

# INSPECTION REPORT

**St. Filumena's Roman Catholic Primary School**  
Stoke-on-Trent

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique Reference Number: 124350

Inspection Number: 189199

Headteacher: Mr. Michael Wheatley

Reporting inspector: George Derby  
25349

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707797

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
Type of control:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Blythe Bridge Road Caverswall Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire ST11 9EA
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev James McInerney
Date of previous inspection:	May 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

<b>Team members</b>	<b>Subject responsibilities</b>	<b>Aspect responsibilities</b>
George Derby, Rgl	Information technology	Attainment and progress
	Mathematics	Teaching
	Music	Leadership and management
		The efficiency of the school
Saleem Hussain, Lay Inspector		Attendance
		Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
		Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
		Partnership with parents and the community
Kathleen Cannon	Science	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
	Art	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
	Design and technology	
Kate Robertson	English	
	Geography	
	History	
	Special educational needs	
	Equality of opportunity	
	Areas of learning for children under five	

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- The excellent provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and the school's excellent ethos significantly influences the pupils' excellent standards of behaviour, their relationships with each other and staff, their attitudes to work and personal development.
- The school's commitment to high standards and the emphasis on the development of the whole child, including their spiritual development is fulfilled through the school's clear aims and the very strong leadership by the headteacher.
- The school makes excellent use of all its staff; classroom assistants have an important teaching and support role which they fulfil extremely well.
- The teaching is very good in just under a third of lessons.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they make good progress, especially in their literacy skills.

### • Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Although pupils make satisfactory progress in information technology, by the time they leave school they do not yet have the skills they should. This is mainly because it takes time for the relatively new programmes of work to be fully integrated throughout the school and not all pupils have had time to build on skills from an early age. Sometimes, not all opportunities are taken for pupils to develop their computer skills through other subjects.

**St Filumena's is a very caring community and a very good school. It sets high standards and promotes a love of learning among its pupils. The few weaknesses are significantly outweighed by what the school does well, but they will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.**

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

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection and has overcome most of the weaknesses identified in the previous report. It is well placed to make further improvements. It achieved high standards in the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests in 1999. The curriculum has significantly improved and those subjects which received insufficient attention now form part of the school's broad and balanced curriculum. History, geography and science are regularly taught throughout the school and standards have risen in science, in particular. Curriculum planning for design and technology and information technology has improved. The school has worked hard to increase the number of computers and the amount of software, and pupils have much more use of computers. Pupils make satisfactory progress in information technology. However, they do not yet achieve the levels they should by the time they leave school but are well on the way. Assessment has improved and is mostly good. It is used to plan pupils' work, to group pupils and to help those pupils who are having specific difficulties. In order to ensure pupils' safety at lunchtime, the school rapidly appointed additional midday supervisors following the last inspection.

## 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	<b>Key</b>  <i>well above average</i> <b>A</b> <i>above average</i>
English	A	B	
Mathematics	B	C	
Science	B	C	

The overall standards of the 11-year-olds taking the National Curriculum tests in 1999 were at least above average in comparison with national standards and in English these were well above. Compared to similar schools standards were mostly average, except for English which were above. The proportions of pupils achieving the expected level (Level 4) and higher was well above average in English, mathematics and science when compared nationally. Those achieving the higher level (Level 5) in English were also well above average. In mathematics and science these higher levels were average. This is an improvement on the 1998 results although the group of pupils taking the tests in that year were small in number and contained some lower attaining pupils. The school's analysis of their assessment information on the 11 year olds taking the tests in 2000, together with inspectors' judgements of the pupils' work indicates that their attainment is well above average in all three subjects. This is because of the high quality of the teaching and the good support for pupils with special educational needs. The school has improved its provision for information technology although standards are not yet reaching those expected by the time they leave the school. By the time they are five, most children exceed the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning and their standards in language and literacy are particularly good.

## Quality of teaching

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

Teaching was at least satisfactory in all lessons and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. In 31 per cent it was very good and in 5 per cent it was excellent. Teaching which was good or better occurred in 84 per cent of lessons. The quality of teachers' questioning, probing pupils to really think hard and exploring and extending their knowledge, was a significant feature of the teaching in the majority of lessons.

*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	Excellent. There is a real care and concern for younger pupils by older pupils.
Attendance	Good; above the average for primary schools. The school monitors attendance well.
Ethos*	Excellent; pupils try really hard and the school is committed to high standards as well as aiming to develop a well-rounded child. Relationships are excellent.
Leadership and management	The headteacher has a very clear vision for the future of the school and for high standards. The aims of the school are very well met.
Curriculum	Good overall. Well-planned and carefully implemented to give all pupils good access to the whole curriculum including the school's extended programme.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good quality provision; some separate teaching and good support in the classroom means that pupils make good progress.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Excellent. There are really good opportunities to reflect on the wonders of creation such as autumn changes and to think about issues that may affect pupils' lives.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory overall but some rooms are quite cramped. Learning resources are satisfactory overall but software for use in subjects is limited.
Value for money	Very good.

\* *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>II. It is easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with their children.</p> <p>III. Children enjoy school and are keen to attend.</p> <p>IV. It encourages parents to play an active part in school life.</p> <p>V. It achieves high standards of good behaviour.</p> <p>VI. The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on children.</p> <p>VII. It enables pupils to achieve a good standard of work.</p>	<p>VIII. Joined handwriting is expected too</p> <p>IX. Teachers do not mark every pupils' work.</p>

Inspectors' judgements support parents' positive views of the school. Both the parents'

meeting with the registered inspector and the replies to the parents' questionnaire provided a very positive picture of the school. There was only a very small proportion of negative comments about the school. The care provided for pupils has a positive impact on their learning and the progress that they make. Parents are very supportive of the school and value the educational opportunities it provides. The school work hard to improve pupils' skills in writing and the teachers' marking of pupils' work is consistent and in line with their policy.

## **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

In order to improve the educational standards further, the headteacher, and governing body should:

- ◆. raise pupils' attainment in information technology by:
  - . ensuring that teachers show how information technology is planned for in other subjects;
  - . providing regular opportunities for pupils to use information technology;
  - . increasing further teachers' knowledge of the subject and particularly in the areas of control technology;
  - . increasing subject software resources in information technology.  
(paragraphs: 17, 44, 47, 60, 101, 186, 190, 191)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the school's action plan. These are indicated in the following paragraphs:

- . Continue to improve the strategic role of the governing body and that all parts of the school's future planning is able to be measured in terms of outcomes; (paragraphs: 90, 91, 102)
- . Ensuring that all opportunities are taken to challenge further the higher attaining pupils; (paragraphs: 46, 143, 157)
- . Continue to raise the profile of music in the school and pupils' attainment further. (paragraphs: 18, 192)

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Characteristics of the school**

1. St Filumena's is a small Catholic voluntary aided primary school with 170 pupils in seven single age classes. This is an increase since the last inspection when there were 117 pupils. Each year since the roll has increased due to the popularity of the school and additional accommodation is in the process of being completed to accommodate the increased numbers.

2. St Filumena's is situated in a rural area in the village of Caverswall, near Stoke of Trent. The school draws from a wide catchment area and there are a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds. Pupils come from villages such as Caverswall, Blythe Bridge, Forsbrook, Dilhorne, Weston Coyney, Meir, Parkhall and Coalville and many travel by school by taxi or coach funded by the local education authority.

3. The majority of children in the reception class were under five years. The children's attainment on entry is wide ranging and from an examination of documents, including the school's previous partial baseline assessment results, overall their attainment is average.

4. The school population is relatively stable with few pupils leaving before they are due to transfer to high school at the end of Year 6. There is one teacher to every 24 pupils. Staffing has been relatively stable until recently when the school's deputy headteacher retired and two new teachers, one newly qualified, were appointed.

5. The school's 14 pupils with special educational needs, one of whom with a statement of special educational need, represents a low number when compared nationally but this figure fluctuates annually. The majority of pupils with special educational needs have specific learning difficulties and a small number have learning or behavioural difficulties. There is a well below average number of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and no pupils with English as a second language. Throughout the school, boys outnumber girls by two to one. The four percent of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average.

The school aims to:

- maintain the growth and development of the whole person including their spiritual, psychological, emotional, social, moral and physical well-being;
- live the values of the Gospel by fostering a genuine love of God, of others and of oneself;
- provide a true model of fairness and consistency in our relationships with others;

1. In order to achieve these aims the school will:

- lead by example;
- foster the faith of God;
- develop continually the links and interaction between the school, the parish and the home;
- reward positive achievement in all areas of school life;
- build upon the co-operation of parents;
- provide a broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum for the pupils;
- love the pupils for what they are.

1. The school's priorities are to:

- introduce the National Numeracy Strategy;
- fully implement all aspects of the school's assessment policy;
- respond to the new National Curriculum changes proposed for September 2000;
- prepare for inspection;
- fully implement revised and new job descriptions;
- to monitor the numbers on roll so that they do not go above 175.

## 1.Key Indicators

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

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	12	16	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	11	11	12
	Girls	14	16	16
	Total	25	27	28
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	89 (80)	89 (81)	100 (84)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	86 (84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	11	12	12
	Girls	14	13	14
	Total	25	25	26
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	89 (81)	89 (85)	93 (86)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

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

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	15	6	21

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	13	13	14
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	19	19	20
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	90 (75)	90 (67)	95 (75)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	14	14	14
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	20	20	20
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	90 (83)	90 (83)	95 (83)
	National	67 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

## Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year		%
Authorised Absence	School	4.7
	National comparative data	5.3
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.0
	National comparative data	0.1

## 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	31
Satisfactory or better	100
Less than satisfactory	0

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

### 8. **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

#### 8. **Attainment and progress**

2. Assessments made soon after the children enter the school indicate that their attainment is broadly average although they have a wide spread of ability. It is strongest in their language and literacy. Children make good progress in all areas of learning. By the time they reach their fifth birthday many attain standards which are above those expected of their age, identified in the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.

3. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level (Level 2) and above, at the end of Key Stage 1 was very high compared to the national average in mathematics, well above average in writing and above average in reading. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 3) was well above average in writing, above average in reading but below average in mathematics. From the assessments made by teachers of the tasks pupils carried out in science, their attainment was just above average when compared nationally but those at higher level were below average.

4. Although there has been some fall in results over the past three years there is now a rising trend. The rise and fall in results reflects the small groups of pupils taking the tests and the variation over the years in the abilities of pupils within each cohort taking the tests. Inspection findings support the picture of rising standards in reading and writing. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are also above average. Recently there has been a marked improvement in writing and a significant improvement in mathematics. Currently reading is above the expected level; this represents a good improvement since 1998 and the literacy hour has had a positive impact on pupils' reading skills. In mathematics and science, the pupils' attainment is above average.

5. At Key Stage 1, the improved standards of pupils, since the last inspection, are evident in information technology where pupils' attainment is in line with what is expected.

6. Overall, the pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1. Their progress is very good in speaking and listening, and good in reading and writing. It is also good in mathematics and science. In art it is also good. In design and technology the profile of the subject has been raised through the appointment of a co-ordinator and the imbalance in the time spent on the subject redressed. At the time of last inspection pupils' progress in this subject was unsatisfactory but pupils now make good progress. In geography progress has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. In history, progress is good. Pupils make good progress in physical education; the very good knowledge the staff have of the subject has a positive effect on pupils' attainment.

7. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level (Level 4) and above was well above the national average in English, mathematics and science; their results were high

compared to schools nationally and above average in English and science when compared to similar schools. In mathematics they were well above average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 5) was well above the national average in English and in line with schools nationally for mathematics and science. Compared to similar schools, in English, their results were above average but below for science and well below for mathematics.

8. The pupils' progress at Key Stage 2 is good. It is good in English, and mathematics and in science it is very good. The high quality of teaching, especially the very good knowledge of teachers and the interesting way they put the subjects across to pupils means that pupils are motivated, have high levels of interest and are spurred on to try harder and deepen their knowledge. Pupils say that it is their homework, and the opportunities they have at lunchtime for extra work, that improves their progress, especially in these subjects. The way the pupils are grouped and the work teachers set for them which is usually well matched to their abilities also has a marked affect. Occasionally, pupils are not always stretched as much as they could be, for instance by using computers to solve problems set in lessons.

9. At Key Stage 2, over the last three years there has been a steady rise in the attainment of the pupils in English, although in 1998 there was a sharp drop in the attainment of pupils in mathematics and science; compared nationally, this was still above average. This reflected the size of the cohort and the varying abilities of pupils within that year. Taking English, mathematics and science together, the performance of pupils was well above the national average. Inspection findings suggest that the standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science are well above average.

10. The pupils' satisfactory attainment at Key Stage 1 in information technology is not yet reflected at Key Stage 2. Pupils have not been learning the subject long enough to acquire all the skills and, sometimes, teachers do not always take advantage of the use of information technology in their planning for other subjects. There are still times where there is too little use of the computer at Key Stage 2. Despite this pupils make satisfactory progress in acquiring the skills and have additional time to use the computer at lunchtime. They can use a word-processor to produce text, selecting the typeface from a range of different font styles and are competent in simple editing techniques. Many are able to insert a picture alongside their written work but not all pupils say they can do this; those who are confident and talk through the process step-by-step. The pupils are beginning to use the Internet to send 'emails' to pupils at other schools and can search for information from a simple database such as CD encyclopaedia as well as by using the Internet.

11. In art, design and technology, history, and physical education pupils make good progress. They make satisfactory progress in geography. In swimming they make excellent progress. This is because of the considerable expertise of the school and pool-side staff and the very efficient way all the time is used so that pupils are totally focussed on the work they have to do in lessons and the goals they are to strive for. By the time they leave the school all can swim at least 25 metres and many do this with a real quality to their style. It was not possible to make a judgement on the progress of pupils in music at Key Stage 2. No lessons could be seen during the week of the inspection as these were timetabled outside the inspection period. Teachers' records clearly show that pupils covered a wide range of experiences during the last year but



there are limited statements about what pupils' know, understand and can do in music.

12. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress at both key stages. This is as a result of the well-constructed individual education plans and support from the considerable expertise of the special educational needs co-ordinator, the work of the teachers and classroom assistants, and the support from external agencies. There is no difference in the attainment of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and they make the same good progress as the rest of their peers. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls or with regard to the progress they make.

