching during the inspection. The "unsatisfactory" judgement is based on evidence that not enough teaching of the subject takes place.

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

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Satisfactory. In most classes behaviour is consistently good, but in others there are instances of poor behaviour which sometimes reduce the quality of learning.
Attendance	Good. It is better than the national average. Punctuality is a problem. A significant minority of pupils arrive at school a few minutes late.
Ethos*	Satisfactory. There is a good climate for learning in most classes, but in a few Key Stage 2 lessons there are insufficiently high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour.
Leadership and management	Unsatisfactory. Although the head and governors are working hard to bring about improvements the support they receive from some members of staff with important responsibilities is inadequate. Insufficient checks are made on the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of the curriculum.
Curriculum	Satisfactory. There is an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy and suitable provision for personal and social education. Information technology and music do not receive sufficient attention. The availability of extra-curricular activities is good.
Pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Lack of funding results in some pupils receiving scant support, but parental volunteers go a considerable way towards correcting this deficiency. The school, with the help of the local authority, makes excellent provision for a blind pupil.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good. Pupils benefit from the close links with the Church, the school's behaviour policy, consistent encouragement to be helpful, considerate and co-operative, and opportunities in both curricular and extra-curricular activities to learn about their cultural heritage.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Unsatisfactory overall. There is an adequate number of qualified and experienced teachers, but insufficient classroom assistants. The accommodation is shabby and scarcely adequate. It is unsatisfactory that there is no school library. Books, materials and equipment, including computers, are inadequate for some subjects.
Value for money	Satisfactory. Similar to that at the time of the previous inspection, but set to improve as well conceived plans for the future are implemented.

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

## THE PARENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<p>VIII. The way they are made welcome in the school and the active part they are encouraged to play in its life.</p> <p>IX. The standard of work and the good availability of extra-curricular activities.</p> <p>X. The value and attitudes promoted by the school, and the good behaviour of the majority of pupils</p>	<p>XI. The quality and consistency of the homework</p> <p>XII. The information they receive about what is</p>

Parents are considerably more satisfied with the school than at the time of the previous inspection. Inspectors generally agree with parents' positive views of the school, but feel some should be a little more concerned about the quality of their children's work. Inspectors agree that pupils should receive more rigorous homework, and that the school should provide better information about what is being taught. Reports are variable, and inspectors agree that parents do not always get a clear picture of the standards their

children are attaining, the progress they are making, what they need to do to improve and the targets at which they should be aiming.

### · **Key issues for action**

To improve the quality of education and raise standards in the school the head, staff and governors should:-

1. Make teaching in all subjects more effective by arranging for members of the senior management team, in conjunction with curriculum co-ordinators, to check and improve the quality of lesson planning and delivery. (See paragraphs 10, 14, 19, 29, 30, 31, 36, 67, 70, 82, 98, 105, 106, 118, 119, 124, 144, 151-154)
2. Ensure that pupils' work is thoroughly marked, mistakes are corrected, and pupils are clearly informed about what they need to do to improve and the targets at which they should be aiming. (See paragraphs 34, 67, 105, 111, 121)
3. Use assessment data more effectively to monitor the progress pupils are making and to evaluate the quality of the curriculum. (See paragraphs 42, 52, 109, 112, 124, 129, 134)
4. Arrange for pupils to be given regular and rigorous homework. (See paragraphs 35, 62, 67, 109, 123)
5. Implement plans to improve information technology education by acquiring more hardware and software, and ensuring that all pupils have adequate opportunities to develop the full range of skills specified by the national curriculum. Improve planning in other subject areas so that more use is made of information technology to support teaching and learning across the curriculum. (See paragraphs 15, 22, 37, 79, 126-130)
6. Draw up and implement long term plans to improve the school's stocks of books, materials and equipment and consider the possibility of establishing a school library. Incorporate the effective use of additional resources into schemes of work so as to improve teaching and provide more opportunities for pupils to engage in independent study and research. (See paragraphs 10, 11, 13, 22, 33, 78, 79, 80, 100, 104, 108, 122, 134, 145)

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

- Implementing plans for establishing an improved approach to music teaching. (See paragraphs 17, 37, 151-154)
- Taking steps to reduce the excessive time pupils spend queuing for school lunch. (See paragraph 51)
- Taking action to remove the rotten steps to the "mobile" classrooms, and attending to other minor matters relating to pupils' welfare and safety. (See paragraph 56)
- Arranging for parents to have greater privacy when discussing their children's progress at parents' evenings. (See paragraph 60)
- Providing advance information to parents about the topics their children will be studying. (See paragraph 60)
- Checking that comments on pupils' reports are clear and informative. (See paragraph 61)
- Issuing pupils with homework diaries so that parents can keep a better check on their children's activities. (See paragraph 62)
- Improving the playground surface. (See paragraph 78)
- Adopting a more consistent approach to handwriting with older pupils. (See paragraphs 11, 102)

## **Introduction**

### · **Characteristics of the school**

1. St Hugh of Lincoln is an above average size school for 4 to 11 year olds with approximately equal numbers of boys and girls on its 297 full time pupil roll, and a further 42 part time pupils in the attached nursery. Children are admitted to the reception class in the September of the academic year in which their fifth birthday falls. At the time of the inspection there were 28 children under five in the reception classes. In the main school children are taught in 11 classes with an average size of 27 pupils. There are currently 12 full time teachers, including the head and the teacher in charge of the nursery. A further two teachers share a class, each working for half a week. Three classroom support assistants work in the

main school for a total of 35 hours per week, and a trained nursery assistant works for 33 hours per week in the nursery.

2. The school is situated in the Stretford area of the Metropolitan Borough of Trafford, and is about five miles from the centre of Manchester. Property adjacent to the school consists of comparatively inexpensive privately owned or rented houses and flats. Most pupils live fairly close to the school. A substantial proportion come from homes where there are significant economic and social difficulties, but the majority of pupils have loving and supportive parents.
3. Nearly all the children entering the reception class have attended the nursery. Overall attainment levels on entry vary from year to year, but are generally a little below average. 15% of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. This is close to the national average. One pupil has a statement of special educational need. This is below average for a school of this size. An average proportion of pupils, about 15%, are entitled to a free school meal. There are currently no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
4. There has been no significant change in the nature of the intake, but the number of pupils on roll has fallen by 23 (7%) since the last inspection.
5. The school aims to provide a warm, caring environment where each child is valued as an individual and is encouraged to develop his or her talents to the full. Attempts are made to nurture, guide and educate the pupils so that they are enriched and prepared to move forward with Christ on their journey in faith.
6. Current priorities include:-
  - A concentration on raising standards and achieving challenging targets for improved overall levels of pupils' attainment.
  - Strengthening procedures for self evaluation and promoting a climate conducive to ongoing improvements in all aspects of the school's work, especially teaching.
  - Making better use of both existing and anticipated information technology equipment.

## Key indicators

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

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	29	17	46

National Curriculum	Test/Task Results	Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	20	15	22
	Girls	15	16	16
	Total	35	31	38
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	76 (83)	67 (83)	83 (83)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teacher Assessments	English	Mathematics	Science	
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	20	22	25
	Girls	16	16	17
	Total	36	38	42
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	78 (89)	83 (89)	91 (89)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

### Attainment at Key Stage 2<sup>2</sup>

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	22	18	40

National Curriculum	Test Results	English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	11	11	17
	Girls	16	17	17
	Total	27	28	34
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	68 (85)	70 (85)	85 (98)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teacher Assessments	English	Mathematics	Science	
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	13	13	17
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	30	30	34
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	75 (90)	75 (82)	85 (92)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

## Attendance

<sup>1</sup> Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

<sup>2</sup> Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:			%
	Authorised Absence	School	3.7
		National comparative data	5.7
	Unauthorised absence	School	0.6
National comparative data		0.5	

### Exclusions

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

### Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:			%
	Very good or better	1.5%	
	Satisfactory or better	88%	
	Less than satisfactory	12%	

## PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

### Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

#### Attainment and progress

· *Key Stage 1 National Assessments*

1. In the 1999 tests or tasks the proportions of seven year olds reaching or exceeding level 2 (the national target) in reading, writing and mathematics were all below the national averages. The proportions reaching level 3 were also all below average. Teacher assessments indicated that pupils' attainment in science was about average. The 1998 results were significantly better. Proportions of pupils reaching level 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science were all about average, although the proportions reaching a higher level were below average. The 1996 and 1997 results were broadly similar to those in 1998. Taking results in these three years together the overall performance of pupils was about average, with girls doing a little better than boys. Inspectors consider that the 1999 results were not typical of the school, and that results in 2000 will again be close to average.

7. *Key Stage 2 National assessments*

2. In the 1999 tests the proportions of eleven year olds reaching or exceeding level 4 (the national target) were average in mathematics and science, but below average in English. Proportions exceeding the national target and reaching level 5 were average in mathematics, below average in English, and well below average in science. These relatively poor performances at the higher levels resulted in the overall performance of the year group being below average in English and science, and average in mathematics. When compared to the results of similar schools (those with between 8% and 20% of pupils entitled to free school meals) performances in 1999 were below the average. The 1998 results were dramatically

different from those of 1999. All 1998 measures of performance indicated that the results were well above average for all schools in English, mathematics and science, and also well above average when compared to those of similar schools. Prior to 1999 Key Stage 2 results had shown steadily improving trends since 1996 and the time of the previous inspection. Data provided by the school revealed that the 1998 year 6 cohort contained an unusually high proportion of very able children and an unusually low proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The reverse was true in 1999 when there was a large proportion (about 25%) of pupils with special educational needs and very few very able children. Over the last three years there have been no systematic differences between the performances of boys and girls at the end of Key Stage 2. Inspectors consider that the 1999 results were not typical, and that the 2000 results will be about average.