13. Literacy and numeracy are well used and promoted in other subjects. There are many examples of pupils using data handling in other subjects and they often display their results using information technology. There are particularly good links between mathematics and science. Pupils develop good research skills and these are now being extended through the use of CD ROM encyclopædias and the Internet. Their homework also promotes their research skills well and the library, although only small, is used well for this purpose. The pupils apply these skills well in their work, as they grow older. Every opportunity is taken for pupils to respond verbally in lessons through the very good questioning skills teachers have. The pupils' presentation skills are of high quality and they take a pride in their work.

14. Throughout the school, pupils are good readers and apply their reading skills effectively and in varied contexts. Numeracy is well-promoted in science, design and technology and geography, such as in identifying locations through four figure co-ordinates. A priority for the school is to set realistic targets to further improve the proportions of pupils achieving national expectations and above. The school recognises it has been over-cautious in its current predictions. The school has set individual targets for pupils in English but has not yet considered a similar process for other subjects.

21.

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

15. The excellent provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and the school's excellent ethos significantly influences the pupils' excellent standards of behaviour, their attitudes and personal development.

16. Children under five are confident, happy and appear to enjoy school. In their work and play they learn to share and begin to develop collaborative skills. Their personal and social development is well promoted by the caring and encouraging approach by staff and the very early opportunities they have to develop personal responsibility such as choosing and collecting 'food' for their 'hedgehog' soft toy who is going to hibernate.

17. The children's excellent behaviour and extremely positive attitudes make a significant contribution to their learning and the quality of school life, and these are significant strengths of the school. Parents recognise and appreciate these high standards of behaviour encouraged by the school. They feel the school actively encourages positive relationships between all pupils, and the pupils' response is evident in the mutual respect they show in their relationships with staff and with each other.

18. The school's ethos is based on commitment to high achievement within a caring and

stimulating environment and the pupils respond well to this provision. They expect to work hard and concentrate well on set tasks. They value the work they do and say that their homework helps them build on what they learn in school, to study for the National Curriculum tests and prepares older pupils for the work they will receive when they transfer to the high school.

19.All pupils are keen and enthusiastic in answering questions. In the reception class, the children collaborate well in drama sessions, remembering the words and actions for a range of songs and simple role-play.

20.At Key Stage 1, the pupils demonstrate very good levels of co-operation. In science for example, small groups collaborate with excellent results, using globes and torches to investigate the earth's day and night zones. They evaluate their own work, setting themselves simple and written academic targets.

21.At Key Stage 2, the pupils maintain and develop their extremely positive attitudes. They show high levels of concentration, and the ability to work either individually, in pairs or as part of a team. For example, in physical education they compete as teams in orienteering exercises, and in classroom settings they work as pairs to complete worksheets or conduct individual research using reference books and computers. They evaluate their own and each other's work, setting themselves targets to do better.

22.At all stages, the pupils respond very well to staff expectations, and incidences of any problematic behaviour are very rare. They respond equally well in assemblies and towards visiting speakers. Their overall attitude towards learning is excellent.

23. Pupils' standards of behaviour are excellent, both in class and in the playground. They listen quietly, follow instructions carefully, and respond with enthusiasm to teacher expectations. They move around the school sensibly and are polite and courteous at all times. At break-times, they play happily in groups or pairs and respond well to good level of supervisory staff.

24. Relationships within the school are excellent and there have been no exclusions. Pupils relate extremely well to each other and staff, show respect for each other's feelings. For example, in the playground older pupils look after younger ones who may be hurt or unhappy and show a real and natural caring response to them. Many pupils take the opportunity of participating in a number of clubs and extra-curricular activities. All staff work as a very good team, creating a positive atmosphere, which is reflected in the pupils' overall attitudes towards learning.

25. The pupils are encouraged to develop their sense of responsibility by undertaking a variety of duties. They act as monitors in classrooms and at lunch and break-times. All pupils take turns with specific responsibilities during lunch, and even the very young clear away their own areas. At the end of lessons they ensure that classrooms are left neat and tidy, and there is no litter or graffiti around the school.

26. They develop independence and learn to organise themselves and their work. At Key Stage 2, they take personal responsibility for their text and exercise books, and are very positive towards homework. Even younger pupils remember to bring in specified items for class work, such as frames and plants. At Key Stage 1, some use their initiative to bring in books from home relevant to their particular study topic. From a very early age pupils are encouraged to work together and their ability to work collaboratively can often be seen in lessons.

27. The pupils' personal development is excellent. They are really well-rounded individuals who converse in a mature way with adults and who can express well-considered opinions about issues relating to their lives and world in general. They also promoted further through day excursions and residential field trips, which support learning and enhance their social and personal development. The pupils are encouraged to develop a knowledge of the wider world through the provision of weekly banking facilities. Visitors include representatives from organisations which promote safety, St John's Ambulance and the Police. In Year 6, links with, and visits to, Painsley High School promote the pupils' confidence and personal well-being in preparation for their transfer at the end of Year 6.

28. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained the excellent standards of behaviour in lessons and around the school. This consistency, coupled with the excellent relationships, has a positive effect on pupils' overall standards of attainment and the quality of their learning.

### 35. **Attendance**

29. Attendance is good. The attendance rate is significantly above the national average for this type of school. This makes a positive impact on pupils' progress and continuity in learning. Authorised absence is broadly in line with the national average and

unauthorised absence is well below. The rate of attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection and the school has maintained its record of having no unauthorised absence. All parents replying to the inspection questionnaire report that their children enjoy attending the school.

30.Registration procedures are efficient and conform to local requirements. Teachers complete registers at the beginning of both morning and afternoon sessions and the procedure is carried out quickly so as not to waste time. Pupils are quiet and respond politely during registration and this creates a calm and positive atmosphere which enables teachers to move smoothly on to the beginning of lessons.

31.The great majority of pupils are punctual and arrive in good time for registration. During the day timekeeping is good, and lessons begin and end on time. Pupils respond quickly to the bell at the end of break and lunchtime play and come back into school ready to start work.

## **38. QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### **Teaching**

32.The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and there is now no unsatisfactory teaching. Issues relating to where teaching was weak in the last inspection have been addressed, and the headteacher and senior staff are supportive of less experienced teachers; through checking on their work they are able to ensure that any weaknesses are quickly addressed.

33.The quality of teaching is good overall; this standard of teaching is consistent at each key stage. This has a significant effect on pupils' attainment and the progress they make. Some very good features to the teaching are seen at Key Stages 1 and 2 and in the teaching of children under five. The proportion of very good or better teaching has significantly improved since the last inspection. Teaching is at least satisfactory in all lessons; there was no unsatisfactory teaching during the inspection although there were a few weaknesses in some of the otherwise satisfactory teaching. The teaching is good or better in 84 per cent of lessons, very good or better in 31 per cent and excellent in three per cent of all lessons seen. The good quality of teaching overall impacts positively on the pupils' attainment and progress

34.The teaching of children under five is good in every area of learning. The teacher has a very good knowledge of the areas of learning and how to promote the children's development. There is good attention to the children's use of correct vocabulary in all areas and there is appropriate exploration of pupils' language used to help pupils' understanding of ideas. Very good storytelling skills by the teacher capture the children's imagination. There is very good use of questioning and clear explanations about what the pupils are going to learn; this is also made explicit in the teachers' plans. The classroom assistant is used very well and adds much to the quality of the experiences pupils receive.

35.The teaching in English, mathematics and science is good overall. It is good at each key stage in these subjects and in science it is very good at Key Stage 2. Two lessons in science seen during the inspection were excellent. The teaching of physical education is good and in one lesson in swimming it was excellent; in art, design and technology, history, it is good overall. In music it is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and in the small amount of teaching of information technology seen, where it is taught through other subjects, it is also satisfactory. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure

judgement in music at Key Stage 2 and in geography at both key stages as it was not possible to observe any teaching.

36. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. The planning of their lessons is good and work set meets their needs in all subjects. On many occasions teachers ask questions that are specifically planned to meet their individual needs and this enables pupils to have full involvement in the lessons. Teachers also plan well for pupils' recording in other subjects, ensuring they gain practice in writing, yet at the same time are allowed to express what they know and understand, either through pictures or orally. Pupils are challenged in small steps which enables them to have opportunities to experience success. Teachers generally praise pupils appropriately. The way the teachers organise their lessons is good overall; groups are organised well by ability in the classroom and for withdrawal. Support staff are well used and organised; they give excellent support to pupils. Homework is set to meet pupils' individual needs.

37. The teachers' lesson plans are satisfactory and with good links to the medium-term plans. They generally make it clear what all pupils are to learn in the lessons. The work for pupils with different abilities is specified. The main approach to these pupils in whole group activities is by the very skilled use of different questioning. Some staff produce brief plans but there is often a good level of detail in the medium-term plans. Their practical planning and preparation is good. The use of information technology is not always specifically identified in teachers' lesson planning.

38. Resources are readily to hand and, as far as possible, equipment checked to make sure it works. This ensures no time is lost and helps maintain the brisk pace of lessons. Occasionally objectives are not always clearly stated in daily plans and in the week-by-week planning books teachers use throughout the year generally only a brief description of the activity is stated, rather than what the pupils are expected to learn.

39. A particular strength is the way in which teachers adjust their very good quality of questioning for individual pupils. Activities are usually very well matched to pupils' abilities and the way in which the teachers use the school's assessment information to group the pupils is good. This has a significant impact on their progress and contributes to the high standards achieved although occasionally some higher attaining pupils are not always stretched as much as they could be.

40. The teachers' knowledge of the subjects they teach is very good overall and is very strong at Key Stage 2 where the skills of specialist teachers are used to teach classes other than their own. Their knowledge of information technology is growing; they are generally confident users although there is some weakness in the knowledge of control technology. They have a good knowledge of the personal circumstances of their pupils and even in the larger classes there is still a 'personal touch'. Teachers have a good knowledge of their pupils' academic strengths and weaknesses through the mostly good quality information they record in their record books.

41. Teachers pay particular attention to key vocabulary in subjects, ensuring that the pupils are introduced to the words at the earliest possible stage and fully understand the ideas behind them. This has a significant affect on their progress allowing them to build on the strong foundations of previous learning. The marking of the pupils' work is

consistent and supportive, through helpful comments, and helps teachers to diagnose problems swiftly.

42. The teachers' expectations are a strong feature of the school and these increase as pupils go through the school; they are very high at Key Stage 2. A lack of high expectations was a weakness identified in the last inspection. The situation has significantly improved and considerable demands are now placed on pupils for consistently high quality work. Pupils rise to this and try really hard. Nearly all lessons are purposeful and challenging; they stimulate the pupils' interests.

43. Lessons generally have a good introduction, middle, and plenary session at the end. This is consistently carried out through the school. Sometimes, the plenary sessions at the end of the lesson are rushed leaving little time for pupils to make a full contribution and for them to demonstrate or evaluate their work, and that of others. The school is aware of this and in mathematics where the numeracy strategy has just been introduced; teachers are still adjusting their teaching to take account of the key features of this. Some teachers use the beginning of the subsequent lesson for evaluation purposes; this is in order to promote the pupils' speaking and listening skills and this is good practice. A strong feature is the clarity with which teachers identify in English, mathematics and science what the pupils are to learn and write their objectives on the board.

44. The management of pupils is very good. The majority of pupils are managed very appropriately but occasionally one or two pupils can present challenges where the teacher does not always expect enough of pupils' behaviour or for them to listen when they are talking. Teachers generally have a good range of ways to ensure that pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are fully involved and noise levels are very well controlled. The ethos of the school has a marked effect on the pupils' ability to sit, listen and conform which, in turn, has a marked affect on their ability to learn effectively.

45. Homework contributes much to pupils' academic progress, especially the challenging work set for pupils towards the end of Key Stage 2 which often has a research element and aims to promote pupils' independent learning. Pupils say they value and enjoy their homework.

52.

### **The curriculum and assessment**

46. The curriculum of the school is good overall. The curriculum provided for children under five is good. It is broad and balanced and relevant for the children. It takes account of the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. The school makes appropriate use of an accredited baseline assessment. This provides a picture of attainment when pupils are five years old on which the school can make judgements about their progress as they move through the school.

47. The curriculum for pupils who are of statutory school age is broad, balanced and relevant. It meets statutory requirements; all subjects of the National Curriculum are taught, including religious education. There is a good balance of agreed time spent on different subjects and some non-core subjects are now beginning to be combined to ensure good use of time. There is a significant emphasis placed on literacy and

numeracy within other subjects, which reflects the schools' aims to achieve high standards.

48.The balance within subjects is satisfactory and the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection, in information technology and design technology, are being addressed by the school. The school now provides opportunities for the use of information technology in the classroom, although there are times when these are not sufficiently extended. Pupils have had opportunities to complete their homework at lunchtime and say they value this opportunity. The curriculum promotes physical development through physical education and through extra-curricular provision for sport. The provision for swimming is excellent and is taught throughout Key Stage 2 in the local swimming pool.

49.The pupils' personal development is very well promoted through the life of the school, religious education and a specific programme for personal and social development. Sex education is not specifically taught and this is in line with the governor's policy. Aspects of animal reproduction and healthy living, including drugs awareness, are taught in science. Some parts of this work also feature in the personal and social education programme. The curriculum promotes the intellectual development of all its pupils very well. A particular strength of the school is the way the needs of pupils with learning difficulties are met. The literacy hour has been well implemented and is having a positive effect on the response of the pupils and the improved standards in reading.

50.The school is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all. All staff give effective support to pupils. The school provides good opportunities for the majority of pupils to make good progress. Boys and girls are treated equally and boys usually make the same progress as girls through the curriculum provided. The school provides a very good multicultural education with good contributions from the majority of subjects. This enables pupils to gain an understanding of life in the wider community in preparation for the future. Pupils who are withdrawn for one-to-one work with the special needs co-ordinator are monitored to ensure that they do not miss too much of one subject over time. This ensures their equality of access to all subjects.

51.A key issue at the time of the last inspection was to provide better guidance for the teaching of design technology and information technology. The school has effectively addressed the major issues in, information technology and design and technology. Medium-term planning is now good overall. Planning is arranged into clear units of work and usually has clear learning objectives. Work set meets the differing needs of pupils and identifies good assessment opportunities. Links with other subjects are good and the use of specialist subject teaching in most subjects at Key Stage 2 ensures that sufficient progress is made.