### ***Inspection findings.***

3. Overall standards are about average at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Overall progress is satisfactory. It is good for the under fives and in much of Key Stage 1, but deteriorates in the early parts of Key Stage 2, improving again towards the end of Key Stage 2. The progress made by boys and girls does not differ in any systematic way. Progress made by pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, although they receive only limited additional support. These findings are broadly similar to those of the previous inspection.
4. Overall progress benefits from the good start pupils receive in the nursery and reception classes, the generally good attitudes to school displayed by pupils of all ages, and the introduction of more systematic schemes of work in the recent past. Progress is not always as good as it could be because lessons are not always prepared and delivered with sufficient care, the teachers do not always work as an effective team in planning and evaluating the quality of teaching, when classes are working in groups some groups are allowed to use time non-productively, and there is a general shortage of up-to-date resources for learning, including computers.
5. Standards in English are about average at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and most pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school, but more able pupils sometimes suffer from lack of challenge. Progress of all pupils has benefited from the introduction of the Literacy Hour. Standards of speaking and listening are generally good because all pupils have ample opportunities to make good progress. Standards in reading are about average at the end of each Key Stage. Progress in reading is restricted by the limited use of non-fiction and reference books across the curriculum, and the absence of a school library. Standards in writing are about average at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Younger pupils would make better progress if they had more opportunities to practise writing longer pieces of work. Older pupils receive a solid grounding in spelling and grammar. Handwriting develops satisfactorily but its use is not promoted consistently in Key Stage 2.
6. The satisfactory development of a range of language skills assists progress in other subjects. Work in other subjects similarly makes a contribution to the development of competency in English, but pupils do not make sufficient use of word processing techniques to draft and refine written work.
7. Standards in mathematics are average at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, and progress is generally satisfactory in both key stages. Progress in Key Stage 1 is helped by the good practical experience gained by pupils in the nursery and reception classes. Throughout the school progress is being assisted by an increasing emphasis on mental arithmetic, and the introduction of the national numeracy strategy. Progress in Key Stage 2 is sometimes hindered by a lack of appropriate resources and an over reliance on worksheets, some of which do not sufficiently challenge more able pupils. Pupils' computational and measuring skills are used to good effect in a range of other subjects, but insufficient use is made of graphical representations in subjects such as geography and science.
8. Standards in science are average at the end of each key stage. Progress is satisfactory, but could be better especially in Key Stage 2. Teachers use a published scheme uncritically, and sometimes fail to make adjustments which would enliven lessons and provide better challenges to more able pupils. Nevertheless most pupils leave the school with a reasonable grounding in physical and biological science, and some understanding of experimental methods.

9. Standards of attainment in information technology are below average throughout the school and progress is unsatisfactory in some aspects of the subject. This is because the school is short of equipment and pupils have insufficient opportunities to practise and refine an appropriate range of techniques. Most gain reasonable proficiency in word processing, some understanding of data processing, and become able to access information from CD-ROMs. There is inadequate software available for information technology to make a suitable contribution to learning in most other subjects.
10. The quality of work in art, design and technology, geography and history is generally similar to that normally expected for pupils' ages, and most pupils are making satisfactory progress. There have been some improvements since the previous inspection because of the introduction of better schemes of work.
11. Standards in music are significantly below average because the subject has been neglected. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress because there is currently no planned programme of musical education as they move through the school.
12. Standards in physical education are above average at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Pupils of all ages make good progress in all aspects of the subject because they are enthusiastic and benefit from well planned and energetic teaching. School teams have a good record of success in local competitions. Virtually all pupils learn to swim to the standard specified by the National Curriculum as a result of the well organised programme of lessons at the local leisure centre for years 5 and 6.
13. The school is emerging from a difficult period involving financial and staffing problems. The head and governors are well aware of current deficiencies in curriculum provision and have made good plans to improve the situation. Challenging but realistic targets for improved levels of attainment have been set in co-operation with the local authority. Inspectors consider there is good potential for improvement in most aspects of the school's work provided the staff work as a productive team and accept that more needs to be done to bring the rate of pupils' progress in all classrooms up to that of the best.

#### **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

14. The last inspection report found that the pupils' positive attitudes to learning made a significant contribution to their progress and attainment. This continues to be the case. Pupils' attitudes are good.
15. Pupils under five in the nursery and in the reception class settle quickly into class routines. They listen carefully to adults and are confident and enthusiastic about learning activities. They communicate effectively with each other and establish good relationships with teachers.
16. In Key Stages 1 and 2 most pupils show interest in their work. They display enthusiasm by bringing books and objects from home to support learning. In most lessons they concentrate well both when listening to teachers and working in groups. Most pupils are good at following instructions but their capacity for independent learning and personal study does not develop satisfactorily. They have too few opportunities to carry out research with library books or to use computers to locate information in CD-ROMs.
17. Parents are happy with standards of behaviour and inspectors agree there are no major problems. There have been no exclusions during the past year. There was no direct evidence of bullying during the inspection. Pupils say there are occasional incidents involving bullying but these are dealt with quickly and effectively by the staff. Most pupils are well behaved in class, but a few older pupils are occasionally disruptive and can slow the pace of lessons. Behaviour around the school and in the playground is generally satisfactory. Pupils know and usually observe the school rules. They help to keep the building and its grounds free from litter and graffiti. Many pupils take pride in the appearance of their written work.
18. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Relationships among pupils, and between pupils and adults are generally good. Most pupils are co-operative and friendly both in lessons and at other times in the school day. Older pupils often help younger ones, for instance, in the dining room. Groups of pupils

sometimes, however, play rough games without consideration for others. Most pupils work collaboratively in pairs or groups, and share ideas and equipment. Good co-operation is shown in gymnastics and team games. Pupils usually show respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others, but a small minority do not behave respectfully in assembly. They respond generously to appeals for people less fortunate than themselves, as when filling shoe-boxes with presents for a Christmas appeal. The older pupils respond well to stories of world leaders like Martin Luther King. Their own wishes for the future show sensitivity to important issues such as pollution and equality. Older pupils are keen to be prefects and carry out appropriate duties enthusiastically and reliably. They are proud to represent the school in competitive sport.

### **Attendance**

19. Good attendance benefits the progress pupils make. The overall attendance rate (95.7%) is above average, and the rate of unauthorised absence (truancy) is about average. Very few parents take their children for holidays during term-time.
20. Punctuality is unsatisfactory, and has not improved since the previous inspection. Far too many pupils drift into school after the official start time. On each of two days during the inspection over 35 pupils were up to 15 minutes late. This poor punctuality delays registration, disrupts classes, and provides an inappropriate start to the school day.

## **Quality of education provided**

### **Teaching**

21. During the inspection 88% of all the teaching observed was satisfactory or better, and 49% was good or better. There was very little very good and no outstanding teaching. The 12% of unsatisfactory teaching was all in Key Stage 2 classes. The best teaching observed was in the nursery and reception classes, where 80% was good and the rest satisfactory. In Key Stage 1 about half the teaching was good and half satisfactory. In Key Stage 2 about a quarter of the teaching was unsatisfactory. About half the remainder was good and about half satisfactory. These teaching statistics may have been affected by the absence of two experienced teachers whose classes were taken by temporary, short term supply teachers.
22. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach are satisfactory overall. The staff have worked hard and successfully to become conversant with the requirements of the national literacy strategy and the national numeracy strategy, and taken part in considerable in-service training to increase their competency in information technology. In the core subjects the teaching of mathematics was rather better than the teaching of English or science, and this is reflected in the standards pupils attain. Lack of in depth knowledge in science sometimes results in a slavish adherence to a published scheme of work, and activities not been appropriately challenging to the pupils being taught. None of the teachers have expertise in the teaching of music, and this has resulted in the subject being neglected. Steps are being taken, however, to remedy this by the implementation of a new scheme of work with appropriate resources to support non-specialist teaching.
23. Most teachers have reasonably high expectations of what pupils should achieve, but there are occasions when the work given is insufficiently demanding. Activities such as copying out printed material or colouring in drawings do little to promote progress.
24. Long and medium term planning of teaching activities are sound, and appropriately reflect National Curriculum requirements and the school's aims. Individual lesson planning, however, is sometimes unsatisfactory because it lacks flair and imagination. Insufficient care is taken to devise activities that are as interesting and effective as possible.
25. Teachers generally strike a suitable balance between whole class teaching and opportunities for pupils to work individually or in groups. Successful attempts are often made to provide work of different levels of difficulty for different groups in the class. On occasion, however, some groups in a classroom are allowed

to be under-occupied and waste time.

26. Management and control of pupils within classrooms is generally good, but rather better in Key Stage 1 than Key Stage 2. In some junior classes the unruly behaviour of a minority of pupils occasionally has an adverse effect on the quality of learning.
27. Lessons generally start on time and sound use is made of the time available during the school day. The school is less well equipped with books, materials and resources than many primary schools, but teachers generally make the best use of what is available. A shortage of books sometimes restricts the background reading, independent study and personal research to which pupils can be directed. Information technology resources are a particular problem, but plans should soon be implemented to improve their availability and teachers will be able to make greater use of computer programmes to aid learning across the curriculum. Extensive use is made of duplicated worksheets. Some of these are very good and allow pupils to work independently on tasks that are appropriate to their level of attainment. Occasionally, however, their use results in pupils being engaged on low level tasks that do little more than occupy the time.
28. The quality of marking of pupils' written work, particularly in Key Stage 2, is unsatisfactory. Much marking amounts to little more than cursory ticks, and mistakes are often uncorrected. Pupils are not encouraged to repeat unsatisfactory work, and are sometimes allowed to leave work uncompleted. Comments which tell pupils what they need to do to improve, and the targets at which they should be aiming, are rare. There are some good end of topic tests to check pupils' levels of knowledge and understanding, but the results are not used systematically to plan corrective work.
29. Homework is sometimes set to supplement classwork, but its use and effectiveness are inconsistent from class to class. The school has recently produced a new homework policy, but at the time of the inspection it was not being implemented with sufficient rigour.
30. Since the previous inspection there has been an overall improvement in the quality of teaching but some weaknesses still remain. The challenge facing the school is to make better use of the experience and capabilities of individual teachers so that more expertise can be shared, and better attempts made to produce very good classroom practice, rather than teaching that is merely adequate.