52.The school continues to give high priority to pupils with special educational needs and the curricular provision for these pupils is good overall. They are well supported by the co-ordinator and classroom assistants who work closely and effectively with class teachers to plan suitable work, with in class or by withdrawing from lessons. The school follows a staged approach and fully meets the Code of Practice. Annual reviews are completed efficiently and effectively to ensure all the pupils' needs continue to be met. Planning ensures progression between classes and key stages in all subjects.



Individual education plans for pupils with learning difficulties are good.

53. Policies have been developed in all subjects. These appropriately outline broad principles for teaching and usually provide good quality guidance. There are schemes of work for all subjects although the elements from the scheme of work for information technology are not always sufficiently planned for in teachers' medium or short-term planning. The school has successfully introduced the National Literacy Framework and the National Numeracy Strategy, which are assisting pupils to make good progress.

54. The school provides a good range of extra curricular opportunities that are well organised and effectively enhance the curriculum. Teachers, give freely of their time to provide sporting opportunities. These include netball and football and help to promote physical development. A homework club is provided at lunchtimes. They also provide musical activities such as the playing recorders in the music club. Pupils have good residential opportunities that include provision for outdoor adventurous activities; these enhance provision in many areas of the curriculum. Pupils at the school appreciate these opportunities.

55. Since the last inspection the whole structure of assessment within the school has been re-developed. Assessment is now good overall. A rigorous system of tests and tasks is now in place. There are good, simple, effective procedures, which, when used consistently, ensure teachers know their pupils well in the majority of subjects. Pupils are assessed in English, maths and science every half-term against the learning objectives identified in medium-term planning. In all other subjects, each child is assessed at least every term. The nature of the assessment procedures varies from subject to subject and is noted in each scheme of work. These assessment procedures are beginning to inform planning and teaching, and this is reflected in the good match of work for pupils with differing levels of attainment. Pupils with higher attainment are usually assessed well and moved on by the teaching provided. Lower attaining pupils are also effectively assessed, work is provided to meet the majority of pupils' needs and academic progress well monitored. Co-ordinators monitor plans and gather together work across the subjects to improve assessment. Pupils' work is systematically collected to include in portfolios illustrating standards of work throughout the school. They give good guidance to teachers, which enable them accurately, and effectively to assess and level work.

56. Good use is made of more formal assessment procedures. The school carries out the statutory, end of key stage tests and tasks and these are analysed to inform future planning. Key Stage 2 pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 are given non-statutory assessments to give an overall picture of standards in English, mathematics, and science. Information from all tests carried out in the school are entered onto a new computerised assessment program and used to track pupils' progress. Assessment results are also recorded in teachers planning books for all subjects. These are also used to track progress.

57. The use of assessment to monitor progress over time is now more effective as the method for recording pupils' attainment more clearly identifies gaps in knowledge and skills within subjects. Teachers make an end of year assessment based on the information from their assessments made over the year. This is recorded in a clear tabular form, gives useful grades in each subject, is carried out consistently, and used to inform teaching groups at the beginning of each year. It is beginning to be analysed to set targets and identify weaknesses in progress across the subjects over time.

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

58. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including children under five, is outstanding. This has a very good impact on the quality of all pupils' learning and their standards of attainment across the curriculum. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully maintained the outstanding provisions. There is a very strong moral and positive ethos which is supported by personal, social and religious education teaching which values pupils' own ideas and beliefs.

59. Pupils' spiritual development is excellent. The school promotes pupils' spiritual development through a clear programme of assembly themes, personal and social education and within the National Curriculum. Assembly themes include caring, sharing and helping others. The parish priest is a very frequent visitor in school and leads weekly mass in church. Activities in church include services, prayers, hymn singing and the discussion of Biblical stories. This enables pupils to experience a high degree of spirituality. School routines include many prayers such as before and after lunchtime and at the end of the school day. These are very good moments of reflection which make a very good contribution to the calm and tranquil ethos of the school. Many opportunities are provided in the curriculum for pupils to study the wonders of art, literature, music and the living world. Work during personal and social education lessons on nurturing friendship and families enables pupils to appreciate the meaning of life. Inspectors saw many examples where opportunities for spiritual development were promoted during lessons. For example, pupils in the Reception class described with awe how they felt about the changes in the shape and colour of leaves during autumn in a lesson to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. There are many opportunities for pupils to reflect on human achievement, progress and suffering. For example, pupils have studied Ancient Greece and Egypt and come to appreciate historical and cultural achievements.

60. Provision for pupils' moral development is excellent. The school creates an ethos in which the pupils' moral and social development is positively encouraged. Personal, social and health education provides good opportunities for pupils to reflect on their

behaviour and to be clear as to what is right and wrong. A good example was seen during a Year 2 whole class discussion as part of their 'happy and sad' topic. Pupils showed excellent awareness of right and wrong as they discussed many types of behaviour in school and at home. There are very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and these are frequently shared, together with patient explanations of why high standards are necessary. Year 5 and 6 pupils recently played a strong part in devising rules for group work in their lessons in mathematics and this shows the high level of their awareness and understanding. Through pupils' interviews it is clear that they appreciate why it is necessary to have such rules and codes. Adults working in the school are very good role models for pupils. Staff use praise and rewards very effectively to reinforce pupils' understanding of right and wrong in their behaviour. All staff are consistent in the way in which they deal with behaviour and reinforce the same messages of strong moral values. Circle time themes for Key Stage 1 pupils often examine the moral aspects of behaviour. Schemes of work for religious education include discussions of Biblical stories with clear moral themes and messages.

61. Opportunities for pupils' social development are excellent. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' progress in lessons as pupils learn to work together and establish strong relationships with others. Throughout all school activities pupils are encouraged to be neighbourly, to show kindness, care and consideration for others. Pupils are encouraged to work collaboratively in lessons and good examples can be seen in group work during the literacy hour. Pupils in Year 2 showed outstanding collaboration during a history lesson. They worked in small groups very effectively in organising tasks between each other, 'brainstorming' their ideas and using photographs about the seaside during Edwardian times. There are many high quality opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for others. This fosters social skills very positively. For example, older pupils read to groups of younger ones during wet break times. Several pupils are members of the eco -School Committee. This gives these pupils very good opportunities to experience and take part in formal meetings with adults, preparing them very well for later life. Personal, social and health education lessons give all pupils opportunities to develop their confidence in speaking to the whole class and in sharing their experiences and views on various issues. Similarly, circle time themes make a positive impact on developing pupils' social skills. Much work is done in the curriculum about relationships and this results in the very good quality of relationships which pervade the whole school. The school organises residential activities for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils each year. These activities provide high quality opportunities for pupils to develop their independence, personal and social skills.

62. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. This represents significant improvement over the good provision found at the last inspection. The school encourages pupils to recognise and value the many different cultures in today's society, while not forgetting the culture in which they are living. Pupils learn about the lifestyles, customs and traditions of many different cultures in an interesting and stimulating way through opportunities in the curriculum.

63. Pupils learn about different faiths and beliefs in religious education. For example, one display of pupils' work portrays the symbols of other major faiths. Pupils regularly visit other Christian places of worship and also a mosque. There are several pupils at school who have different cultural backgrounds and beliefs. The school makes very

good use of the different cultural experiences of pupils to enrich learning. For example, one Year 2 pupil gave a talk last year to her class following an Islamic pilgrimage within the family and brought religious artefacts for everyone to see. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about their own and different cultures through art, music, literacy, geography and history. In art for example, pupils have studied the lives and times of many past and present artists from around the world as well as the Western culture. Pupils have produced paintings and drawings in the style of artists such as Van Gogh, Monet, Morris and Lowry. Year 2 pupils recently copied Mehndi patterns from books and illustrations. School trips in the community make a significant contribution to raising pupils' awareness and understanding of their own culture. For example, Key Stage 1 pupils recently visited the Newcastle-Under-Lyme Museum as part of their 'old and new' topic work.

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

64. The provision for the support, guidance and welfare of pupils is very good. This is a strength of the school. The caring ethos makes a significant contribution to the school community. The high quality of pastoral care has been maintained since the last inspection. There are very good arrangements for induction to the school. Prospective pupils have the opportunity to attend many well-organised sessions in school where they can experience class routines. This makes a really positive contribution to pupils' personal and intellectual development.

65. The school has effective procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs. Efficient procedures are in place for the identification of such pupils through the experience and expertise of the school's co-ordinator and the good liaison with the educational psychologist. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by staff to enable them to participate in all school activities. They receive a good level of specialist support from outside agencies where this is necessary. The high quality of support impacts positively on pupils' progress. The school has maintained the good support given to pupils since the last inspection. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are of good quality and contain appropriate learning targets.

66. Pupils who are withdrawn for one-to-one work with the special needs co-ordinator are monitored to ensure that they do not miss too much of one subject over time. This ensures their equality of access to all subjects.

67. There are good procedures for monitoring pupils' academic achievements and personal development. This results in teachers having a very good knowledge of pupils and makes a good contribution to pupils' progress in lessons and their attainment overall. The school has successfully addressed the concern of the last inspection regarding the consistency in the way teachers monitor pupils' academic progress. Teachers continue to meet on a regular basis to ensure a uniform approach to the nature and quality of monitoring in each class. The school maintains pupils' records in good order, and there are many tests and assessments undertaken at appropriate intervals. Assessments are well detailed and are effectively used to inform and guide pupils in their work. Separate records are maintained regarding pupils' personal and social development and they enable staff to effectively track the progress of individual pupils. Teachers liaise effectively with parents, outside agencies and each other about the needs, aspirations and progress of individual pupils.

68. There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour. The behaviour of individual pupils is carefully monitored where necessary, and appropriate support is provided. Good quality records are kept, when necessary, of any significant behavioural problems and parents are informed and involved. Teachers give pupils reminders of the school's behaviour code and pupils always respond positively to this. There is a good quality, and effective, behaviour policy. Staff make very good use of praise and a variety of rewards; each class maintains their own merit charts with the headteacher's awards being presented at Friday assemblies. These assemblies celebrate pupils' achievements and good behaviour and help to promote high standards. The school has good strategies to eliminate any difficult behaviour.

Personal and social education lessons include guidance on how to deal with bullying. The school has an effective anti-bullying policy.

69.Procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are good. There is an effective partnership with the education welfare service on the rare occasions that the school needs assistance or advice. There are well-established and rigorous procedures in place to follow up absences. Registers are taken promptly at the start of each session and are conscientiously and accurately completed. The headteacher and class teachers regularly and frequently monitor pupils' attendance and punctuality. They follow up any concerns with parents. The school works closely with parents and provides regular reminders about the benefits of good attendance to children. There are regular mentions in newsletters and issues related to attendance are sometimes raised through the Parents and Teachers Association. The school's efforts have resulted in good levels of attendance and no unauthorised absence in the last school year.

70.Child protection procedures are good. The school complies with legal requirements. There is a designated member of staff who has received appropriate training and liaises effectively with outside agencies. All staff are aware of the school practices and procedures and staff meetings held regularly to discuss any issues.

71.The school has very good procedures to promote pupils' health, safety, hygiene and well being. The school has maintained the very good quality of provisions since the last inspection. Healthy lifestyles are positively encouraged in the curriculum. Topic work in science includes activities and work about healthy eating, good habits and the need for regular exercise. Outside agencies make a significant contribution to raising pupils' awareness of health and safety issues. The school nurse attends the school frequently and gives talks and advice to pupils on various health matters. The school does not have a written drugs education policy but works closely with the police service in providing pupils with guidance. The community police officer is a regular visitor to the school and talks to pupils about several issues including drugs education and personal safety. The school also works effectively with the fire service, and they too give presentations and advice to pupils on safety matters on a regular basis. For example, a presentation recently took place regarding bonfires and fireworks safety.

72.Accident and emergency procedures are well developed. Five staff have received basic skills training in first-aid. The school has implemented a sound quality health and safety policy. Risk assessments and fire drills are carried out periodically.

73.The last inspection identified that there was a safety risk in the school not having sufficient lunchtime supervisors. The school responded immediately following that inspection and more than doubled the number of staff.

74.During this inspection, inspectors examined carefully the arrangements for escorting pupils to the busy main road and waiting parents and buses. The school has very good arrangements to ensure the safety of pupils with very good supervision by adults. The school organises cycling proficiency training for Year 6 pupils each year. All pupils receiving training in the last school year achieved competence certificates.

## 81. Partnership with parents and the community

75.The school's partnership with parents and the community is very good. The links they have made a significant and positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. The school has significantly improved the quality of its partnership with parents since the last inspection when it was good.

76.Parental involvement in the life of the school and in pupils' learning is very good. The school positively encourages and welcomes parents to become involved in school life. *The Parents and Teachers Association* provides valuable support for the school in organising fund-raising and social events. Considerable funds are raised at events such as the summer fair which is jointly organised with the parish church. Other productive events include the Christmas Prize Draw, quiz nights and children's disco's. Money raised by the *Association* has gone towards buying useful learning resources for the school. The recently extended school accommodation included a significant contribution from the *Association*. A group of parents are also heavily involved with the school through the *eco* - committee which helps to take forward many environmental issues within the school community. Many parents help in school regularly. They assist in classrooms, listen to pupils read, accompany school trips and support extra-curricular activities. They also make a significant contribution to supporting the Saturday Sports Club, such as with gymnastics. Some parents give talks to pupils about areas of their expertise and interests. For example, this includes talks about promoting good health and very basic first aid, from parents in the medical professions. A few parents are also highly involved in the cycling proficiency training that takes place each year for Year 6 pupils. Parents work effectively with staff at all times.

77.Parents of pupils with special educational needs are appropriately involved in developing individual education plans, and also in reviewing their children's progress.

78.Information for parents is good. A 'new parents' evening is held at the start of each school year and they are provided with a good quality information pack. The revised school prospectus is of high quality and is very useful and informative regarding the school's policies, routines of work and curriculum. Very good quality newsletters are sent to parents every few weeks. These inform parents about events in the school, developments in education generally and forth-coming work in each year group. The school provides generally good quality pupils' annual reports of reasonably consistent quality. These clearly say what pupils know, understand and can do in English, mathematics and science but sometimes have more general statements for the rest. The last inspection found that pupils' annual reports were of uneven quality. The school has corrected this by agreeing a consistent approach with all teachers and carrying out regular reviews of reporting standards. Parents have the opportunity to discuss their children's work and progress on three occasions in the school year. The school regularly organises information evenings for parents. For example, evenings have been held about the National Literacy Strategy and also the National Numeracy Strategy. Parents feel they can approach the school at any time. The welcoming approach by the school, especially when pupils are brought to school in the morning, is valued by parents.