### **The curriculum and assessment**

31. The curriculum is reasonably broad and balanced. It meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum, except in information technology where the full programme of study is not covered. The curriculum is mainly taught in discrete subjects but teachers encourage the transfer of skills and knowledge across subject boundaries. Throughout the school insufficient attention is given to music and information technology. The curriculum for children under five is good and links closely to the early stages of the National Curriculum. It covers all the areas of learning expected for the age group and is presented in an exciting way which prepares children well for the next stage.
32. Satisfactory provision is made for personal and social education. Topics such as sex education and drugs awareness are integrated in a sensitive manner at times appropriate to pupils' natural inquisitiveness and increasing maturity.
33. Since the previous inspection new policy documents and schemes of work have been put in place to support planning. Subject co-ordinators are beginning to check the effect of this on pupils' work but procedures are at an early stage of development. Daily lesson plans usually include tasks to match pupils' differing abilities, and opportunities for assessment. In some good lessons observed teachers made pertinent use of the latter in preparing for subsequent lessons. A good start has been made with the introduction of the Literacy Hour and this is leading to improvements in English. The National Numeracy Strategy has only recently been introduced but it is already having a positive impact, for instance in making pupils aware of the different mental strategies that can be used in number work. This is more noticeable in Key Stage 1 where there are better resources and teachers have had more training.

34. The curriculum provides equal opportunities for all pupils to learn and make progress. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils with special educational needs, the support from external agencies being especially valuable in the case of disabled pupils. A blind pupil who attends the school receives excellent support which enables her to benefit from all aspects of the curriculum, including the effective programme of swimming instruction organised for pupils in years 5 and 6. Additional professional support in the classroom for pupils with learning difficulties is limited. Consequently the regular help given by a number of parent volunteers is particularly welcome.
35. There is a good, varied programme of extra-curricular activities including many competitive sports such as cross-country running, netball, football, cricket and touch rugby. A considerable number of boys and girls participate in these activities. It was pleasing to see how much pupils valued the prayer group meeting. The sensitivity with which they used the opportunity to think of the wider world was indicative of a growing awareness of their inner feelings. Educational visits to technology centres, museums and environmental centres enrich the curriculum, as do talks and demonstrations from visiting speakers. The residential outdoor pursuits courses for years 5 and 6 are particularly beneficial. They provide new physical experiences and good opportunities for pupils to socialise with others away from home. The school makes good provision for pupils outside normal hours through the 'out of hours' club.
36. Whole-school assessment procedures were not well developed at the time of the previous inspection and the need for their improvement was a key issue. Since then a new system has been introduced, but is not yet fully effective in measuring the progress of pupils towards the targets set for them. Pupils not making the progress of which they are capable are not always identified at a sufficiently early stage. The assessment procedures for children under five are good. They are thorough in tracking all aspects of development and provide clear starting points for teachers in Key Stage 1.

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

37. The previous report stated that all aspects of spiritual, moral and social development were effectively promoted and that cultural development was sound. At the present time the overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
38. The provision for spiritual development is good. Pupils take part in a collective act of worship each day either at a school assembly or with prayers in the classroom. The pupils also attend Mass in the adjacent parish church. Religious education is taught each day using the Salford Diocese Syllabus. The parish priest visits the school regularly and other visitors, such as a missionary with experience in the third world, come to assemblies. The mission statement has a spiritual base and the aims of the school reflect gospel values. Good spiritual development is exemplified by the displays of prayers written by pupils.
39. The provision for moral development is good. Pupils are clear about the behaviour needed to make the school a caring and happy place. Most are well behaved and show respect for fellow pupils and adults. Occasional miscreants are usually well managed by teachers. Appropriate moral and social themes are a good feature of assemblies and the religious education syllabus. During the inspection, for example, pupils were encouraged to reflect on repentance and forgiveness. All pupils develop a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong because the staff use all opportunities to give explanations and examples. The school helps the less fortunate people of the world through regular charitable collections. Shoeboxes full of Christmas presents are currently being assembled and sent to children in Liberia.
40. The provision for social development is satisfactory. Pupils are courteous, well mannered and confident conversationalists. Behaviour in the dining room is good. Most pupils have well developed table manners. On the school yard pupils play co-operatively together so that lunchtime is a worthwhile social experience for them. Bullying is not a serious concern but pupils know what to do if they encounter unpleasant behaviour. The school grounds are free from litter and the pupils treat the school buildings, the furniture and equipment with care. Pupils speak sincerely about the importance of preserving and improving the environment.
41. Older pupils are given some real responsibilities and respond to them well. They look after younger

children who are having packed lunches under the supervision of welfare assistants. Pupils are encouraged to have a sense of sportsmanship when they take part in competitive games. They learn to “meet with triumph and disaster, and treat these two impostors just the same”. A good policy for personal and social education includes topics involving sex education, drugs awareness and alcohol in the science curriculum. The police “Crucial Crew” team visits the school to make the pupils aware of aspects of personal safety. Old age pensioners are invited to visit the school at Christmas. Each year older pupils make a residential visit to Lledr Hall Outdoor Pursuits Centre. This provides valuable social opportunities for them to live together independently of their families.

42. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils’ cultural development. In art lessons pupils encounter the work of famous painters. There are visits to museums and art galleries. A range of classical and modern music is played during assemblies, and pupils can learn to play the guitar in an extra-curricular club. Pupils develop a sound understanding of their own heritage through work in English, history, geography and religious education. They have only limited opportunities to become aware of the diversity and richness of other cultures, and this aspect of provision has not improved since the previous inspection.
43. Pupils with special educational needs participate fully in the spiritual and social life of the school. Their behaviour and moral development are good. They share the same provision for cultural development.

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

44. The school's approach to support welfare and guidance is generally sound. No concerns were raised by parents.
45. The school is a caring community where relationships between most staff and pupils are good and where pupils' well being has a high priority. Pupils are well supervised at all times. Staff generally provide good role models to the pupils. The mid day assistants effectively encourage good table manners and the correct use of cutlery. However those pupils having school dinners spend far too long queuing - a particularly unstimulating way of occupying their free time. The bleak appearance of the dining room and its poor acoustics reduce considerably the value of lunchtime as a social occasion.
46. The school's procedures for keeping track of pupils' progress and personal development are unsatisfactory. Academic progress is supposed to be recorded in class assessment folder, but many of these, particularly in Key Stage 2, contain very scanty information. Personal development of the underfives is recorded well, but in the rest of the school records are again very sparse. The paucity of background information made it difficult for supply teachers to operate effectively during the inspection.
47. Procedures for promoting good behaviour are satisfactory and generally successful, although the school discipline policy is a complex and confusing document which does little to promote a consistent approach throughout the school. Occasional incidents of poor behaviour have an adverse effect on the quality of learning in some classes. Good behaviour is recognised by a system of awards which are well publicised in assemblies.
48. The school keeps satisfactory formal records of all serious incidents of bad behaviour. Bullying and racism are not tolerated and neither is a problem in the school, but if an incident occurs satisfactory records are kept and parents informed.
49. The school's procedures for recording and promoting attendance are generally sound. The completion of registers meets statutory regulations - a point criticised in the previous inspection. Absences are correctly recorded and there are satisfactory procedures for following up all cases where the reason for absence is unknown. It is unsatisfactory that the prospectus contains no guidance as to what parents should do if their child is absent, although procedures are explained in the discipline policy which is only available to parents on request. Parents are also not informed of the school's policy towards holidays in term time although this is not a problem in the school. The desirability of good punctuality is mentioned in the prospectus but the school's procedures on the subject need tightening up. Not all teachers are in the playground to meet their pupils at five to nine, the school is too tolerant of pupils arriving up to 15 minutes late and it is unsatisfactory that no records are made of the numbers involved.
50. Health and safety is taken seriously. The responsible person has been trained, the premises are inspected termly and there are regular fire drills and safety checks on equipment. There is adequate first aid cover and accidents are correctly recorded. The inspectors noted that the emergency steps out of the mobile classrooms appear rotten and that many pupils with packed lunches eat in rooms where paint is peeling off the ceiling. The school should take professional advice on the health and safety implications of these points. It is unsatisfactory for pupils to practise cross-country running at lunchtime in their normal school clothes.
51. The school shows good practice on the subject of Child Protection. There is a policy in place, the named person has been correctly trained and all staff are regularly reminded of the school's procedures.

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

52. The school's aim of fostering and strengthening bonds with parents, parish and the wider community is being well met.
53. The vast majority of parents are supportive of the school. They are considerably more satisfied with the school than at the time of the previous inspection. Parents very much approve of the values and attitudes

taught and they like the way they are made welcome in the school. Nearly all reported that their children like going to the school. These positive points were confirmed by the inspection.

54. Overall, the quality of information given to parents is satisfactory. The prospectus and governors' annual report are informative and give parents a clear picture of what the school stands for, but there are some minor omissions mentioned elsewhere in this report. Meetings have been held to keep parents fully informed on the recent changes to the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Arrangements for parents to meet their child's teacher are satisfactory. There are two formal opportunities a year to meet but some parents would like more privacy at these meetings. The school is aware of these concerns and has plans to improve the arrangements. The lack of any information for parents on future work significantly restricts the extent to which they can be involved in their child's learning. The inspectors agree with those parents who expressed concern about not having a clear understanding of what is taught.
55. The quality of pupils' reports is variable - a few are good but some are unsatisfactory. Reports would benefit from a common layout and style. Progress in each of the National Curriculum subjects is not always clearly described, and many reports do not include advice about what pupils need to do to improve and the targets at which they should be aiming.
56. Some parents have concerns about homework, and these are shared by inspectors. The school has a clear homework policy but this is not being consistently implemented in all Key Stage 2 classes. Pupils are not issued with homework diaries and this makes it difficult for parents to check that homework is done.
57. Pupils benefit greatly from parent helpers in school. A large number of committed parents regularly help in the classroom. Their contribution is especially valuable because the school cannot afford to employ an adequate number of classroom assistants. Volunteer helpers know what they are doing and their time is very well used. They are having a significant impact on pupils' learning. Parents are also involved in an active Parents' Association which is successful in arranging social events and fund raising for the school.
58. Good links with the community enrich pupils' education. The school is seen as an integral and essential part of the parish community - the priest regularly visits the school and there are weekly class masses in the church. A good range of visitors to the school helps to introduce pupils to the wider world. Parish pensioners, for instance, go to the nursery for tea and songs, and local residents bring history to life by talking about bygone days in the local area. Good use is made of the locality and museums when studying history and geography. There are ample opportunities for pupils to take part in competitive sports against local schools. At present the school has no significant links with industry.

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

### **64. Leadership and management**

59. The overall quality of leadership and management is unsatisfactory but improving.
60. The previous inspection, which took place a little over three years ago, reported some significant problems with the leadership and management of the school. Delegated responsibilities were not all being satisfactorily discharged, curriculum planning and delivery were not being checked adequately, governors' committees did not have suitable terms of reference, and an appraisal system was not being implemented satisfactorily. The situation was exacerbated by the long term absence of a senior member of staff. Shortly after the inspection the head teacher left to take up another post. A temporary acting headteacher was drafted in from another school before the current head took up his post two years ago. With the effective support of the governors and the local authority he has worked with considerable industry and purpose to remedy shortcomings. It is understandable, in the context of the time scale involved and the need for government initiatives involving numeracy and literacy to be tackled, that not all reported faults have yet been fully corrected. Inspectors are confident, however, that the current head is providing a clear educational direction for the work of the school and plans exist to bring about required improvements.

61. The current senior management team consists of head, deputy, Key Stage 1 co-ordinator, Key Stage 2 co-ordinator and the early years co-ordinator. Other important roles are filled by curriculum co-ordinators – teachers with responsibilities for the oversight of National Curriculum subjects throughout the school. All have appropriate job specifications but are not yet working effectively as a fully co-operative team. Checks on the quality of curriculum planning and teaching are still not being carried out with sufficient rigour. It is unsatisfactory that the quality of marking of pupils’ written work has not been improved. The newly revised homework policy has not been implemented with sufficient thoroughness. Successful steps have been taken to introduce new and improved assessment systems, but the data these are producing is not yet being used appropriately to evaluate the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of the curriculum.
62. The governors are very supportive of the school and are well aware of its strengths and weaknesses. They have clear ideas about how the latter can be overcome. Since the previous inspection they have formulated terms of reference for committees. In the light of concerns about the curriculum they have linked a named governor with each of the curriculum subjects. These link governors now receive regular reports from appropriate teaching staff. Appraisal systems have been considerably improved, and procedures have benefited considerably from the commendable initiative to involve the school in the “Investors in People” project. The governors, working in co-operation with the head, have wisely involved the local education authority in analysing weakness and formulating plans for the future.
63. There is a sound school development plan which lists clear priorities for the future. It contains end of Key Stage 2 performance targets which have been agreed with the local authority. Proposed activities are clearly costed, with indications of staff responsible and success indicators. Procedures to evaluate and monitor developments are currently not fully developed, and this is a matter to which the governors need to pay attention.
64. The school has a sound ethos. There is a good climate for learning in most classrooms, but in some Key Stage 2 classes there are insufficiently high expectations of the rate at which pupils should work and the standards they should achieve. Some teachers are too easily satisfied with their lacklustre lessons, and do not give enough thought to how they might be made more interesting and stimulating. Relationships between pupils and teachers are generally good, but teamwork among staff needs to be developed further.
65. The well conceived equal opportunity policy is satisfactorily applied throughout the school.
66. The governors ensure that the school meets most statutory requirements. Occasional infringements, such as the incomplete implementation of the information technology curriculum, are mentioned elsewhere in the report.
- 72. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**
67. Overall staffing, accommodation and learning resources are unsatisfactory.
68. The school has an adequate supply of teachers for the number of pupils in the school and they are suitably qualified and experienced. All have appropriately worded job descriptions, although in practice some assigned staff responsibilities are not being carried out effectively. A reasonable amount of trained special needs support is “bought in” from the local authority and this is used effectively. There are insufficient classroom assistants and the level of general classroom support is poor. The situation is ameliorated by the large number of parents who help in the school and make a valuable contribution to the quality of education. Excellent support is provided for a blind pupil who is enabled to make very good progress.
69. There is a satisfactory induction policy for staff who join the school and a useful staff handbook. The previous report noted that the appraisal system was unsatisfactory. The school’s involvement with the “Investors in People” has helped to remedy this deficiency and appraisal arrangements are now satisfactory. Arrangements for staff development are satisfactory and are linked to both the school development plan and the appraisal system.
70. The school office staff work unobtrusively but effectively to ensure that all systems run smoothly. The

school caretaker and his staff provide a clean and tidy school, and carry out minor repairs efficiently.

71. The main building is shabby and uninspiring, but provides adequate space for the pupils it accommodates. The previous report noted that the “mobile” classrooms were in a poor state of repair. They are still below standard and do not provide a suitable educational environment for the new millennium, despite the valiant efforts of the teachers to make them more attractive with interesting displays of work.
72. The previous report was critical of the lack of a library. This is still a problem which restricts opportunities for pupils to engage in independent study and research. Nursery accommodation is good. In addition to classroom space it includes a covered outdoor play area, a garden and an appropriately protected pond. The school uses the good sized parish hall for physical education and assemblies. There is a small but adequate games field. The junior playground has an unsatisfactorily broken surface. It does not drain well and there are large puddles for some time after rain.
73. The overall provision of resources for learning, although better than at the time of the previous inspection, is still unsatisfactory. In recent years too little has been spent on books, materials and equipment. There are shortages in science, music, art, information technology and Key Stage 2 mathematics. The nursery has an adequate supply of large outdoor equipment. Many of the computers are becoming obsolete and unreliable, but the situation is set to improve with imminent government funded additions. Current stocks of information technology software are inadequate to support learning in the full range of subjects. The supply of books in classrooms is generally adequate. Resources are satisfactorily organised, clearly marked and appropriately stored so as to be readily accessible. Resources outside school are also taken advantage of to enhance the quality of pupils’ experiences and improve their social and cultural development. Pupils visit the local library, Peel Park Museum and the Manchester Museum of Science and Technology. A theatre group is shortly to visit the school with a performance of “Pinnoccio.”

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

74. Shortly after the previous inspection the school experienced severe budgetary problems culminating in a considerable deficit. Prudent planning and tight financial control have resulted in a significant improvement in the situation and the school is on target to eliminating the deficit next year. The consequences of the cost cutting exercises have impacted on some aspects of the school’s effectiveness. Whilst class sizes have been kept at a reasonable level, additional support in the classrooms is minimal. This affects the amount of time teachers can devote to smaller groups of lower-attaining pupils, and sometimes restricts the progress of others in the class. Spending on resources has been low. There is an inadequate supply of good quality materials with which pupils can work independently, for instance, in information technology and mathematics in Key Stage 2. Expenditure on the maintenance of the building has also been kept to a minimum and much of the school has a shabby appearance. The headteacher and governors maintain good oversight of the financial situation. They implemented all recommendations made in the audit that was carried out shortly after the previous inspection. The school fund is well managed and audited annually. The day-to-day administration is satisfactory.
75. The income and expenditure per pupil are about average. Money allocated from specific grants is used appropriately and effectively. The school makes adequate provision for the pupils on the register of special educational needs.
76. Teachers are sensibly deployed in relation to class sizes. With regard to other responsibilities, the senior management team and subject co-ordinators are not effective enough in checking pupils’ progress and instituting follow up procedures where they find under-achievement.
77. Accommodation and resources, limited as they are, are used appropriately for the benefit of pupils’ progress and well being. Taking into account the standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science, the satisfactory progress, the average level of funding and the overall standard of teaching, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

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

78. Pupils are admitted to the reception class in the September each year before their fifth birthday. Almost all of the pupils have spent at least a year attending part-time in the nursery before starting school. At the time of the inspection, there were eight children who were four years old in the nursery. The majority (28) of four-year-olds were attending the two reception classes.
79. Overall provision for the under fives is good. The school has established an early years policy which provides a suitable framework for the nursery and reception staff to meet children's needs. The curriculum is based securely on the six areas of learning recommended for this age group, and leads into the National Curriculum as pupils move through the reception year. Whilst the curriculum is broad and balanced, priority is appropriately given to the development of language and literacy, mathematical skills and to personal and social education.
80. Attainment on entry to the nursery is varied, but is generally below that expected for this age group. Nearly all children make good overall progress in the nursery and reception classes. By the time they start compulsory schooling at the age of five the majority of children have achieved the standards expected in all recommended areas of learning.

### **86. *Personal and Social Development***

81. Almost all of the children make good progress in developing personal and social skills. In both the nursery and reception classes they play together well and co-operate successfully in role-play. In the reception classes, the children have developed their co-operative skills sufficiently to enable them to work successfully with a partner or as part of a team, for example, in gymnastics and dance. They are able and willing to share and take turns. The majority of the pupils relate positively to adults and confidently join group and class lessons. They quickly become able to select activities independently. They are enthusiastic to explore and persevere, for instance, when developing pencil control or using scissors, to complete their tasks. They respond to the school's values and are beginning to develop an understanding of what is acceptable and what is not. All staff have a secure knowledge of the needs of young children. They work hard to provide a calm yet stimulating environment where the children feel valued and grow in confidence. In the nursery, music is often used successfully to create a peaceful atmosphere as children arrive or have their snack. All adults show respect for the pupils' ideas and carefully arrange displays of their work. This raises pupils' self-esteem and encourages greater effort. Relationships are caring and supportive. Staff use praise effectively. All adults provide good role models, and promote positive, considerate attitudes and values. These provide a firm foundation for subsequent school life.