79.Links with the community are very good. This represents considerable improvement

from the sound links found at the last inspection. School trips are well planned to support and enrich the curriculum and topic work. For example, Key Stage 2 pupils recently visited Jodrell Bank as part of their topic work on the solar system. Other venues have included Cheddleton Railway and Flint Mill, Amerton Working Farm, Consal Forge and Tittesworth Reservoir. Links with the emergency and welfare services make a good contribution to promoting pupils' health and safety. For example, the community police officer is effectively involved in drugs education. There is a very close and effective link with St Filumena's Parish Church. The parish priest is a very frequent visitor to the school and makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and religious education. This includes a full sacramental programme and many services and prayers at the church. The school has effective partnerships with Alton Castle Retreat Centre and this makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development and physical education. Year 5 pupils are able to take part in residential activities such as quiet walks and cycling within a calm and religious setting. The school also liaises effectively with other residential venues such as the Crystal Palace Sports Centre in providing outdoor pursuits such as ski-ing, abseiling and fencing for Year 6 pupils. All pupils are able to benefit from the many links with sports clubs and groups in their physical education. For example, the link with Stoke City Football Club gives pupils the benefit of specialist coaching.

80. There are effective links with local businesses. A school bank operates well in partnership with a local bank. Pupils visit many different environments as part of the 'world of work' topic and local employers support this by acting as hosts. Local businesses are also generous with financial donations to the school.



81. There are effective links with local high schools. The great majority of pupils go to Painsley High School when they leave St Filumena's and there are several good curriculum links in place between the two schools. For example, Key Stage 2 pupils regularly make good use of the High School's sports and information technology facilities. Year 6 pupils are able to spend three full days at the High School so that they can meet staff and experience the new routines of work. Staff liaise effectively regarding the transfer of pupils' records and this ensures a smooth transition to the next stage of education.

## **88. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

### **88. Leadership and management**

82. The school has made good progress in implementing its action plan following the last inspection and has rectified most of its weaknesses. The headteacher and governors are well placed to further improve the school and its standards.

83. The headteacher, supported by the senior teacher and subject leaders, together with the governing body manage the school well. The parish priest, who is chair of governors, regularly visits the school and has a good knowledge of pupils. There is an appropriate committee structure in place and governors meet regularly to discuss the work of the school and to receive information from the headteacher in order to fulfil their monitoring role. They are supportive of the work of the school. They have improved in their ability to hold the school to account for its standards and the headteacher is keen to recruit governors who are able to bring skills to the school, using their experience and background. The vice-chair of governors, is a recently retired ex-primary school headteacher and two recently appointed governors who have financial expertise. Their advice and support has helped to improve the financial control in the school. Some governors have monitored the work in classrooms but generally the governors' role in checking on aspects of school life is still under-developed. This represents the stage they are at in their own development as a governing body. However, governors are knowledgeable about staff, pupils, school routines and generally know the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

84. The headteacher's leadership is very strong and there is a very clear vision for the future of the school, very firmly established through the school's aims. The aims are purposeful and indicate high expectations academically, personally and spiritually. The school is very successful at meeting its aims and pupils who leave to school are well-rounded individuals, personally, spiritually and academically. The school has generally maintained its standards where they were high since the last inspection and has improved in areas where there were weaknesses. There is a purposeful two-year whole school development plan with sections produced by co-ordinators which show a clear emphasis on improvement and raising standards in their subjects. This satisfactory plan is constructed by the headteacher and staff initially, based on a review of previous developments. Governors consider this plan and evaluate the school's progress through a process of discussion. The plan has all the necessary elements such as costings and evaluation criteria although these are not always expressed in terms of outcomes.

85. The headteacher has recently changed the management team following the retirement of the deputy headteacher. In addition to the headteacher, it now consists of a senior teacher and key stage leaders. However, the headteacher's approach is very much an inclusive one, where all the relatively small numbers of staff are involved in planning and decision making. He is a very good role model for staff and is keen to lead by example, especially through his teaching. However, this results in him spending nearly three-quarters of the week teaching and leaves little time for all the necessary 'paper-work'. There is a successful pragmatic leadership style although not everything is always written down. This weakness is recognised and with the

increased numbers of pupils and related income the amount of time teaching is planned to be reduced in the future.

86. Checking on teaching is built into the work of the management team and the headteacher and other senior staff are very supportive of staff who need advice. Through this there is a clear knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the staff team and of areas where support needs to be provided. Teachers identified good examples where they had been given support to help them with their teaching and felt well supported by the management team. Some co-ordinators have checked on their subjects through monitoring planning and some have visited classrooms to see the teaching. However, time for this is not always built in systematically and there are few written records kept. Through the close relationships staff have with each other and the approach the school has to including all staff in decision making standards are often discussed collectively. Overall, the monitoring of the teaching and the curriculum is satisfactory.

87. All members of staff and governors contribute much to the school's excellent ethos. The school's commitment to equal opportunities and inclusion for all is seen in the way staff plan and the watchful approach to ensuring that boys and girls have equal access to the curriculum.

88. The special educational needs co-ordinator gives very good leadership and support for both staff and pupils. Pupils' special educational needs are recognised as early as possible and strategies are tried and reviewed. The progress of pupils' on the special needs register is reviewed and monitored on a regularly basis. The school complies with statutory requirements in its implementation of special educational needs provision and the headteacher and governing body have ensured that this aspect of the school's work is organised effectively and monitored well.

#### **95. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

89. The school is sufficiently staffed to meet the demands of the National Curriculum, to promote the growth of the whole child as well as meet their spiritual needs of the pupils. Staff are suitably qualified and have a secure knowledge of the majority of the subjects they teach. This ensures the requirements of the National Curriculum are met and enables the effective provision of education for children under five. Teachers' knowledge of information technology has increased since the last inspection and, although staff are increasing in their confidence there are still some weaknesses; the school is committed to developing the subject and staff's competency in using computers. Since the last inspection, a teacher with specific responsibility for information technology and for design and technology has been appointed and has worked hard to improve school provision. This has addressed the issue identified in the previous inspection. The staff are hard-working and committed, and the sufficient number of classroom assistants provide excellent support inside and out of the classroom. They are well experienced and also have an important teaching role which they fulfil well. All staff work in harmony with education advisers, educational psychologists and other external agencies whenever necessary. There are no pupils for whom English is a second language, and, therefore, no specialist teacher is required. Office staff, domestic assistants and the school janitor make a positive contribution to

the smooth running of the school.

90. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are good. There is regular staff attendance on courses and in-service training is linked to the school development plan and to the school's needs. The staff are a well co-ordinated team and the senior management team support new staff, with informal induction procedures which are effective. Newly qualified teachers have a designated mentor and weekly training and appraisal sessions. An ongoing system of appraisal is in place for all staff, and teachers receive strong support from the headteacher, who personally conducts staff development interviews.

91. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. It is of sufficient size and there are enough facilities to allow the curriculum to be taught effectively. The entrance area, which has a good security door and effective system, is attractively furnished with display cabinets, soft chairs, tables and plants, and presents a welcoming introduction to the school. Although most classrooms are of a suitable size, the classroom for Year 4 pupils is cramped. Some rooms lack storage space, while others have walk-in cupboards. The assembly hall, which has a raised stage, is also used as a dining room and a gymnasium. Although it is of adequate size for these purposes, its free space is severely restricted by the lack of storage for gymnastic apparatus and matting, musical equipment, chairs and sundry other items. Good use is made of the backstage area, which has been converted into the Reception classroom. Two new classrooms are currently in the final stages of completion. The headteacher's office is of a reasonable size, but is shared by the school secretary and means that she has to leave the room if the headteacher wishes to hold a private conversation. In addition, it currently serves as a temporary cloakroom for all staff. All classrooms and corridors have a selection of display boards, with displays, some of which are three-dimensional, which attractively celebrate the pupils' achievements. Two cloakrooms accommodate the pupils' outdoor wear. Boys' and girls' toilets are in good condition, with handrails for disabled children in the boys' toilets. Staff toilets are clean but the décor and trimmings are in poor condition. Although there is newly created access for disabled pupils and adults, wheelchair mobility inside the school is limited.

92. External facilities are good. The school is well provided for, with a large playing field and football pitch adjoining the upper tarmaced playground. There is a pleasant wooded area on the school boundary, which is currently being developed by parents, pupils and staff as an *eco-area* and enhances pupils' scientific opportunities. There is a good, but small separate attractive, play area for children under five outside the Reception class. The main, lower, playground is marked out with suitable games and incorporates a small, hedged area. This is furnished with good quality wooden tables and chairs and provides an area for social opportunities where pupils can sit and talk quietly.

93. Resources, which are satisfactory overall, support the curriculum and enhance learning. They are accessible to all pupils. The quality of books is good in the classrooms, but are of mixed quality in the library area. The library is small and, although there are a number of new books on the shelves, there are also several which are old, having loose or torn pages. Nevertheless, the pupils make good use of their library. There are sufficient textbooks to support the curriculum, and all classrooms

have a stock of quality fiction and non-fiction works. There is a range of basic tools and equipment to support design and technology, and a stock of artefacts support science, art, history, and geography. There is a range of musical instruments, and equipment for physical education is good overall.

94. All classrooms and the library have a modern multimedia computer and printer, and the school's digital camera is used for recording events and work in design and technology and science. Only the library computer has Internet access at the present time, and none of the computers are network linked. Plans are in hand for developing this during the next phases of the installation of wiring from the government grant the school successfully bid for. Although there is adequate computer software to give general support to the curriculum and for improving pupils' capability in information technology, subject specific software and equipment for control is limited. The school further supplements its resources with borrowed artefacts to support specific topics. The curriculum is well enhanced through visiting speakers, off-site visits and field trips.

## 101. The efficiency of the school

95. The financial planning of the school is sound and prudent management of the school's finances have led to a small surplus at the end of the financial year. Until recently, and because the school is small, there was little room for financial development once all the staff were budgeted for. There is clear evidence of the school financially planning for its future; the trend over the past three years has been increased numbers of pupils through the school's popularity. A government grant was applied for and the school's successful bid for its new additional accommodation is to be paid for from sources already agreed and discussed at governors' meetings. The school development plan is suitably costed although the criteria for success is not always stated in terms of the impact it should have and this makes it difficult for governors to measure the cost effectiveness of the decisions they make.

96. Excellent use is made of teachers and support staff and classroom assistants are used particularly effectively in a teaching role with groups of pupils in and away from the classroom. For instance, they work with groups of pupils using information technology and hear pupils read. They give a full commitment to the school. A particularly strong feature is the way the school uses the strengths of its teachers' specialised subject knowledge in Key Stage 2 to teach specific subjects to all Key Stage 2 classes; this has a really positive effect on the pupils' attainment. In addition, a specialist teacher for music now teaches music across the whole school. All the available accommodation is used very well and the school playing field and conservation area are a real asset and very well used by pupils. The really good way the staff use most of the school's resources to the full to support their pupils' learning has a very positive impact on the pupils' learning although information technology is not always to the fullest extent in lessons.

97. Overall, there are effective financial controls; the auditor's report identified some deficiencies but most of these are now being dealt with, supported by the relatively new governors who have a financial background. Many issues have been resolved but some other tasks, such as finding someone to fully audit the school fund, are predicted to take a little longer to complete. The school's new secretary is quickly becoming familiar with the financial systems and she is already confident in checking on the school's finances, budget monitoring procedures and reconciliation of accounts. As clerk to the governors she is well placed to support the governing body and the school.

98. In relation to the school's high standards and especially the pupils' excellent attitudes, behaviour and relationships, the relatively low income, the broadly average attainment of pupils on entry, their good progress and the good quality of education provided, the school gives very good value for money.

## 105. PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

### 105. AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

99. Children under five are admitted to the school at the beginning of the school year. The majority of the Reception class were under five at the time of the inspection. An appropriate supportive approach to induction enables the children to adjust successfully to their new learning environment, especially those who come in part way through the year. The school uses the local education authority recommended scheme for baseline assessment when children are rising five years. Assessments made soon after the children arrive, indicate that their attainment on entry is broadly average. They make good progress in each area of learning from the time they are admitted. By the time the children are five most have exceeded the Desirable Learning Outcomes for Children's Learning and they are working towards the lower levels of the National Curriculum. The provision for children under five is good in all areas of learning. There is very good support from a full time nursery nurse who works exclusively with the Reception class. This makes it easier for the teacher to share her time among the different groups of children and to monitor all that they are doing.

100. The provision for children with special educational needs is good. The school monitors children with potential difficulties closely. As a result, children are identified early and targets are set.

107.

#### ***Language and literacy***

101. Good emphasis is placed upon the development of language and literacy skills and the children have clear targets set for them; their progress is good. By the time they are five the majority of children are exceeding levels appropriate for their age. Many enter the school with some knowledge of letter sounds and the school builds on these so that by the time they are five they know many of their sounds. The children are provided with many opportunities to talk and listen, both individually, with the whole class group and older children. They express themselves clearly and volunteer information confidently. They share stories, poems and experiences, which promotes and fosters individual expression. They concentrate well when listening to a story told to the whole class. Children quickly learn that they must put their hands up to answer questions or contribute information. They listen well to stories and recognise sounds and words; they learn to enjoy books and value them. They have a growing understanding of rhyme and how it can help them remember words. Most children know the sounds of letters and are beginning to build simple words. Children write, practising their letter formation and begin to accompany their pictures with words; some higher attaining children write simple phrases with help. They trace and copy their names.

102. The quality of teaching in language and literacy is good. The class teacher has a good knowledge and understanding of how to enhance children's skills in literacy. Children are engaged in good quality literacy experiences throughout the day. Good use is made of the time available to teach language skills in the context of the children's experiences and imagination.

109. **Mathematics**

103. The children make good progress in mathematics. Children know their colours and simple shapes. They are familiar with counting songs and rhymes and some children can count to ten and beyond with understanding. They enjoy mathematical games where they have to identify the missing numbers with the class teacher using a puppet that makes mistakes. They tell the teacher what number was missed out, correcting the 'errors' the puppet makes. They make sets of six in a counting game, throw a die and recognise the numbers they have thrown. The children use a good range of resources for sorting, matching, counting, weighing, measuring and recognising two-dimensional shapes. They play number games on the computer and are developing a confidence in handling numbers as well as developing their information technology skills. By the time they are five they exceed the standards set by the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning. They have a developing mathematical vocabulary and confidently use words such as "big" and "little" in the correct way. The teaching of mathematics is good. The class teacher plans a good range of interesting activities, and encourages the children to use their counting skills in a variety of situations.