87. ***Language and Literacy***

82. Most children make good progress in developing language and literacy skills. They particularly enjoy listening to stories and joining in repeated refrains. They are confident in talking about their own experiences to the rest of the class and generally listen to others with interest. Most pupils are interested in books and handle them with care. Nursery children are beginning to recognise characters in their first reading books. In the reception class, the majority of the children recognise the names of the characters and some key words in books. They recognise an increasing number of letters of the alphabet, including the initial letter of their name by shape and sound. They can compose a simple sentence verbally and copy it under their teacher's writing. Handwriting skills are variable. Most of the children are beginning to form letters correctly but are still developing control over size and position. In informal play situations, the children write notes using letters and pictures to communicate with their friends, for instance, to take orders in 'the café'. The higher attainers can write their own names. The teachers, especially in the nursery give appropriately high priority to the development of speaking and listening skills and take every opportunity to extend children's vocabulary. Classroom displays are organised attractively to give prominence to the written word, and to familiarise the children with the words used in their reading books. A systematic approach to teaching specific vocabulary and to learning letters and their sounds supports progress well. The National Literacy Strategy, at an appropriate level, is being carefully implemented in the reception classes and provides a secure framework for progress. Careful assessments are made of pupils' progress in reading and writing. Planned work usually takes good account of what the pupils already know. Occasionally time is not used well and pupils colour in pictures when they could be involved in more challenging activities.

88. ***Mathematics***

83. Children make good progress in mathematical development. They become able to sort, count and match numbers to five or ten with a range of practical equipment. They learn to recognise several two-dimensional shapes. In the reception class, children sort mixed shapes by touch. They can recognise and name shapes such as circle, oblong and triangle with reference to the corners and sides. About half of the children recognise the numerals one to nine and can arrange them in the correct order. They are beginning to carry out simple addition operations practically. They use their emerging skills to record information in other areas. For instance, with help from the teacher, they are able to record data about the class's favourite sandwiches in a bar graph. The teachers are skilled in organising a range of relevant practical activities, for the whole class and for small groups, which enable the children to learn at first-hand. Good management of groups within the classes enables the teachers to intervene effectively and extend the children's learning through carefully directed questions.

89. ***Knowledge and Understanding of the World***

84. Most children make good progress. They are interested in the world around them and keen to explore it. During the inspection, for example, the reception pupils were preparing a party to celebrate "Baby Bear's Birthday". They used their own experience of birthdays to consider party food and drew up a list of necessities. They compared three different sandwich fillings using their senses of smell and taste, and discussed texture and "spreadability", before deciding on their favourite. They considered which picture would be suitable for Baby Bear's birthday card and were competent in cutting out, folding and sticking to make a card. Pupils become able to use information technology to support their learning. They control the mouse adeptly to alter images on screen when using a language programme, and use the language master carefully when listening to a recorded story. Teachers organise a wealth of interesting experiences which challenge children to extend their existing knowledge. The curriculum is usually based on a central theme, which enables the teachers to plan activities which support each other and provide a coherent overall learning experience.

90. ***Physical Development***

85. Children make good progress in physical development. In the nursery, they explore space, and display increasingly good control over the selection of large wheeled toys in the purpose-built and well organised outdoor play area. They show good fine motor control when playing with construction toys and jigsaws. Reception class pupils show increasing skills in using pencils, scissors and paint brushes. In physical education lessons, they move with confidence in the school hall, showing an increasing awareness of space and of other children. They stretch, curl and balance with an above average degree of control and co-ordination for their ages. Teachers plan activities with clear objectives, so that a range of physical skills is developed over time.

***Creative Development***

86. Children make satisfactory progress in creative development. They explore and experiment with a variety of techniques from free painting to sponge printing. When making individual or group collages they choose from a range of papers and fabrics to provide different textures with some degree of imagination. They respond to music and with help, are able to interpret a story in dance, and keep to the beat of a simple tune. They sing a good repertoire of songs and rhymes. They are imaginative in their informal role-play when, for example, acting out the story of the Three Bears. Group activities are carefully organised and resources well prepared to enable all of the children to gain from the experience.
87. The quality of teaching is consistently good in all six areas of learning. There is effective liaison between the two reception teachers and nursery staff in planning for progress over time. Day-to-day assessment is carried out conscientiously and used to plan future work. However, the nursery records which are passed on to the reception classes are not sufficiently detailed to enable full curriculum continuity to be achieved. A formal assessment is made of all of the pupils' attainment on entry to the reception class. The information gathered is used to set appropriate levels of work and to form ability groups within each class. The nursery nurse provides very good support for the teacher and the children in the nursery. The absence of non-teaching assistance in the reception classes inhibits progress. This is mitigated by the good voluntary contribution made by the parents.

93. **English, mathematics and science**

**English**

88. In the 1999 statutory tests for seven year olds the proportion of pupils reaching the target level was:-
- below the national average in reading;
  - well below average in reading when compared with similar schools;
  - well below the national average in writing;
  - well below average in writing when compared with similar schools.
- The proportion of pupils exceeding the target level was:
- well below the national average;
  - well below average when compared with similar schools.
1. Whilst results in reading have declined gradually since 1996, and writing results have been variable, standards have remained at least in line with the national average until 1999. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that overall standards in reading and writing are now close to those achieved in 1998 and are currently in line with the national average, although some pupils are not reaching the standards of which they are capable.
2. In the 1999 statutory tests for eleven year olds the proportion of pupils reaching the target level in English was:-
- well below the national average;
  - below average when compared with similar schools.
- The proportion of pupils exceeding the target level was:
- in line with the national average;
  - below average when compared with similar schools.

1. Test results have improved steadily since 1996 with an exceptionally good performance in 1998, but a considerable drop in 1999. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that present standards are in line with the national average at the end of the key stage. They are better than in 1999 but not as good as in 1998. The school is on line to meet targets agreed with the local authority at the end of Key Stage 2 for year 2000.
2. Overall progress in both key stages is satisfactory, but there is room for improvement because the rate of progress varies from class to class. Lack of challenge and failure to build on what the pupils have already learned has an adverse effect on the progress of younger Key Stage 2 pupils. In Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2 teachers' expectations are not always high enough, and insufficient opportunities are provided for the potential higher attainers to make the good progress of which they are capable. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and make good progress in line with their individual education plans. Help from the Local Education Authority Learning Support Service, when available, is used effectively to promote progress. Excellent support is provided for a blind pupil who is making good progress. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, whilst in need of further refinement in some classes, provides a sound structure for learning as the pupils move from class to class and is beginning to have a beneficial effect on progress. The systematic teaching of letters and their sounds enables the younger pupils to make satisfactory progress in reading and spelling.
3. Standards of speaking and listening are good for pupils' ages. Most pupils make good progress in communicating their ideas and listening to adults and to each other. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 listen attentively to stories and show understanding when retelling the plot. By the end of Key Stage 1 they join confidently in class discussion and can express ideas in role play situations. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils listen well to adults and to each other in large and small groups. They are able to speak confidently in front of the whole school in assembly. They read plays with expression and express opinions clearly, for instance when discussing the merits of school uniform. Higher attainers express their response to classical literature sensitively and use appropriate vocabulary. They are able to articulate their feelings for fictional characters with clarity.
4. Progress in reading is satisfactory throughout the school. Some pupils in year 6 are making good progress. The youngest pupils in Key Stage 1 are becoming familiar with the names of characters, and the key vocabulary in their first reading books. They recognise most letters of the alphabet by shape and sound and are beginning to blend letters together, such as 'th' to decode unfamiliar words. By the end of the key stage, most pupils are able to read aloud confidently and accurately from their graded reading books. They are beginning to apply a range of strategies to establish meaning. Opportunities for individual reading are based mainly on the graded reading scheme, commercially published work books, and group readers during the literacy hour. This does not provide enough support for the pupils in developing reading reference skills. Consequently, their ability to find information independently in simple non-fiction books is unsatisfactory. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils are enthusiastic readers. Many bring in books from home and several are members of the public library. Almost all are aware, through class studies, of the works of famous writers such as Dickens and Shakespeare and express opinions about such authors. Skills of locating and using information from reference books, and of skimming and scanning text to support their learning in other subjects, are not sufficiently developed. The absence of a school library has a significantly detrimental effect on the pupils' acquisition of independent research skills.
5. Most pupils in both key stages make satisfactory progress in learning to write. The youngest pupils in Key Stage 1 can compose, with help, a message for a get well card. Led by the teacher they contribute to the writing of group stories, and start to learn spellings. By the end of the key stage, most pupils can write to report their "news", retell familiar stories and compose poems. They are beginning to use capital letters and full stops and are starting to recognise and use spelling rules. Higher attainers have insufficient opportunity to compose and refine longer pieces of writing. Handwriting is generally well formed and neat.
6. In Key Stage 2 younger pupils write poems with particular attention to layout. Whilst a few of the higher attainers choose words creatively for effect, the majority of the pupils rely heavily on the teachers' suggestions and show little independence or imagination in their work. By the end of the key stage, the

majority of the pupils are able to communicate their thoughts clearly in writing. When responding to an extract from 'The Secret Garden', for example, they expressed thoughtful opinions about the main character and extended their ideas in a series of interesting sentences. Most older pupils can spell with reasonable proficiency. They know and make use of grammatical rules about sentence construction. Handwriting is well formed and most older pupils write neatly and legibly in a clear cursive script. There is some inconsistency, however, in teachers' expectations of pupils' presentation. In some classes pupils are allowed to revert to printing and fail to make use of acquired handwriting skills.

7. Most pupils are interested and enthusiastic. They enjoy books and handle them with care. They co-operate effectively in shared reading sessions and sustain concentration well. Whilst attitudes to learning are invariably good in Key Stage 1, they are more variable in Key Stage 2 where a minority of pupils are sometimes noisy and restless in lessons. They respond only slowly to their teachers and occasionally disrupt the progress of others.
8. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in the opportunities it affords for the pupils to respond emotionally and imaginatively to fictional situations. The range of literature studied, from traditional fairy tales such as Red Riding Hood to the works of Shakespeare, gives pupils some understanding of the wealth of their cultural heritage. Group working during the Literacy Hour encourages pupils to take turns and share. Opportunities for the development of independent study skills are neglected. Insufficient use is made of information technology to support learning in English.
9. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teaching was good in about half the lessons observed. Some unsatisfactory teaching was observed in Key Stage 2. Teachers plan work in the context of a secure understanding of the National Literacy Strategy. The Literacy Hour has been established in all classes but there are inconsistencies in its implementation particularly in Key Stage 2, which limit long term progress for some of the pupils. Nevertheless, the organisation of most sessions with an appropriate balance of class and group work is efficient. Teachers are generally precise in their expositions, and lessons are well focused to meet clearly defined learning goals. Expectations are often not high enough and work planned does not always match the full range of ability in each class. Undemanding activities, such as colouring in, do not enable some pupils, especially the higher attainers, to make the good progress of which they are capable. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good in most classes. Most lessons proceed at a brisk pace. Resources are shared well between classes, and appropriately prepared. "Big Books" chosen for whole class work are of suitable quality and relevant to the pupils' level of development. Assessment procedures are carried out efficiently and used to plan future work in most classes in Key Stage 1. These procedures are not used consistently in Key Stage 2 and insufficient data is collected to plan accurately to meet pupils' needs. Whilst marking is regularly carried out, it is not always thorough and does not tell the pupils how to improve their work. Homework in Key Stage 2 is not used consistently to support work in class effectively. In unsatisfactory lessons teachers' lack of knowledge of pupils' prior attainment, low expectations and ineffective management strategies led to unsatisfactory progress for most pupils.
10. The school has not yet established a climate of self-evaluation. Procedures for senior staff to check up on the implementation of school policy and the standard of work in both key stages have not been put into place. This makes it difficult for the curriculum co-ordinator to be effective in helping to raise standards throughout the school.

## **Mathematics**

11. Pupils' results in national tests for seven year olds in 1999 were well below average both when compared to all and to similar schools. These results were in contrast to those of previous years which were consistently close to the national average. The 1999 results were significantly affected by changing staffing circumstances in Key Stage 1. In the national tests for eleven year olds in 1999, pupils' results were similar to the national average for all schools but below average compared to similar schools. When averaged over the three year period to 1998, results were well above average. The 1999 results accurately reflect the distribution of ability in the cohort. By the time pupils leave the school, attainment in mathematics is better than that in English and science. Observation of lessons, scrutiny of work and

discussion with pupils during the inspection confirm attainment to be average in respect to expected levels for seven and eleven year olds in 2000. However, there is some under-achievement in the proportion of pupils exceeding the expected level for their age. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. In Key Stage 1, emphasis is rightly placed on mental mathematics and the understanding of number concepts. These are being consolidated through the use of a wide range of practical and mental strategies. Pupils enjoy this approach and there is a noticeable increase in confidence as they progressively learn to apply new skills. In Key Stage 2, pupils become more competent in giving explicit explanations for their answers. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive impact on the development of numeracy skills, but more so in Key Stage 1 where there has been a greater training input.

12. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school. Progress is currently good in Key Stage 1 because teachers are working hard to compensate for poor retention of knowledge and lack of understanding in some classes last year. Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 2 but there are fluctuations. For example, pupils in year 3, many of whom did not reach their full potential in mathematics last year, are still confused about aspects of the subject. Sometimes teaching does not focus sharply enough on helping them to understand very basic principles, such as simple fractions. In other circumstances the class is taught by a succession of supply teachers. In both situations progress is sometimes unsatisfactory. Progress accelerates towards the upper end of the key stage. It is constrained, particularly for higher-attaining pupils, by the lack of up-to-date, structured course material. Teachers make extensive use of worksheets to supplement the old textbooks. Worksheets do not provide adequately for the promotion of independent learning and their preparation is time consuming and costly. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. Good use is made of additional classroom support but this provision is minimal. Teachers sometimes spend a disproportionate amount of time helping lower-attaining pupils at the expense of others who could be moving at a faster pace.
13. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils use mental recall for simple addition and subtraction. They recognise sequences and order numbers to 100. Some pupils understand and use place values to 1000. Attainment in shape, space and measure is satisfactory and pupils use bar charts and pictograms to illustrate features of data they have collected. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to produce graphs and charts using computers. In Key Stage 2, the scheme of work satisfactorily provides for progression through the National Curriculum programmes of study but the assessment system is not sufficiently well developed to detect diminishing progress at a sufficiently early stage. Consequently some pupils' long term progress is unsatisfactorily slow. The development of investigative skills is an integral part of the curriculum and some good examples were noted in year 6. This approach could profitably be extended to younger year groups. Overall the quality of pupils' written work is variable. At best, it is neat, thorough and complete. In contrast some pupils take little pride in presentation and this leads to illogical reasoning and incorrect answers. For instance, when pupils do not use a ruler and a sharp pencil in graphical work they find it impossible to extrapolate results accurately. The use of homework is inconsistent. Pupils benefit on those occasions when it is used purposefully to complement and reinforce classwork.
14. Pupils' attitudes are satisfactory. They respond well to their teachers, particularly when teaching is varied, stimulating and demanding. Pupils in year 6 demonstrated this in a lesson on perimeters. They worked out for themselves how to find the lengths of unknown sides in compound shapes and were keen to apply their knowledge to more complicated questions in the ensuing exercises. Pupils are generally polite and well-behaved. There are however a few exceptions in Key Stage 2, almost invariably in situations where the teacher has failed to captivate and sustain pupils' interest. Basic arithmetical skills support work in other subjects. Teachers do not, however, exploit the use of other skills, for example, graphical representation and statistical analysis of data, to full effect in subjects such as science and geography. Measuring skills are used effectively across the range of subjects.
15. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. The new three-part format of lessons incorporating sharply focused mental work, independent activities and summative class sessions is working particularly well in Key Stage 1 where teaching is good. Teaching is more variable in Key Stage 2 but some good teaching was seen in the upper years. Teaching was unsatisfactory in two of the lessons observed at the lower end

of the key stage. The quality of teaching is the most significant feature contributing to the good progress in some parts of the school. Characteristics of a good lesson in year 1 included lively, enthusiastic exposition, fast pace, realistic targets for pupils of all abilities, and material which stimulated imagination. Addition and subtraction were practised on an extremely good board display which simulated changing numbers of spots on a Dalmatian, and bugs eating through a leaf. The lesson passed all too quickly and pupils were still keen to continue when it came to an end. The oral sessions at the beginning of lessons are particularly effective when teachers capitalize on the opportunity to reinforce aspects known to have been insecure in a previous session. For instance, in a Key Stage 1 class, the teacher used pupils' positions in a circle to consolidate understanding of two more or less than a given number. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, explanations were unclear and pupils became confused. They spent an inappropriate amount of time in a long queue waiting for further clarification. Worksheets were also of poor quality. In general, the quality of teaching is similar to that at the time of the previous inspection. Marking of written work is routine rather than informative. It rarely provides the pupil with guidance as to how the work might be improved.

16. Since the previous inspection there has been a greater emphasis on planning. Long and medium-term plans are translated into daily planning which successfully incorporates evaluation of progress in one lesson to preparation for the next. The school has just put new assessment procedures in place but these are not yet effective in tracking the progress of individual pupils or setting targets for improvement. The curriculum co-ordinator needs to be provided with the facilities and scope to fulfil the responsibilities of her role, especially in relation to collaboration across the two key stages.

#### 112. Science

17. Nationally required teacher assessment procedures at the end of Key Stage 1 in both 1998 and 1999 indicated that the overall level of attainment of the school's seven year olds was broadly average, and similar to those in 1996 and 1997. Observation of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' written work during the inspection revealed these average Key Stage 1 standards are being maintained.
18. National tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1998 and 1999 gave results which produce the comparisons shown in the following table. Level 4 is the expected performance of an eleven year old. "Similar" schools are those with approximately the same proportion (between 8% and 20%) of pupils entitled to free school meals.

Key:- A\*, very high compared to average

A, well above average

B, above average

C, average

D, below average

E, well below average

#### End of Key Stage 2 national science tests

	1998		1999	
	Compared to all schools	Compared to similar schools	Compared to all schools	Compared to similar schools
% pupils gaining level 4 or above	A	A*	C	C
% pupils gaining level 5 or above	A	A	E	E
Overall average score in test	A	A*	D	D

19. The startling difference between 1998 and 1999 is largely explained by the composition of the year group. In 1998 there was a much higher proportion of able pupils, and a much lower proportion of pupils with learning difficulties than in 1999. Observation of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work during the inspection indicates that standards in the current year 6 cohort are about average - better than those of 1999 but not as good as those of 1998.
20. During the inspection it was apparent that most Key Stage 1 pupils gain some understanding of health and growth. They learn about a variety of plants and animals, and become able to talk about their own bodies using a suitable vocabulary. They encounter topics involving light and sound, and gain an initial

insight into a range of materials, their uses, and how they can be changed. They start to use measurements in investigations and by the end of the key stage are starting to understand the concept of “a fair test”.

21. Most Key Stage 2 pupils develop an increasingly complete appreciation of national curriculum topics as they move through the key stage. They gain a satisfactory grounding in biological science with studies that include plants, animals and the internal structure of the human body. Work is appropriately linked to health and sex education. By the end of the key stage work with a variety of materials enables many pupils to distinguish between different types of changes, such as dissolving and burning. They gain an appropriate vocabulary and use words such as dissolving, insoluble, evaporation and condensation accurately. Pupils can enter into discussions about the effects of forces. By the end of year 6, after visiting and re-visiting electrical topics throughout Key Stage 2, most pupils have a sound understanding of electrical circuits. Pupils engage in a range of experimental activities in all Key Stage 2 classes, and develop some appreciation of “the scientific method”. They have insufficient opportunities, however, to draw graphs from tables of measurements they have taken and detect and explain patterns in their results.
22. The quality of work observed in each year group indicates that pupils of all levels of prior attainment, including those with special educational needs, are making satisfactory progress in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. They are following a nationally recommended course of study which meets the National Curriculum requirements in full. All classes have an appropriate weekly time allocation for science, and pupils generally show good levels of interest and enthusiasm for the subject. Progress is not as good as it could be, however, especially in Key Stage 2, because much of the teaching, although generally sound, is pedestrian and unambitious.
23. Teaching is generally satisfactory in both key stages, but there are some weaknesses. Individual lessons are sometimes not planned with sufficient care to ensure that all pupils are appropriately challenged by suitable work for the whole of the time available. In a Key Stage 2 lesson on rocks and minerals, for example, about half the class spent most of the lesson drawing and colouring a small number of rock samples, and gained little or no additional understanding of the topic.
24. The good quality scheme of work is not always interpreted with enough regard for the capabilities of the pupils involved. Some older Key stage 2 pupils, for example, were spending too much time on an investigation involving evaporation. Although the teaching was thorough, and pupils were acquiring an appropriate vocabulary and developing their understanding of experimental method, expectations of the rate at which pupils could work were too modest.
25. Many pupils take some pride in their written work, and books examined during the inspection were often models of neatness and well ordered recording. Written work is not, however, marked with sufficient care. In one instance noted a pupil had indicated that a typical use for metals was in the strings of tennis rackets. This had been ticked as correct with the comment “well done”. Marking is also unsatisfactory in that it does not inform pupils about what they need to do to improve or the targets at which they should be aiming. Occasionally incomplete work passes unnoticed, and corrections are not insisted upon.
26. There are some shortages of equipment for practical work. This sometimes reduces the rate of progress in lessons. In one lesson observed, for example, pupils struggled to make electrical circuits when they were investigating how switches operated because there were no cell holders for the “batteries” they were using. Much time was lost as they struggled to hold wires in contact with the cell terminals instead of being able to make proper connections.
27. Homework is not given to older pupils with sufficient regularity, or with real purpose to consolidate learning and improve progress. More use needs to be made of “revision homeworks” so that pupils do not forget about topics they have previously learnt about. This is especially important because the school operates a two year cycle to take account of mixed aged classes, and some important topics are only visited at infrequent intervals. More encouragement should be given to older pupils to engage in independent study, for instance by engaging in background reading about topics studied and using computers to consult CD-ROMs for information.