110. **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

104. In their knowledge and understanding of the world, children are making good progress and their attainment is above that expected nationally. They have a growing awareness of the past. They are beginning to talk about time relating to them and their activities, identifying parts of the day and the passing of time. They use appropriate drawings to depict the passing of time and label them appropriately using terms such as *morning*, *noon* and *night*. They use a mouse with reasonable accuracy to access computer programs such as "Pingu" and other number programs. There are times, however, when children are not always sure of what they are doing and have to stand because the computer is too high. Children can use a small tape recorder to play tapes. The majority of children talk confidently about their homes and families. They enjoy role-play and act out activities about people they know who help them. For example, they act out the role of an optician and receptionist in the "opticians" corner. There is a good range of visitors to the school such as Postman Pat, and travelling performers. Children learn about their immediate locality and environmental issues from visits they make into the local village, bottle banks, library, local farm and the local museum. The children's observational skills are well promoted and they look carefully at autumn leaves, seeds, bark and cones, which they sort into types of autumn flora. They learn about what changes to look for in autumn and sort the leaves by their changes in colour. They draw the leaves and choose colours to represent autumn leaves. The children acquire a growing vocabulary associated with their observations. The teaching of knowledge and understanding of the world is good.



111. **Physical development**

105.Children attain good standards in physical development and make good progress. They are given appropriate opportunities to develop manipulative and co-ordination skills through the use of tools for drawing, painting, writing, cutting and sticking. They are able to cut out pictures and sequence them for the morning, noon and night. They make small models. There is evidence of good hand control developing, seen through displays of painting and drawing. As they move and play they have a good awareness of space and direction. Good use is made of the school hall, the conservation area, and the outside area, for play, physical education and scientific activities. The teaching to aid pupils' physical development is good.

112. **Creative development**

106.Children make good progress towards the Desirable Learning Outcomes through the good quality of teaching and their development in this area is above that expected nationally. The children use their knowledge of colour to good effect. They use play dough to make models of hedgehogs. Good examples of well-displayed work are evident. There are opportunities for the exploration of music and the pupils sing number songs well, for example. They recognise a range of animals from rhythms tapped out by the teacher. Children play with a doll's house and make up imaginary stories. There is a good balance between what the teacher chooses for them to do and they activities which they choose for themselves. Children are made to feel very secure quickly and this makes a positive impact on progress.

113. **Personal and social development**

107.The children make good progress in their personal and social development. They attain standards which exceed with the Desirable Learning Outcomes. On entry to school they are made to feel welcome and secure and quickly settle down to their new routines and surroundings. Children really enjoy coming to school and they are happy, secure and confident learners. The culture of the whole school, routines and the very good relationships between pupils adds much to their personal development. Children clearly know what is expected of them and are exceptionally well behaved. They know familiar routines and develop an increasing responsibility for themselves and their environment. They learn about sharing and playing together co-operatively. They volunteer answers and listen when others are speaking, and can wait their turn with few reminders. The staff are good role models. They have high expectations of children's behaviour, supported by the general ethos of the school. The quality of teaching is good.

108.The quality of the teaching is good overall. There are often very good features to lessons. The teacher has a very good knowledge of the areas of learning and how to promote the children's development. There is good attention to the children's use of correct vocabulary in all subject areas and there are appropriate language prompts used in helping pupils' understanding ideas, such as "when we play we share". Very good storytelling skills by the teacher capture the children's imagination. There is very good use of questioning and explanations are always clear. The class teacher makes good use of plenary sessions after each activity to celebrate achievements, discuss completed tasks and reinforce learning. Groups are usually monitored effectively to check that tasks and activities are completed.

109.There is a good policy and curriculum planning for the early years, which is

informative, well planned and taught with good links to the National Curriculum. This aids pupils' continuity of learning well. Planning covers all the areas of learning and, when appropriate, the National Curriculum too. The activities provide a broad and balanced programme of work for all pupils. Children with special educational needs are effectively supported. Throughout the year children are regularly monitored and assessed and this informs teachers' planning and leads to new targets being set. Appropriate records are kept and progress tracked carefully so that they move easily from areas of learning into the National Curriculum. Displays considerably enhance the environment which promotes learning. Resources are satisfactory. The well-organised Reception class environment promotes learning well. The school has maintained a similar high standard of provision seen in the last inspection.

## 116. ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

### 116. English

110.The 1999 National Curriculum test results show that the proportion of pupils' attaining at the expected level (Level 2) and above in reading was above the national averages at the end of Key Stage 1, and was well above in writing. They show levels of attainment which are average in relation to pupils from similar schools in reading, and above average levels in writing. The previous inspection found attainment in English was in line with national expectations. Current inspection findings suggest that the pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is above national expectations in reading and above in writing. Pupils have achieved similar, good, levels of attainment over the past three years and these are now beginning to rise.

111.In the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests in 1999, overall attainment of pupils reaching the expected level (Level 4) and above in English was well above average compared nationally and above average compared with similar schools, with nearly four tenths of pupils attaining the higher level (Level 5). This is an above average level nationally and an average level when compared to similar schools. In the current Year 6 group, inspection findings suggest that standards of attainment are well above national expectations. Trends over time show steady improvements in reading and good improvement in writing.

112.Overall, at both key stages, pupils of all levels of prior attainment make good progress in English.

113.The speaking and listening skills of most pupils are very good and their attainment is well above average at each key stage. By the end of Key Stage 1 they are articulate in most situations, and listen well to complex instructions. They contribute to class discussions with confidence and show an awareness of the needs of the listener. Higher attaining pupils respond clearly and audibly to challenging questions on a range of texts. Low attaining pupils show increased confidence in reading a play script in a group at Key Stage 2. They discuss preferences when comparing poems on similar themes and substantiate their views by referring to the text. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 show an increasing ability to use subject specific vocabulary to engage the listener. Pupils discuss text in terms of *characterisation*, *attributes*, *genre* and *plot*. They talk about spelling in terms of *digraphs*, *prefixes* and *suffixes*.

114. The pupils' very good progress at Key Stages 1 and 2 in speaking and listening is exemplified by a growing confidence in speaking in a range of situations, and expressing well reasoned opinions. This was seen at the end of Key Stage 2 when pupils discussed the 'I had a dream' speech of Martin Luther King. They show an increasing ability to use a very wide range of vocabulary, and adapt their talks to suit a range of purposes and audiences, and thus engage the listener.

115. From inspection findings, the pupils' attainment in reading is above the nationally expected level at Key Stage 1 and their progress is good. They read with expression and accuracy and predict what will come next in the text. In Year 1 they use phonic and context strategies to read new words and their reading is generally accurate. By the end of the key stage, they have a range of reading strategies and are fluent readers. They express preferences for different authors and illustrators, and begin to use simple dictionaries. Low attaining pupils show a growing knowledge of high frequency words and phonics. Work is linked to individual educational plans for pupils with special educational needs, and their progress is carefully monitored. Regular supported reading for pupils with special educational needs ensures their very good progress in relation to their prior abilities.

116. From inspection findings, by the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils' reading is well above national expectations and they make good progress. Pupils in Year 3 show a growing ability to read with expression and understanding. Low attaining pupils recognise rhyming words. They compare the characters and writing style of authors such as Dick King-Smith, expressing views about the story, showing increasing awareness of plot and characterisation. Pupils in Year 4 read a range of texts with accuracy and fluency. They compare and contrast poems on the theme of cats and use connective words in their writing. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress, increasing their knowledge of high frequency words and developing reading strategies. Pupils in Year 5 investigate how language is used to present characters. For example, they annotate copies of text to change non-standard English to Standard English when studying the *BFG* by Roald Dahl, which they bring to the plenary sessions to exemplify their ideas. The highest attaining pupils show a growing ability to refer to text, which they use to support their answers to questions. Pupils with specific learning difficulties identify and point to imaginative words. They read less demanding books with expression, answering simple questions on the texts, and can identify alliteration and rhyme.

117. Pupils at the end of the key stage read for enjoyment. They offer opinions about a range of authors and make comparisons. They understand the relationships between characters and refer to text when expressing their views. They can distinguish between the points of view of different characters in a story. They understand that a myth is based on truth, for example the story of the Trojan horse. Pupils with special educational needs also recognise differences between characters in a story. During work with the special educational needs co-ordinator, they read stories with expression and use strategies to enable them to read more accurately.

118. From inspection findings, the pupils' attainment in writing is above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1, and they make good progress. Pupils write for

a good range of purposes, for example, pupils in Year 1 write about their news showing an increasing awareness of sequencing and using good vocabulary for their age. Handwriting is well formed, clearly shaped and usually well orientated. At the end of the key stage pupils can sequence events when writing extended, imaginative stories, which engage the reader and show good use of connectives. Simple punctuation is usually correct. They talk about poetry in familiar settings and write their own ideas using similar formats with good use of vocabulary and sentence construction. Spelling is particularly good and some pupils make very good progress. Pupils' handwriting is well-formed and of a suitable size. Many are beginning to write in a neat cursive style.

119. Pupils' attainment in writing at the end of Key Stage 2 is well above the national average. Their range of writing is varied and they have a very good understanding of purpose and audience. They write scripts, chronological accounts in history, newspaper articles, poems, obituaries and take notes using correct format with increasing expertise. In Year 6, there is an increased awareness of punctuation, and high attaining pupils use, commas, inverted commas, brackets, dashes and hyphens. Most pupils write well-ordered and organised letters with good presentation. Progress in writing is good overall in Key Stage 2 and high attaining pupils make good progress. Pupils in Year 3 practice writing with a joined script and usually transfer these skills to other written work. Pupils in Year 4 develop their use of punctuation, and improved spelling and handwriting skills enhance the fluency and clarity of their work. They understand how verbs and adverbs should be used in sentences and use this knowledge to produce more interesting sentences. They learn to write to a greater length, use increased imaginative and subject specific vocabulary, sustaining ideas and themes. Pupils in Year 5 learn how to make notes from information about cats using a variety of abbreviations where appropriate. Year 6 pupils understand the language style and organisational strategies used to produce leaflets and posters on environmental issues. They know that writing and presentation should be used for impact as well as information.

120. Pupils' attitudes to work and their behaviour is very good overall in both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs show good attitudes to work, including the very few pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties as part of their special educational needs. The majority of pupils enjoy sharing texts and join in reading with sustained interest. Pupils with special educational need show improving concentration levels and take pride in their reading skills. The behaviour of younger pupils' is exceptionally good and they respond to questions with eager enthusiasm. They have very good relationships with each other, help one another and celebrate each other's successes. They work collaboratively and are enthusiastic about their work. Most pupils are respectful and polite towards their teachers. In both key stages, pupils are aware of class rules and need few reminders.

121. All pupils work hard. Most pupils sustain concentration for long periods even when teachers' explanations are occasionally overlong. They know what to do when they meet a problem and when they have completed their work. Where pupils are set personal lesson targets, they show pride when they achieve them. For example, a Year 1 pupil remembered to use finger spacing when writing a sentence. Pupils take responsibility for clearing up at the end of lessons.

122. Overall the quality of teaching is good at both key stages. It is very good or better

in a just under a quarter of the lessons, good in over a half and satisfactory in a quarter. Teachers' set high expectations and pupils of all abilities are usually very well challenged. Their subject knowledge is very good overall and has been greatly enhanced by literacy training, which has enabled them to plan well for the literacy hour. They engage in joint planning, sharing knowledge and expertise with other staff. The best planning has clear objectives, with explicit targets for individual needs. Good use is made of support staff in lessons. Very good use is made of questioning to motivate pupils and as a check of their understanding in all lessons observed. This helps pupils gain a good grasp of the ideas presented in lessons.

123. The way that teachers organise their lessons and the methods they use range from satisfactory to very good, and are good overall. Teachers point to the text for younger pupils, and this effectively involves pupils with special educational needs. The best teachers have a very good balance between teacher instruction and pupil discussion and pupils know exactly what they have to learn. Occasionally introductions are over-long but this does not effect the pupils' interest or concentration. In many classes there are good systems to support pupils independence in reading and writing. Most teachers prompt pupils with problem solving strategies such as looking in their wordbooks, or using a dictionary or thesaurus. Group sessions at the end of lessons are used well by all teachers to celebrate work and to consolidate or extend learning. Most lessons are brisk and book resources are well chosen to include motivating reading for boys. Behaviour management is very good; teachers rarely raise their voices and use praise appropriately to motivate all pupils. They use a calm, non-confrontational approach to ensure the few pupils with behavioural difficulties are fully involved.

124. Assessment in the subject is good overall. In the last inspection assessment of pupils' progress at the end of Key Stage 1 was ineffective; this is no longer the case. There are now good examples of pupils' assessment being used to identify specific learning difficulties at Key Stage 1, and recording systems show well the strengths and weaknesses of individual pupils. Regular assessments are made at the end of each term. Key Stage 2 pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 are given non-statutory end of year tests to give an overall picture of standards. Information from these tests is entered onto a new computer assessment program and used to track pupils' progress. Assessment results are recorded in teachers' planning books. These books are also used to track progress day-to-day. Pupils from Year 1 to 6 have weekly spelling assessments. A portfolio of assessed work is kept by the co-ordinator. Marking for both key stages is constructive, indicating areas for pupils' improvement, informing planning and celebrating achievement. Regular homework extends or consolidates learning.

125. The co-ordinator continues to make a good contribution to the development of this subject and provides very good leadership. She is an English specialist who is enthusiastic and dedicated and who supports other class teachers very well. She has recently reviewed the policy and the scheme of work to meet the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy. She has monitored the well-implemented National Literacy Strategy at Key Stage 1. This is having a very beneficial effect on standards and has raised the expectations of all teachers. Staff identified writing as a weakness some time ago and have worked hard, under the co-ordinator's direction, to address this deficit with success. Staff have received appropriate literacy training and regular staff meetings are held to disseminate information and discuss developmental issues. Good

liaison between the school and local high school ensure a smooth transition at the end of Year 6. Resources are reviewed on a regular basis and support the English curriculum. However, not enough use is made of information technology to support the curriculum. Good use is made of educational visits to theatres, libraries and exhibitions, such as the Anne Frank exhibition, to enhance provision.

### 132. **Mathematics**

126. Since the last inspection pupils' attainment in mathematics at Key Stage 2 has been well above average or higher and the high quality of provision has been maintained. There has been a steady rise in the performance of pupils at Key Stage 1 since 1996 although there was fall in the Key Stage 1 results in 1998. The school's analysis indicates that this is due to variations in the cohort of pupils with some lower attaining pupils taking the tests as well as some weaker teaching which has now been rectified. Although the school's population has risen overall since the last inspection, some year groups remain small such as in the current Year 1 and so small variations in the population can have a significant affect on the school's results.

127.The results of the National Curriculum tests in 1999 show that the proportion of pupils who attained at the expected level (Level 2) and above was well above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and very high at Key Stage 2 when compared to schools nationally and to similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining at the higher level (Level 3) at Key Stage 1 was below average when compared nationally. At Key Stage 2 the proportions reaching the higher level (Level 5) were within the average range when compared nationally. Compared to similar schools the proportions reaching the higher level were well below average at both key stages.

128.From observation in lessons and an examination of the pupils' work during the inspection, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level is above the national average at Key Stage 1 and well above average at Key Stage 2.

129.The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress at each key stage. This is due to the good standard of teaching they receive and the way the work challenges them to think deeply about mathematical processes. The work is always presented in an interesting way and it motivates the pupils very well. This enables them to gain a depth of knowledge and they apply this well to practical situations. All teachers promote mathematical language well and by Year 6 pupils competently explain how they will carry out an investigation. There are usually close links between work in mathematics and other subjects. For example, in English at Key Stage 1 when pupils cut bread into halves and quarters and use this language in preparing written recipes. In many subjects, and especially in Key Stage 2, data handling is well promoted. However, teachers do not always take the full opportunity in their planning for building in work related to the pupils' mathematical ability in order to re-inforce their learning or stretch the higher attainers.

130.Pupils at the beginning of Key Stage 1 have a good grasp of number and insert numbers into a square of a hundred numbers where there are many missing. Higher attaining pupils begin to recognise the patterns in the tens and the units in a sequence of numbers on the square and predict from their conclusions which number is next without counting. Lower attaining pupils count objects into sets of less than five and develop an understanding of zero and where it comes in the number line.

131.Near the end of Key Stage 1, in Year 2, the pupils' ability to manipulate numbers has increased and higher attaining pupils confidently add numbers to 20 and beyond; they have a firm grasp of tens and units. For instance, they establish that 29 is made up of two lots of ten and nine units and can interpret numbers such as 55 as made up of  $5 \times 10$  add  $5 \times 1$ . Lower attaining pupils add two digits to ten and interpret simple additions such  $6 + 4$  correctly to make 10 from the number facts they have learned. They are confident with numbers to ten and many extend their knowledge to numbers higher than ten. All pupils develop a confidence in writing and using the language of length such as *longer than* and *shorter than* when comparing objects which they measure in centimetres. Lower attaining pupils estimate using non-standard units, such as the length of a book, although some are quite inaccurate at this stage.

132.By Year 4 their knowledge of number has increased and they have developed well in their ability to add and subtract three digit numbers using a variety of methods. For instance, they understand how to count on to find the answer to  $86 - 54$  and can show

their working out and adding 125 and 116 in columns identifying clearly the hundreds, tens and units. Their understanding of shape develops well and their vocabulary is growing; for instance, they know that a polygon is a two-dimensional shape with many sides. They are confident with the use of 10 for multiplying and dividing and quickly recall that  $340 \times 10$  is 3400; they have firmly established the rule about '0' in multiplication and division calculations. Higher attaining pupils respond well to the challenge of investigations in mathematics and discover interesting mathematical relationships in the 100 number squares they study. The few lower attaining pupils work with small numbers such as two and begin to develop the idea of numbers patterns in twos.

133. In Year 5, the pupils study data collected about other pupils such as height from a table created through the use of a database. Some take it in turns to order the information into ascending lists using the computer database while others begin to identify the mean, the range, the median and the mode through calculations made by competently using a calculator. Pupils are developing quick recall of mental facts and vocabulary associated with data handling through regular practice during lessons as a result of the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. For instance, they have a good understanding of 'frequency' and how they would use tally charts.

134. By the end of the Stage 2 the number knowledge of higher attaining pupils is extensive and they are confident in handling numbers up to 10,000. They use negative numbers confidently and relate these to practical applications relating to the fall in temperature below zero degrees Celsius over time. They have a good knowledge of decimal notation and confidently add and subtract to two decimal places. They have a very clear understanding of place value. They calculate the area of a rectangle using formulae of length  $\times$  width in square centimetres and develop their understanding of volume. They calculate the volume of a cone and investigate the volume between the diameter of the base, the height and the volume. They use data to good effect and draw and interpret graphs and other representations such as pie charts and make accurate deductions from information provided. Lower attaining pupils enjoy recording but their interpretation of data is limited and related to more simple deductions.

135. The pupils' response to mathematics is very good. Pupils are very keen and interested and really think hard about their answers and strive to ensure they are correct. They enjoy the work, which really challenges them, and investigations are tackled with great enthusiasm and vigour. They particularly enjoy the mental challenges which are presented to them as part of the school's numeracy strategy. They respond very well to the need to increase the speed and accuracy of their responses and try very hard to improve on their previous performance. There is great disappointment when they do not achieve this but they are really keen to do better the next time. The pupils value the responses made by other pupils and often spontaneously applaud their successes. They take a great pride in their work and aspire to the highest standards. They discuss their work with fellow pupils well with a particularly mature level of collaboration towards the end of Key Stage 2.

136. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages and particularly strong at Key Stage 2. This has a positive effect on the pupils' attainment and progress. Teachers are confident in their knowledge of the subject and teach it well. They know the strengths and weaknesses of their pupils very well. This is from their day-to-day work with the



pupils and the good analysis of the pupils' assessments. These are held each half-term and information is also gathered from the statutory and non-statutory National Curriculum tests. Lesson planning is generally good with teachers identifying mostly clear objectives and sometimes stating clearly what pupils of different abilities are to learn. Teachers usually deal with pupils of different abilities by the way they alter their questioning for them or by different worksheets given. This works well in the main but opportunities to stretch all pupils' are sometimes missed by teachers not specifically identifying and planning what different pupils need to learn. A particular strength is the very good quality of teachers' questioning which probes pupils' understanding of mathematical ideas and makes them really think about the answers. All time is used effectively and lessons always start promptly. Teachers expect pupils to work at a brisk pace and each part of the lesson proceeds speedily so as to maintain pupils' interest. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced in the school since September and teachers are just getting used to ensuring that there is an appropriate balance of time between activities. Sometimes, however, the section at the end of lessons, where teachers evaluate what pupils' have learned, is too short.

137. The mathematics curriculum is well supported by the school's scheme of work which is now based on the National Numeracy Strategy planning. There is a good quantity of good quality resources and an appropriate balance between teacher-made materials, published books and practical apparatus used in lessons. Assessments at the end of each unit of work are very thorough using school based, as well as published, tests. The results of these are analysed each half-term and work revisited where pupils are having difficulty. As a result, teachers are becoming far more accurate in their National Curriculum assessments and in their predictions of pupils' possible future attainment. The approach is now consistent at both key stages and represents an improvement since the last inspection when there was a weakness at the end of Key Stage 1. Teachers make notes on pupils who are having weaknesses in lessons so that they can check on pupils during subsequent lessons. This is not consistently carried out to the same standard by all teachers although the limited amount of information in some records is sufficient to prompt teachers to check on pupils when they see them again. There is a brief development plan for the subject and it is very well led by the headteacher who is the co-ordinator. The school has set its own targets for improving the quality of its mathematics provision and also set targets for the National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 1 and 2 in subsequent years. This shows a decreasing number of pupils achieving at the expected level and above in mathematics and represents an over-cautious figure set by the school. Work for the highest attaining pupils could sometimes be more challenging, more thought provoking and use information technology to a greater degree to help them gain a greater depth of knowledge.

#### 144. **Science**

138. Since the previous inspection in 1996 there has been a significant improvement in the pupils' levels of attainment at Key Stage 1 and for the last two years the pupils who have achieved the expected level (Level 2) and above was above the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level (Level 3) and above has been below average and in 1998 was well below average. At Key Stage 2 the school has largely maintained its good levels of attainment since the last inspection although in the 1998 results of the National Curriculum tests were generally lower than other years. However, in comparison with other schools nationally they were still above average. The school has raised the profile of science, and improvements in the balance of the subject across the curriculum has helped to raise pupils attainment.

139. The teachers' assessment of the proportion of pupils reaching expected level (Level 2) and above in the National Curriculum assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 was just above the national average, but below average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils at Key Stage 1 who achieved the higher level (Level 3) or above was below the national average and well below average when compared to similar schools. The proportion of pupils at Key Stage 2 who achieved the expected level (Level 4) and above was well above average in comparison with schools nationally, and above average in comparison to similar schools. The proportion of pupils in Key Stage 2 who achieved the higher level (Level 5) or above was average when compared to schools nationally but below average compared to similar schools.

140. From observations in lessons and an examination of the pupils' work during this

inspection, the attainment of the pupils is above the national average at Key Stage 1 and well above at Key Stage 2.

141. By the end of Key Stage 1, they have progressed from learning about the divisions of night and day to understanding how these divisions are linked to the rotation of the moon around the earth. They classify different materials into living and non-living groups. The pupils at Key Stage 1, who have not yet developed competent handwriting skills, record their work either by dictating a sentence, and copying what the teacher writes, or by having a computer print out, tracing over the letters and colouring the sketch.

142. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils have a good knowledge of the human body, and know food provides energy. They can locate and name major organs such as the heart and lungs. They investigate a wider range of materials, and sort rocks and soils according to scientific criteria. They develop a deeper understanding of the earth and beyond, and the importance of light to life. At Key Stage 2, the pupils with special educational needs are provided with worksheets containing key words and simplified text.

143. In all years, the work of the pupils with special needs is consolidated through question and answer sessions and through repetition. For example, the same message is delivered in a variety of ways, worksheets, pictures, practical experiments, games and role-play. The teachers' constant reinforcement promotes the pupils' progress, which is relative to their ability levels. The rate of progress of the pupils with special needs is as good as their more able peers.

144. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make good progress at Key Stage 1 and very good progress at Key Stage 2.

145. In Year 1 pupils develop their earlier knowledge, remembering that when clocks change, the lengths of day and night change and reflect the seasons. They discuss aspects of night and day such as animal behaviour and the scientific aspects of festivities such as bonfire night. They begin to associate the movement of the sun and the moon with the lengths of day and night and examine people's fear of the dark relating this work well to aspects of personal and social education.

146. In Year 2 they extend their scientific knowledge. They begin to record the results of their investigations into night and day, writing and illustrating simple sentences. They conduct group experiments using globes and torches to simulate night and day, and identify parts of the globe not reached by torchlight. Wall displays reflect their work on living things with nature displays and collages. They begin to identify a range of materials and their properties, and recognise the differing textures. They begin to study forces, conducting simple push pull experiments using toy cars and trucks, and they look at the effects of heat and cold on a jelly, and how water acts as a coolant. They develop and use scientific terms and vocabulary. They record their experiments in photographs and drawings, which are displayed in the classrooms.

147. At the beginning of Key Stage 2, in Year 3, the pupils progress to study the structure and workings of the human body. They develop an idea of skeletal structure and shape, which is evident in their displayed work. They identify and name parts of the body, using scientific vocabulary such as iris and retina when labelling the eyeball. They examine how the eyes and ears work, illustrating their well-presented work with annotated drawings. Their homework surveys on eye colour are recorded in graphical form, which links to mathematics. In Year 4, work on the earth's inner core is consolidated through their written study of a cross section of the earth, and they use correct terminology such as molten lava and crust in annotating their work. By Year 5 the pupils study of living things is extended to include the workings of major body organs. They experiment with breathing and an airway, simulating the lungs by making pupil interactive models from plastic bottles, straws and balloons. They develop their understanding of night and day by linking their studies to the hemispheres and the movement of the earth and planets. In role-play situations, they demonstrate the

rotation of the tilted earth, and its relationship with the sun and moon, linking this knowledge to the lengths of days, months and years. They learn the sequence of planets by inventing mnemonics. From an investigation of different soils, they progress to studying the construction of the earth's core. Higher attaining pupils use microscopes and slides for closer examination of soil structures, and make predictions of the changes which water would make. They work in pairs to evaluate and record their findings, such as when there is too little water, the soil remains dry, or when there is a high sand content, the water is absorbed.

148. Following the National Curriculum tests, the pupils in Year 6 extend their learning through links with the secondary school. Over a period of five or six visits, they use scientific apparatus to investigate what happens to carbon dioxide at different temperatures, and conduct simple investigations into fizzy drinks and air bubble sweets. This project promotes their personal development very well while easing their transition from primary and into secondary education.

149. Throughout the school, the pupils' attitudes towards science are very good. They are attentive, responding with enthusiasm to question and answer sessions. They listen carefully and follow instructions. They are very sensible when conducting experiments or carrying out investigations. They are polite and well-mannered, raising their hands enthusiastically to ask or answer questions. Even the youngest children are willing to share and take turns with equipment. They work individually or collaboratively and are positive and responsive to the teachers' expectations. They apply themselves well to tasks and show good levels of concentration. They take responsibility for clearing away at the end of lessons and know where materials and equipment are kept. In practical work, they show good levels of responsibility and pay heed to general safety measures.

150. The quality of teaching is consistently good. It is good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. One fifth of all the teaching seen in lessons was excellent. Lessons are well structured and balanced to include elements of listening, speaking, written and practical work. Teachers have a very secure knowledge of the subject and resources are well planned and prepared. Teachers use some very good strategies and a variety of techniques to reinforce learning, such as making a cross sectional model of the earth's core to support written work, or holding brainstorming sessions to focus pupils' thoughts. Levels of challenge are mostly good, but in some cases, higher attaining pupils are not always stretched as much as they could be. The lower attaining pupils benefit from simplified work sheets, which are sometimes used and good quality questioning to probe their understanding. In all year groups there are very good links with other subjects, such as when Year 2 pupils identify Egypt on the world globe and link this to their religious education work. Whenever possible, numeracy and literacy skills are promoted very well through scientific experiments, handwriting and general work presentation. The teachers are good role models and have an excellent knowledge of their pupils. Homework is set on a regular basis and marking is consistent and positive. The teachers' assessments and records are very thorough; staff carefully monitor the pupils' progress and their notes about pupils from lessons informs their subsequent planning.