28. To improve the quality of science education teachers, both individually and working as a team, need to be more critical of their own and others' lesson planning. More checks are needed on the suitability of proposed activities to allow the pupils concerned to make the maximum progress. Marking needs to be improved, and more use made of assessment procedures to check on the progress pupils are making and evaluate the quality of teaching. The scheme of work in use needs to be interpreted with more imagination and steps taken to ensure that appropriate equipment and materials are available in sufficient quantities.

### **Information technology**

29. As there were no lessons on information technology during the inspection judgements are based on observations of pupils using the computers and discussions with pupils and staff.
30. By the end of Key Stage 1 attainment is below that expected of pupils aged seven. Progress is unsatisfactory because infant pupils do not spend enough time using computers and do not have sufficient experience of all the necessary aspects of information technology. The previous report reached the same conclusion. With help year 2 pupils are able to carry out some word processing operations. In one class observed during the inspection pupils wrote their address using the computer when working on a topic about homes. Pupils are able to use the mouse to operate simple programmes, such as one observed during the inspection that helped develop reading skills. Pupils have little experience of programmes that use simulations to explore and solve problems. Neither can they use simple data handling programs to produce bar charts. Although there is a programmable toy in school pupils rarely use it.
31. By the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is below that expected of 11 year olds. Progress is unsatisfactory because they do not have a wide enough experience of all the strands of information technology required. The previous report records a similar situation. Pupils do not know how to operate a programmable toy and there are no control units in school to operate models made in design and technology. They are not able to use monitoring equipment such as a temperature probe for investigation in science. Pupils do not have sufficient experience of simulation programmes in which they can explore and solve problems. A survey of computer use in school clearly shows that pupils do not spend sufficient time using information technology to support other subjects. Word processing skills are satisfactory. During the inspection year 6 pupils could edit, change fonts, save and retrieve their work and print it. In one class pupils used a word processor to write about the Millennium. The older pupils in another class were able to use data handling to make suitable graphs to record the type of clothing pupils chose to wear on a uniform free day. Other pupils used data handling to show the results of tests they carried out at a science and sports exhibition. Pupils are also able to extract information from CD ROMS but have limited opportunities to use the skill for independent learning. Because of the present lack of suitable equipment pupils do not have experience of the Internet or communicating with e-mails. A few pupils who have computer systems at home are, however, conversant with such techniques.
32. Pupils display a good attitude to information technology. They show interest and are well motivated, but express disappointment that they cannot use computers more often. When pupils use computers they do so carefully and show respect for the expensive equipment.
33. Teaching has to be judged to be unsatisfactory at both key stages because not enough occurs. Although a considerable amount of in-service training has taken place not all teachers are fully confident with all aspects of the subject. It is unsatisfactory that there is no systematic assessment and recording of the work done by the pupils in order that their attainment and progress can be clearly charted.
34. A subject policy and scheme of work have been produced but are not yet operational. Teachers are consequentially unsure of the areas they should cover with their classes, and have insufficient information about pupils' previous learning. Resources are inadequate, many of the computers are unreliable and fast becoming obsolete but new personal computers are scheduled to be introduced within the next six months, and the school has plans to acquire more software to support learning in other subjects. The school has fallen behind many others in information technology developments. There is a considerable need to revitalise the organisation of the subject if effective use is to be made of new equipment.

## Other subjects or courses

### Art

35. The judgments made are based on a small number of lessons observed, work on display and discussions with teachers and pupils.
  36. The previous report indicated that by the end of Key Stage 1 standards were appropriate to the age of the pupils and this is still the case. Infant pupils are introduced to a wide range of skills and use a variety of materials. For example in a Key Stage 1 class pupils used printing with paint to decorate fruit mobiles in their toy fruit shop. In another infant class pupils made some startling collage faces using wool for hair and attractive paintings of skeletons using white paint on black paper. Satisfactory progress is assisted by a sound scheme of work which helps teachers to build upon skills pupils have acquired in the nursery and reception class.
  37. The previous report also indicated that standards were unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2. This issue has been successfully addressed and the quality of work is similar to that usually encountered in this age range. Progress is satisfactory throughout the key stage because teaching is now based on a well designed scheme of work which does full justice to National Curriculum recommendations. Lower juniors, for example, engage in good three dimensional work when they produce models of Viking helmets and shields out of papier mache. Upper juniors learn about the work of Van Gogh, Matisse and Lowry and attempt to produce pictures in the style of these artists. There is an art club after school where the pupils are able to use and improve their skills. At the moment the club is producing a large mural for the Millennium.
  38. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Many teachers have a sound knowledge of art and a personal interest in the subject. They provide opportunities for pupils to experience a wide range of interesting activities, and are able to use their skills to demonstrate a full range of art techniques. The quality of teaching and learning could be improved further by:-
    - issuing pupils with sketchbooks so that they have more practice in observational drawing,
    - improving the stock of materials, particularly for three dimensional work,
    - attempting to incorporate the use of information technology into some parts of the scheme of work,
    - introducing a system for assessing and recording the progress pupils make.
- **Design and technology**

1. It was not possible to observe a significant amount of design and technology teaching during the inspection. Evidence was obtained from discussions with teachers, examination of planning documents, a scrutiny of work previously completed, and discussions with pupils. There have clearly been substantial improvements since the previous inspection, which reported that there were serious weaknesses in the curriculum being implemented.
2. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. They follow a programme of activities which promotes the development of designing and making skills, and successfully gives them an insight into a variety of materials, their uses, and how they can be shaped and joined to create useful devices. Pupils complete at least one progressively more demanding project each term. In Key Stage 1, for instance, pupils think up ideas for making pictures with moving components, for example, a bird with wings that flap. Their suggestions are discussed and plans drawn, then using a selection of card, paper, and colouring materials, together with appropriate fastening techniques, they construct and test their designs.
3. Technology activities are often complementary to other subject areas. Pupils in years 5 and 6, for example, explore a range of musical instruments and then make a musical instrument to their own design. The various devices they construct for producing a range of sounds assist understanding in both music and science. Pupils' discussions of design possibilities contribute to the development of their speaking and listening skills, and competence in mathematical techniques benefits from the necessity to measure when drawing plans and marking out designs.
4. The scheme of work encompasses procedures with an appropriate range of materials. As well as paper, card, wood, construction kits and recycled everyday materials, pupils also encounter some food technology, when for example, designing, making and testing healthy sandwiches in year 2.
5. Discussions with pupils indicate that they enjoy the subject and take a pride in the articles they produce. Indirect evidence suggests that the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory. The curriculum is occasionally enhanced by visits to appropriate venues such as the Manchester Museum of Science and Technology.

### 139. **History**

6. Pupils make satisfactory progress in both key stages and work at levels similar to most pupils of similar age. They are developing a good sense of time-scale and an appreciation of the way the past influences the present.
7. Pupils in Key Stage 1 begin their studies through considering their own lives and those of their families. This links well with work on personal development, as evidenced in displays on the corridor mapping out the lives of families of pupils in the school. Pupils enjoy their lessons and as their understanding of the past develops they begin to sequence historical events in chronological order. For instance, by the end of the key stage, they know that Florence Nightingale lived over a hundred years ago. Pupils begin to differentiate between fact and fiction and start to predict how events might have occurred by looking at artefacts.
8. In Key Stage 2, pupils build on their knowledge through the study of peoples and civilisations. They particularly enjoy the work on the Vikings, the Egyptians and the ancient Greeks. Pupils are most enthusiastic when they can enter into the spirit of the era through practical activities such as the making of reproductions of everyday objects. The interesting display of Viking helmets and shields in a Year 3 classroom is a typical example.
9. Pupils have a good attitude towards the subject epitomised in the comment of a year 1 pupil - 'our work today will be history tomorrow'. They contribute well in discussion but are less rigorous in the

presentation of written work. Pupils work with enthusiasm when extracting information from first hand evidence but a wider range of resources is needed. A substantial amount of work is on worksheets, which, although usually of good quality, do not provide sufficient opportunities for expressive writing. Pupils would benefit from more opportunities for deeper levels of independent research, especially through access to CD ROMs and enlarged book resources.

10. Overall teaching is satisfactory. Half the lessons observed were good but in the one unsatisfactory lesson pupils made little progress because insufficient demands were made on them to complete the activity. The teacher did not provide clear instructions about what was expected, nor were there discernible objectives. The pupils' behaviour was poor and not conducive to learning. In contrast, in the good lessons, activities were well planned and lessons were rounded off with pupils' summaries of their own conclusions. Pupils listened to each other and were prepared to adjust their views in the light of convincing argument. Teachers make good use of visits to places of historical interest, such as Wigan Pier and Bramall Hall, to make history come alive.
11. A new, more relevant, scheme of work has been introduced since the previous inspection. Other than this there has been little change. Written work is still too narrowly focused on worksheets with insufficient opportunities for independent work and wider exploration of issues.