151. Policy documents are detailed and comprehensive, and the well-balanced curriculum, which is well matched to National Curriculum programmes of study, is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Long-term assessment is very good,

informs curriculum planning and is linked to the school development plan. The department is currently creating an exemplar portfolio of pupils' work as an indicator to National Curriculum attainment levels. A range of quality textbooks supports the curriculum and a borrowing facility for specialist equipment from local sources supplements the satisfactory resources within the school. Overall the accommodation is satisfactory, although the temporary Year 4 classroom is very cramped and makes investigative work difficult. The science department is strongly led by an efficient co-ordinator. The provision is very good overall with some excellent features and has significantly improved since the last inspection.

## 158. OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

### 158. Art

152. During the inspection no art lessons could be observed at Key Stage 1 as they were timetabled outside the inspection period. Only a small number of lessons were observed at Key Stage 2. Judgements are, therefore, based on an extensive examination of the pupils' portfolios and classroom displays, together with a detailed analysis of teachers' schemes of work, lesson planning and records. These suggest that at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in drawing, painting and three-dimensional work is good overall. This is an improvement when compared to the last inspection especially as sometimes their work is very good compared to that of pupils of similar ages. By the end of this key stage their work shows an understanding of shape, colour, shade and tone. Art themes are occasionally linked to other subjects, and pupils show a clear understanding of the human form, which links well to their science work. They imitate the styles of Picasso, Van Gogh and Monet, developing a knowledge of colour and painting self-portraits. They use their own portraits as a base from which they develop three-dimensional self-images in salt dough. There is evidence in their work of a good ability to use a wide variety of tools such as brushes, pencils, crayons, felt-tip pens and poster paints for two-dimensional work, and scissors, glues, plasticines and dough for three-dimensional work.

153. The pupils at Key Stage 2 extend their skills, using a wide range of materials which include natural grasses, cones and flowers for collage work. They develop an appreciation of line and form through the observational drawings and sketches. They begin to use their sketches as a basis for the development of paintings and models. They broaden their artistic knowledge, examining and imitating the work of other cultures, such as Hindi 'Mehndi' hand painting and Australian art. They continue to use dough for modelling, but their work becomes more sophisticated in its shape and form as they translate two-dimensional work into three-dimensional models. Pupils in Year 6 study the reverse stencil techniques of Matisse, using computers to research into his life and background.

154. At both key stages, the pupils make good progress in art, and there is evidence of continued progression and artistic development as they rise through the school. The pupils with special educational needs make the same good progress as their peers.

155. The pupils' attitudes towards art are good. At Key Stage 1, the pupils are happy to discuss and explain their work. They take pleasure in identifying their own work displayed on walls and around the school. The pupils at Key Stage 2 share materials and collaborate well when using sample posters such as Matisse's work *Monsieur Loyal 1947*, pooling their ideas and posing as head and shoulder models for each other. They listen carefully, asking relevant questions, and following instructions. They concentrate well and take care and pride in their work. They use materials and equipment appropriately, sharing and taking turns as necessary. During lessons there is a pleasant *hum* of activity, although occasionally, noise levels rise as pupils become excited and enthusiastic when working.

156. From evidence of teachers' planning, pupils' work and small number of lessons

seen the quality of teaching is good overall. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching ranged from satisfactory to good. Teachers use the schemes of work for art well and plan from these for their well-prepared lessons. They use available resources well, and set high, but realistic, challenges, although some higher attaining pupils, who finish their work early, do not have enough work to extend their skills. Lessons are balanced and well structured to include clear directions and demonstrations, and the teachers' movement around the classroom ensures that no pupil is neglected or gets into difficulty. Despite the cramped conditions of one of the classrooms, organisation and the management of pupils is satisfactory.

157. The strength of art is its well-planned curriculum and schemes of work, which are clearly linked to National Curriculum programmes of study and designed to promote continuity of learning. The subject co-ordinator monitors the curriculum, keeping exemplars of the pupils' work across all years, but the lack of non-contact time prevents the direct monitoring of teaching. Although the pupils at Key Stage 2 refine and extend the skills learned at Key Stage 1, there is little variation in content, and there are no off-site visits to consolidate learning. However, art fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the provision is good overall.

#### 164. **Design and technology**

158. The previous inspection identified weaknesses in pupils' standards and the teaching of design and technology. The pupils' attainment at both key stages was judged to be low compared national expectations, and although progress was satisfactory at Key Stage 1, it was unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2. There was insufficient teaching of the subject at Key Stage 2, but where it was taught it was judged unsatisfactory. There were no effective procedures for assessing and recording the pupils' progress.

159. The profile of design and technology throughout the school has been raised with the appointment of a subject co-ordinator. The lack of time for the subject has been addressed, and the pupils at both key stages now make good progress, achieving levels of attainment to those achieved by pupils of similar ages.

160. At Key Stage 1, the pupils make good progress. In Year 1 they use examples, such as pop-up books, for ideas before designing and making their own pop-up creatures from card. They design their work carefully, applying logic to solve balance and weight problems, and using basic materials such as glues, scissors, pens and card to make their finished item. In Year 2, they progress to work based on storybooks such as the *Incy Wincy Spider* project. They design and make models of spiders descending from their webs using pulleys and string and lots of colourful imagination. They construct mobiles using coat hangers and a range of design ideas. They record what they have achieved, evaluating their work and formulating new personal targets.

161. At Key Stage 2, the pupils make good progress. They begin to use simple tools such as fret saws, measures and safety blades to cut out their work from a range of materials. They examine how things are constructed prior to designing their own item. For example, in Year 4 they disassemble picture frames, examining and naming the



various parts before designing and making their own frames from wood, plastic or card. In Year 6, they use their imagination to disassemble musical instruments before designing and making their own versions. In both cases, the pupils evaluate their work by putting the item to its intended use, such as playing their own instruments in assemblies. They use needles and threads to sew fabric clothing for puppets, which they have made, or solve balance problems in making a free standing parrot on its perch. They record and evaluate their own and each other's work, both in writing and through standard and digital photographs.

162. At both key stages, pupils enjoy their work. They concentrate, try hard and take care when using materials and equipment. They take great care with their planning, experimenting and amending or adapting their ideas to improve their designs. They are well behaved and well motivated. At Key Stage 1, they take turns, share tools and help each other. They are pleased to discuss their designs and explain how they intend to make the item. At Key Stage 2, the pupils are attentive and appreciate the usefulness of teacher demonstrations in helping them organise design work, and on one occasion they spontaneously applauded the teacher. They show initiative in their design skills, and work well independently or in pairs and groups.

163. The standard of teaching is good overall and has a positive effect on pupils' motivation and enthusiasm for the subject. This also has a positive effect on their achievement and the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Sometimes there are very good features to lessons. Lessons are well planned and well prepared, with clear guidelines and expectations. The teachers show imagination and flair when introducing new topics. Some themes are related to other subjects such as where story books are linked to the pupils' literacy work, or to music, when a range of instruments is demonstrated, played and classified into percussion, wind and string. Although the pupils' achievements are recorded, at Key Stage 2, the monitoring and assessment of their progress is too informal.

164. The profile of design and technology has been raised throughout the school, and a balanced number of lessons are timetabled for all year groups. This has helped raise attainment and improve the pupils' progress. The subject policy and schemes of work are satisfactory and match the programmes of study for the National Curriculum. There are good topic workbooks, designed by the department, which encourage pupils to list their requirements, sketch their designs and record and evaluate their finished work. Currently, neither the curriculum nor teaching is monitored, although there are plans to create non-contact time, allowing the co-ordinator to fulfil this aspect of the subject.

165. Resources overall are satisfactory. There is a selection of basic tools and equipment, and pupils have access to a computer for design work. However, there is limited software to aid design and limited use of computers to support learning.

## 172. **Geography**

166. Geography is taught in blocked units of work at different times of the school year. At Key Stage 2, the pupils are taught over a two-year rolling programme. At the time of the inspection it was not possible to observe lessons in geography. Evidence from teachers planning, scrutiny of work, school displays and discussions with pupils contribute to the judgements made. Progress is satisfactory in geography across both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress and there are no significant variations in the progress of pupils of differing genders or backgrounds. This is an improvement since the last inspection when there was insufficient geography taught to pupils at Key Stage 1 and, as a result, they made unsatisfactory progress.

167. Pupils at the beginning of Key Stage 1 recognise simple features in their local environment and look at the school locality. On an enlarged map of the area pupils locate their homes and mark them using postcards bearing their names and addresses. Pupils make gains in knowledge about places through studies of people who help them in the community. Pupils describe and name the weather in different seasons. Pupils, at the end of Key Stage 1, in Year 2, study seaside locations and know that the seaside is on the coast. They have an increasing knowledge of their locality and of areas in Britain. They use holiday brochures to gather information for research about places on the coast.

168. At Key Stage 2, pupils in Years 3 and 4 make observations and judgements about the weather. They are developing an ability to recognise patterns and variations in day-

to-day weather, seasonal patterns and world climates. They study river systems and their effects on the landscape. In Year 5 and 6 pupils study settlements and climate. They look at issues concerned with population and compare rich and poor countries. They make progress in identifying the geographical factors which relate to poverty. They compare various climates for example tropical and Polar Regions. Pupils in Year 6 know that Greece is located in Europe and can name the surrounding seas in history lessons on Ancient Greece. Their knowledge of the world is growing. Evidence from their work shows they develop use of four figure grid references in their map work and display a good understanding of the key features of maps.

169. It is not possible to make a judgement about the quality of teaching overall or on pupils' responses in lessons. The quality of teachers' planning is good at both key stages. For classes studying similar areas, work is matched to pupils' needs and abilities appropriately. Good use is made of the community to enhance learning of aspects of locality and good use made of the local village and surrounding area. Satisfactory links are made with other subjects, history, religious education, literacy, art, and mathematics, for example.

170. The co-ordinator has recently taken responsibility for geography and has made a commendable start. She has a clear educational direction and a clear position statement. The subject is regularly reviewed in the school development plan cycle. The quality of the curriculum since the last inspection is now satisfactory; it is now sufficiently broad and balanced, and medium-term planning ensures that there is progression across classes and key stages. Assessment procedures are good, and teachers are beginning to record their assessments at the end of each term. A portfolio of assessed work is being built up and kept by the co-ordinator. These assessments are now beginning to be used to inform future planning and track the progress of pupils. The co-ordinator has plans to increase the range of resource materials and relevant educational visits augment the curriculum. Although there are computer programs available for use in geography, they were not observed being used during the course of the inspection. The school's conservation area is used well to support teaching and good use is made of visitors. Visits are made to Cheddleton Railway, the Isle of Wight and London, in addition to using the local village of Caverswall, to enhance the curriculum.

## 177. **History**

171. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in history. This is an improvement since the inspection when the progress of pupils at Key Stage 1 was unsatisfactory due to insufficient history being taught.

172. Only a small number of lessons were seen during the inspection as history is taught in blocked units at different times of the year for different year groups. At Key Stage 2, the pupils are taught six study units and two extension studies which are covered over a two year rolling programme. Good foundations are laid in the early years, which encourage pupils to take an interest in history and appreciate the passage of time.

173. Pupils at the beginning of Key Stage 1 develop their understanding of *then* and

*now* and learn to recognise the distinction between present and past in their own and other pupils' lives. They know the days of the week and months of the year. They use phrases such as "*in the olden days*". They begin to find out information from books and pictures. Pupils in Year 2 write confidently and draw pictures to answer questions about photographs, and consider similarities and differences in dress, entertainment and transport at the seaside, for example. Pupils with special educational needs learn and use the language associated with the passing of time, and describe objects as *old* and *new*.

174. At the beginning of Key Stage 2 pupils learn about places and events in Ancient Egyptian society. They look at evidence and features of culture, religion and everyday life. The pupils in Year 5 and 6 undertake their own research from books on the Ancient Greeks and have a growing understanding that time is divided into periods, and are able to identify specific dates; they understand *AD* and *BC*. Pupils in Year 6 find out in greater depth about the Ancient Greeks' houses, lifestyle, and dress. They draw conclusions from their research, that Ancient Greeks were good at art, writing and building, for example. They learn about the Greek gods and famous people of the time, and name sources that can be used to investigate life in that period. They begin to use dates and more complex terms to describe the passage of time. They compare life in Sparta to that in Athens. They show greater knowledge of the use of types of evidence that can be used to support research, and select and combine information from a variety of sources.

175. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils in history are very good overall. The youngest pupils are enthusiastic about analysing photographs of the seaside for differences between then and now, and are very keen to contribute their ideas. They concentrate well on challenging tasks. Pupils study hard in the subject and work completed is of good quality. They work in groups co-operatively, and share materials well. They show great interest, enthusiasm and enjoyment when undertaking tasks and make good contributions to class discussions.

176. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this is shown in their planning and in their interesting exposition and explanations. Planning is good with learning objectives for groups of differing abilities, and these are clearly communicated to pupils so they know what they are to learn. Lessons are planned to cover all aspects of the subject and include visits into the wider community. Good links are made with other subjects, religious education, geography, literacy and art, for example. There are good opportunities for independent research; pupils find out about historical facts using a variety of sources of evidence. Lessons are usually paced appropriately. Good opportunities are given to pupils to make gains in speaking and listening. The use of questioning to challenge and check prior learning is a particularly good feature. Pupils are usually well managed, helped by the interesting work set.

177. Leadership of the subject is good. The new co-ordinator has a qualification in history and has attended a course for new co-ordinators. She has recently reviewed the policy in the light of new developments. There is a good scheme of work developed in conjunction with other members of staff. The subject is regularly reviewed in the school development planning cycle, pupils' work checked, but teaching of the subject is not monitored by the co-ordinator at present. The quality of the curriculum is good; it is sufficiently broad and balanced, and the scheme of work ensures that there is progression across classes and key stages. Assessment procedures are good, and teachers are beginning to record their assessments at the end of each term. A portfolio of assessed work is being built up and kept by the co-ordinator. These assessments are now beginning to be used to inform future planning and track the progress of pupils. There are information technology resources to support the teaching of history, but their use was not observed during the course of the inspection. Although the school uses what resources it has well, there are not always enough artefacts to support the units of work. Presently, resources are borrowed from the local resources centre or provided by parents. Good use is made of visits to museums, and the locality and parents and grandparents are used to provide first hand evidence to pupils. This enhances the curriculum and enables pupils to make good progress.

#### **184. Information technology**

178. Since the last inspection the school has worked hard and has improved its provision of computers. Each class now has a modern multimedia PC and the library area has a PC with dedicated Internet access. The school has put a programme of work in place based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's exemplar scheme of work.

179. At both key stages the progress which pupils make is satisfactory. At Key Stage 1

their attainment is in line with that which expected nationally but this is not yet the case at Key Stage 2. Pupils have not had long enough to acquire all the skills or to the depth necessary and sometimes, teachers do not always take advantage of the use of information technology in their planning for other subjects. There are still times where there is too little use of the computer at Key Stage 2 and teachers, and some pupils, say that it is difficult to integrate the use of these in the literacy hour.

180. From very early on in their school life pupils are encouraged to use the computer and they quickly develop good control of the mouse to move objects around the screen. They are really motivated by the software and the activities they undertake, such as selecting an icon for use in a *Pingu CD* game to make something happen on the screen. They know that the sound of the program can be controlled and turn the knob on the speakers to adjust the volume. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are more confident and use simple 'tools' in a drawing program to create shapes such as a rectangle and triangle in their shapes work in mathematics. They are able to size the objects by dragging with the mouse and are amazed at how the shape can be quickly created. They add text by selecting the text icon and all are confident in printing their work; one could even identify the reason for the printer not working by reading the error message on the screen. From the pupils' records they are able to give simple instructions to a *Roamer* to make it move a specific distance.

181. By the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2 they have used a wide variety of equipment such as a digital camera, the Internet, and some control equipment. Their opportunities have increased as additional hardware and software has been purchased over the past two years. They can use a word-processor to produce text, selecting the typeface from a range of different font styles and are competent in simple editing techniques. Many are able to insert a picture alongside their written work but not all pupils say they can do this; those who are confident and talk through the process step-by-step. They are beginning to use the Internet to send 'emails' to pupils at other schools and can search for information from a simple database such as CD encyclopaedia as well as by using the Internet. They select the information they want and print this out. They have used databases in mathematics to sort work into an order of size, for example. They use lists to identify the median and mode in their statistical work. There are some examples of pupils using control technology and also sensors for measuring temperature but this work is not a regularly built into in other subjects. As yet, pupils do not have a depth of knowledge to be able to produce simple written procedures to turn lights or motors on or off in a sequence or to be able to design an experiment or set up an investigation in science, for instance. They make satisfactory progress overall because they have started from a point where the school did not have this equipment and they have had a great deal of work to complete to reach the standard required at the end of Key Stage 2. Some pupils in Year 6 still feel that they have too little opportunity to use computers in their classroom work.

182. The pupils are enthusiastic users but are also patient when equipment does not work properly, such as sometimes when it is difficult to access the Internet on the library computer. They concentrate very well on the work they are given and discuss what they are doing with their partner, such as when sorting and printing lists in a simple database in Year 5. The pupils are responsible and take care of the equipment; they know how to handle CD ROMs and how to set up the printer. The responsibility for

equipment is encouraged by staff from a very early age and this clearly benefits the pupils.

183. Little direct teaching of information technology was seen during the inspection but where it did happen it was satisfactory. Sometimes teachers set up equipment and gave pupils an activity to do; they checked on what the pupils were doing from time to time. Occasionally pupils needed help when they were unclear what to do next, and if the teacher was busy with other pupils, most used their initiative well and tried out ways of proceeding. Teachers have developed their knowledge and most are competent in the basic use of computers. There are still weaknesses in the use of control technology, however. They are well supported by the school's co-ordinator who is able to provide advice and support. The teachers' planning for information technology is not always recorded in their record books, and there is no separate section for information technology to prompt teachers to think how they could use during their weekly planning. Teachers clearly know of the uses of information technology but sometimes their planning is limited by the lack of available subject software. They have not yet fully considered all the possible ways information technology can be used in all subjects, using the 'toolkit' of software installed on all their computers.

184. Since the last inspection, a knowledgeable co-ordinator was appointed with the specific responsibility for the subject and, until recently, taught all classes of Key Stage 2 pupils. There is now a greater awareness of the use of information technology throughout the school. The responsibility for teaching the subject has now passed to all other teachers with a requirement that the key elements of the programme of study are integrated into the subjects they teach. The subject is well led and there is evidence in the co-ordinator's planning file of much work and development since the last inspection. The school's scheme is suitably linked to units of work each term and teachers are expected to plan from these. There is good guidance given about what to teach and example lesson plans are included in the school's information technology planning file for teachers to draw upon. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers keep records of pupils' use to ensure fairness of access. There is a satisfactory assessment system in place but teacher's own assessments are often brief. The school's annual reports often lack examples of what pupils' know, understand, and can do; more general statements are used instead.

#### 191. **Music**

185. At the time of the last inspection pupils reached high levels of attainment in music and the specialist teaching at Key Stage 2 contributed significantly to pupils' learning. Since then, the school has appointed a new music teacher who has just begun to teach music throughout the school. Music is not as strong, at present, but the plans the new co-ordinator has for the subject are good and there is a really good emphasis on music from other countries in the new scheme of work she is constructing. Already, pupils in Key Stage 1 are developing satisfactory skills in music and building well on what they have learned. The teacher's good planning is ensuring that they develop their skills in suitable steps.

186. At Key Stage 1 pupils make satisfactory progress. It is not possible to make a judgement about pupils' progress or about the teaching at Key Stage 2. No lessons could be seen during the week of the inspection as these were timetabled outside the inspection period. Teachers' records clearly show that pupils covered a wide range of experiences during the last year but there are limited statements about what pupils' know, understand and can do in music; they tend to be more general such as 'has a good sense of rhythm' or 'performed with confidence'. From talking to some pupils and hearing them play the recorder in the *music club* some individuals progress well.

187. At Key Stage 1 the youngest pupils show an enthusiasm for making music and can tap out rhythms to the syllables in their name. They are beginning to recognise words by the rhythms tapped such as *el-e-phant* and *ti-ger*. Most are keen singers and really join in well with action songs although one or two are still reluctant. During the middle of the key stage pupils have developed a good knowledge of the un-tuned percussion instruments they use such as the tambour, cymbal and maraca. They join in enthusiastically when playing games such as *pass the beater round* waiting to receive it when the music stops so they can perform, or answer a question about, long and short sounds, and which instruments make these sounds from those they have heard. Pupils make satisfactory progress in identifying the length of sounds and use arm signals to state when the sound made by an instrument has ceased. By the end of the key stage, in Year 2, pupils are beginning to use simple shapes as notation to represent sounds.



Some are beginning to compose their own ideas of rhythms for other pupils to play. They sing songs which increasing confidence and vigour.

188. The pupils' response to music is satisfactory overall; during parts of some lessons this is better, usually when they are fully involved and do not have to wait for a long time before they can perform. They sit quietly and behave well although some younger pupils occasionally become restless. Older pupils in Key Stage 1 act very maturely, know when to sit and be quiet and take responsibility readily and volunteering to extend what they have been asked to do by the teacher.

189. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The specialist teacher is very knowledgeable about music and draws upon the new medium-term planning to produce detailed lesson plans which mostly have clear objectives. The teacher plans well for pupils' progress over the key stage and provides interesting and well thought out ways to develop music skills in pupils. She acts as a good role model and uses pupils' well in lessons to demonstrate their skills. Weaknesses in teaching let the otherwise good elements down; the delivery is sometimes lacking in enthusiasm and the pace sometimes laboured. Occasionally, there is not the insistence that the very small number of pupils making a noise should listen when the teacher is talking.

190. The *music club* makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' skills in playing the recorder, playing together as a group and in using traditional musical notation. It is well attended, mainly by girls, but the co-ordinator is aware of the need to encourage more boys to attend. The school has considered the way it provides music and still covers all elements during a reduced amount of time in the week. Many of the strengths identified in the last inspection are no longer present, partly due to changes in staff and the emphasis of music in the curriculum. The co-ordinator wishes to raise the status of music and has clear plans to revive the role of the peripatetic tuition in learning specific instruments.

197.

#### 197. **Physical education**

191. The lessons observed during the inspection, included physical development for the children under five, and at Key Stages 1 and 2, swimming, gymnastics, outdoor activities and dance. Further evidence of the pupils' progress and achievement was provided through an examination of planning documentation, teachers' records and an interview with the subject co-ordinator.

192. Pupils make good progress throughout the school. The work undertaken by children under five provides a firm foundation on which teachers can build in the later key stages. The youngest children develop good co-ordination through balance work and begin to participate in teamwork activities, taking turns in a gymnastic carousel. They balance on benches and devise various ways of crossing bars or jumping from boxes. They perform rolling over exercises with action songs and simple role-play in combination lessons of music, dance and drama.

193. Throughout Key Stage 1, the pupils make good progress in dance. Although a few pupils need help with buttons and laces, the majority change into their kit, without help and very promptly. They repeat safety rules at the start of each lesson. They make good use of space when moving around the hall during warming up exercises, and when imitating some of the animals featured in the film *The Lion King*.

194. At Key Stage 2 they make good progress. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils develop good teamwork skills, collaborating in orienteering exercises. They read a master map for information on locations, marking their group map accordingly and using analytical skills to locate hidden letters, replacing these carefully for following teams. They participate in football and netball matches against neighbouring schools and join in lunchtime and weekend coaching sessions with enthusiasm. The range of sporting activities provided by the school is open equally to boys and girls and equality

of opportunity is well promoted. A number of the pupils at Key Stage 2 enjoy the opportunity to participate in climbing, canoeing, abseiling and similar outward bound activities during two annual residential field trips. Pupils' progress in swimming is excellent. This is because of the considerable expertise of the school and poolside staff and the very efficient way all the time is used so that pupils are totally focussed on the work they have to do in lessons and the goals they are to strive for. By the time they leave the school all can swim at least 25 metres and many do this with a real quality to their style.

195. The pupils respond to physical education with great enthusiasm. At Key Stage 1, the pupils' imagination is stimulated prior to physical activities, through watching a film extract. They reflect on animal movements and think about which creature they want to imitate. The behaviour of all pupils is generally good. Some pushing-in occurs among younger pupils in Key Stage 1, but older pupils wait their turn patiently. Four pupils in Year 6, who had forgotten their kit, were genuinely annoyed with themselves for their forgetfulness and were sad to miss their lesson. All take care with safety procedures and know what to do in the event of an accident.

196. The quality of teaching is good overall; the teaching of swimming is excellent. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject. Physical education lessons are well planned and risks are minimised. Good quality warm-up sessions are a feature of every session, and transition into the main part of the lesson is smoothly accomplished. Lessons are well timed and balanced to ensure that everyone gets a chance, and that there is no time to tire of an activity. Where any minor accidents occurs, such as a slight thumb injury, these are dealt with quickly and efficiently by staff and the pupil returns to the activity with the minimum of fuss. Where support staff assist with the youngest pupils, their work is of a particularly high quality, encouraging independence while offering security and confidence to the very young. Staff form good trusting relationships with the pupils, and are good role models. Assessment procedures are satisfactory at Key Stage 1, but sometimes a lack of rigour and informality of recording at Key Stage 2 means that it is difficult to track the pupils' progress. Assessment of swimming is very good and results in staff knowing the next steps to build on their pupils' skills. Pupils are grouped well by ability which means that each member of staff can target pupils' needs specifically.

197. Subject documentation is good overall, as is planning for progression of ongoing physical development. Long-term plans are matched to National Curriculum programmes of study, and forward planning is linked well to the school development plan. Off-site activities are booked well in advance, and planning for extra curricular activities is well organised. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and hard working, with a genuine personal interest in sport.

198. Resources overall are satisfactory for both outdoor and indoor physical education. However, much gymnastic equipment is stacked against the walls in the hall, and climbing ropes, suspended from the ceiling and are not always fully fastened up when not in use. This heavily restricts hall space for other school uses. There is a good size playing field for outdoor sports, and a primary school size football pitch. The upper playground has hockey goals at each end, while for younger pupils, playground games are marked out on tarmac in the lower play area. Changing arrangements for older pupils are just about satisfactory. Girls are supervised in the open cloakrooms, while boys are supervised changing in one of the classrooms.

199. Extra-curricular provision is good. In addition to two annual outward-bound trips, physical education is supplemented by Saturday morning coaching sessions in football, and occasional match fixtures in both netball and football.

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

### 206. **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

200. This inspection was carried out by a team of four inspectors including a lay inspector over a period of four days, to a total of 14 days. The school was also inspected in

September 1999 under the provisions of section 23 of the School Inspections Act. Inspectors spent 54 hours and 40 minutes observing a total of 58 lessons, looking at pupils' work, examining teachers' records and talking to pupils. Lunch and breaktimes, assemblies and extra-curricular activities, such as recorder and homework clubs, were seen. Inspectors scrutinised samples of pupils' work provided as well as examining pupils' records to inform them about pupils' progress and the curriculum.

201. Discussions, both formal and informal, were held with the chair of governors, and a governor responsible for building matters. Pupils in Year 6 were interviewed about their time in school and how they were prepared for transfer to the high school. Inspectors also met with the headteacher, the senior teacher, subject co-ordinators, teachers, non-teaching assistants, and other professionals, such as the school secretary, who supports the work of the school.

202. Statements of special educational need, annual reviews, annual reports to parents, individual education plans, records, and other reports were examined. All the school's available curricular documents and assessment information and those relating to school organisation and procedures were read. The school development plan was examined together with the minutes of governors' meetings. A meeting to hear parents' views was held, and this was attended by 25 parents and carers representing 31 pupils. Responses to 62 parental questionnaires were analysed. During the preliminary visits to the school, meetings were held with the headteacher, staff and formally with the governing body.

## 203. 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
YR – Y6	170	1	14	7

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	7.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22

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

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked each week	51.75

Average class size:	24
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### Financial data

Financial year:	1998/1999
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	£
Total Income	230 039
Total Expenditure	228 060
Expenditure per pupil	1 471
Balance brought forward from previous year	4 970
Balance carried forward to next year	6 949

## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

170

Number of questionnaires returned:

62

### 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	76	21	0	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	92	8	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	61	26	5	2	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	50	42	2	3	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	60	31	2	3	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	69	23	0	2	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	65	24	3	3	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	53	26	10	5	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	73	23	2	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	79	16	0	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	77	21	0	0	0

N.B. Not all parents responded to all questions