## **Geography**

12. Geography and history jointly share an allocation of time on the school timetable. Some aspects of the geography course are ongoing but a greater proportion of the work is scheduled for the latter part of the school year. This is so that fieldwork can be incorporated. As the allocation of time for geography is relatively low there are limited opportunities for extended writing. The main thrust of the work is directed towards the interpretation of information and the development of observational skills. The school does not fully exploit the use of data to develop analytical skills, for instance through graphical interpretation and information technology. Most of the recording is in short sentences and diagrammatic form.
13. In Key Stage 1, geography is studied through the local environment. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in developing a sound knowledge of the world about them. They understand about routes in and around school and appreciate the positioning of buildings and spaces in the locality by viewing them and looking at photographs. In Key Stage 2, younger pupils satisfactorily relate aspects of social and physical geography. In later years they record statistics of changing weather patterns and satisfactorily use them to investigate daily and seasonal changes. Pupils comprehend the range of weather symbols used to transmit information in newspapers and on television. All classes spend some time each week discussing national and international issues. Topical news features are displayed on world maps providing good opportunities for pupils to appreciate the impact of world events on the nation's life. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school.
14. Pupils respond well in class discussion sessions but the quality of written work is below that expected for their age. Not enough care is taken with presentation or exemplification of content. A new scheme of work has recently been adopted which, when fully implemented, will provide a more structured approach to geography and map work. In recent years the latter has been covered to some extent during residential activity holidays at Ravenstor and Lledr Hall.
15. The quality of the pupils' work is similar to that seen in many schools. Teaching is satisfactory and in one of the lessons seen was good. In this Year 5 lesson the teacher used skilful questioning to help pupils deduce a method for the purification of polluted water. Subsequently he provided simple, everyday equipment for the pupils to investigate filtration and the effect of passing soil-polluted water through sand. Constant reference to scientific procedures reinforced the relevance of subjects one to another.

16. The school is in the early phase of implementing a policy to check pupils' progress throughout the year.. Assessment procedures are not yet sufficiently advanced to provide information for targeting higher standards of work. The situation is much the same as at the time of the previous inspection.

150. **Music**

17. Pupils are currently making unsatisfactory progress in both key stages because there is no overall school programme for music teaching. In most classes pupils do not receive regular, systematic teaching in the range of skills specified by the National Curriculum.
18. Standards of singing are satisfactory for pupils' ages because this is the only significant musical activity, apart from listening to recorded music at the start of assembly, pupils currently experience. Most learn to sing tunefully with a good sense of rhythm. By the end of Key Stage 2 groups of pupils can successfully perform vocal pieces which require two part singing. Other aspects, such as listening to and discussing the feelings that various types of music engender, composing and then performing musical pieces, learning about musical notation, and performing on a range of musical instruments are either missing from the curriculum or only taught occasionally. Standards in these areas of the subject are consequently lower than those usually encountered in primary schools. A few older pupils learn to play the guitar during lunchtime sessions with a guitar enthusiast on the staff. These pupils achieve good standards for their ages.
19. The situation is similar to that described in the last inspection report. Planned developments have been hampered by the loss of staff with musical expertise, and the need to concentrate on literacy and numeracy strategies. The school has recently designated a member of staff as music co-ordinator, and good plans are being made to raise the profile of music in the school. These include the production of a scheme of work and the acquisition of complementary resources, including recordings and instruments, to support non-specialist teachers giving weekly music lessons to all classes.
20. The potential for improvement was illustrated well during the inspection when year 6 pupils participated enthusiastically in a music lesson based largely on a recorded educational radio programme. All pupils made good progress in their understanding of scales. They learnt and rehearsed some new songs, and carried out useful exercises in two part singing.

**Physical education**

21. The school curriculum for physical education includes an appropriate range of activities including gymnastics, dance, games and swimming. Suitable outdoor and adventurous experiences are planned during an activity holiday arranged each year for the older pupils at Lledre Hall Outdoor Pursuits Centre.
22. The previous report stated that standards were satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Attainment is now above that expected for pupils of their age at both key stages. Key Stage 1 pupils enjoy dance and are able to improvise sequences of movement in order to create characters in stories and interpret music. For example in one class of younger pupils the pupils were able to produce good quality movement when they were pretending to be a fox looking for food. They were able to move slowly, quickly and in different direction in response to the mood of the music. Competence develops in the full range of activities suggested by the National Curriculum, and progress is good throughout the key stage. During the inspection, for example, pupils were observed practising throwing and catching small balls and reaching a good standard for their age.
23. Good progress in a range of activities continues to be made in Key Stage 2. In gymnastics pupils

become increasingly conscious of their movements as they try to control and improve them. In one class of older pupils who were using large apparatus the pupils were investigating turning and stretching movements. They showed good agility and initiative as they jumped, balanced and climbed with confidence whilst thinking carefully to devise interesting sequences of stretching and turning movements.

24. There is a commendable number of worthwhile extra curricular activities arranged throughout the year which contribute to the good standard of physical education in the school. These include football, netball, girls' football and five a side, cross-country, touch rugby, rounders, cricket and athletics. Competitive games are arranged against local schools with a good success rate.
25. Pupils with special educational needs made good progress and very good progress is made by a blind pupil who takes a full part in lessons because of the good support she receives.
26. As recorded in the last report pupils' attitude to physical education is good at both key stages. During lessons behaviour is good and sportsmanship is evident when pupils take part in competitive activities. Boys and girls are involved in physical education together and there is full access to all pupils. During the lessons the pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy the activities. They make a big effort to improve their movements and skills. There is good co-operation between the pupils and with the teachers.
27. The last report stated that the quality of teaching was variable. It is now good in both key stages. There is effective direct teaching of skills and good use of demonstrations by both pupils and teachers. Lessons are well prepared and teachers have a good knowledge of the subject. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and give them appropriate challenges. Good explanations are given to pupils about what happens to their bodies during exercise. There is a suitable warming up and cooling down session at the beginning and end of each lesson.
28. There is an adequate supply of both small and large equipment. Physical education makes a worthwhile contribution to the social and moral development of the pupils because they are encouraged to behave in a sporting manner.

### *Swimming*

29. The inspection of this school included a focussed view of swimming which is reported below.
30. All pupils in years 5 and 6 receive weekly half hour long swimming lessons. The lessons take place in a nearby leisure centre. Pupils travel to and from the centre on a specially hired bus. They are well supervised by a member of the school staff on these journeys. The total time out of school is a little over an hour for each swimming session. The modern leisure centre is well maintained and equipped. It has a 25 metre pool and a smaller, shallow learners' pool.
31. Pupils are taught swimming by members of the leisure centre staff who are fully qualified instructors and life savers. They implement a systematic programme of tuition throughout two years which is securely based on the requirements of the National Curriculum, and statutory requirements are fully met.
32. By the end of year 6 nearly all pupils display confidence in the water and know how to rest, float and adopt support positions. They can propel themselves through the water using a variety of both front and back strokes, and have gained a knowledge of the principles of water safety and survival. Records show that over 90% become able to swim unaided, competently and safely, for at least 25 metres. The small number who cannot manage this distance can all swim shorter distances unaided. Their records are passed on to their secondary school so that further development of swimming

competence can be organised.

33. Throughout the two years in which they receive tuition all pupils, including those with specially educational needs, make good progress. This is because they are competently taught and follow a well designed sequence of activities which allows them to build upon existing skills.
34. All pupils are keen to improve their swimming proficiency and enjoy visiting the pool. They get changed quickly and pay careful attention to the swimming instructors. In the water they behave sensibly and try hard to follow instructions to refine their swimming techniques.
35. The teaching by the swimming instructors is good. They have good communication skills, an enthusiastic approach, clear objectives and appropriately worked out methods of achieving them. Careful records are kept of the progress children make, and weekly activities organised so that there is continuity in their learning. Pupils are divided into at least two groups, depending on their level of attainment, and there is an instructor for each group. Non-swimmers or poor swimmers are taught in a separate group in the learners' pool. Excellent arrangements are made for a blind pupil to be assisted in the water by an adult helper.

## 169. **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **Summary of inspection evidence**

36. About 52 hours were spent observing 67 lessons or parts of lessons.

All teachers and classes were observed

Assemblies and registration sessions were observed.

The children's behaviour, before school, during playtimes, at lunchtime and after school, was observed.

All the written work from a significant sample of pupils was monitored.

Discussions about their work were held with pupils.

Pupils from throughout the school were heard reading.

Teachers' planning documentation, attendance registers and pupil records were examined.

Discussions were held with the headteacher, teachers, non-teaching staff, and governors.

#### **Prior to the inspection week:-**

93 responses to a questionnaire about the school were received from families of the pupils in the school. These were analysed and used in planning the inspection.

The Registered Inspector held a meeting for parents to express their views about the school. The meeting was attended by 27 parents.

School policies, other documents, and records of meetings were studied.

Meetings were held with the head, staff and governors of the school.

## Data and indicators

### PUPIL DATA

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
<b>YR – Y6</b>	297	1	45	45
<b>Nursery Unit</b>	21	0	3	Not applicable

### TEACHERS AND CLASSES

#### Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.75

#### Education support staff (YR – Y6)

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked each week	35.5

#### Qualified teachers (Nursery unit)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21

#### Education support staff (Nursery unit)

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked each week	33

Average class size:	27
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### FINANCIAL DATA

Financial year:	1998/99
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	£
Total income	456770
Total expenditure	464685
Expenditure per pupils	1461
Balance brought forward from previous year	2325
Balance carried forward to next year	-5590

## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

267
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Number of questionnaires returned:

93
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Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	28	63	5	3	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	42	48	5	4	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	14	58	23	4	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	14	67	10	9	1
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	14	65	14	6	1
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	24	64	9	3	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	32	53	13	2	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	17	55	14	12	1
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	34	57	5	3	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	48	34	16	1	1
My child(ren) like(s) school	59	37	3	1	0