

## INSPECTION REPORT

**LOSTOCK GRALAM C of E CONTROLLED  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Lostock Gralam, Northwich

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111289

Headteacher: Mrs. I. Elson

Reporting inspector: Peter Sudworth – 2700

Dates of inspection: May 22<sup>nd</sup>- May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2000

Inspection number: 190147

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	CE Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	School Lane, Lostock Gralam, Northwich, Cheshire
Postcode:	CW9 7PT
Telephone number:	01606 42804
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Stuart Russell
Date of previous inspection:	30 <sup>th</sup> September, 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Peter Sudworth	Registered inspector	English, Geography, Physical education, Music; Areas of learning for under-fives.	The school's results and pupils' achievements; How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Ken Lawrence	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Tom Prosser	Team inspector	Mathematics; Information technology; History; Special educational needs.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Accommodation.
Michael Woods	Team inspector	Science; Art; Design and technology; Religious education; Equal opportunity.	How well are pupils taught? Assessment; Staffing.

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Lostock Gralam Church of England Primary School educates pupils from 4 -11 years and is situated in the village of Lostock Gralam, near Northwich. It mainly serves the pupils of the village. A privately run Nursery operates on the school site which also offers before and after school care. The number on roll at the time of the inspection was 145, smaller than most primary schools. 14 pupils, ten per cent, are on the special needs register, below the national average. Of these pupils, three are statemented. All pupils are of white European origin. 26 pupils, 18 per cent, are on the free school meals register, about the national average. The school serves a broad mix of housing types. Overall, the pupils' attainment on entry is below average. Pupils usually begin school at the start of the school year in which they are to become five.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The overall effectiveness of the school is sound. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The quality of teaching is mainly good. Most pupils have good attitudes to their work and behaviour is generally good. Standards are broadly in line with expectations in most subjects in both key stages but overall have been better in mathematics than in science and English. Nevertheless, standards in English are improving significantly. Standards are good in art. Overall, value for money is sound.

#### **What the school does well**

- The quality of teaching is good. The staff is committed and hard working and their management of the pupils' behaviour, combined with the dedication of a few volunteer helpers, contribute significantly to the overall sound progress which the pupils make;
- Pupils enjoy school; their attitudes to their work and their relationships with one another are good.
- The thorough analyses of the pupils' performances and the setting of targets for academic improvement are contributing to improvements in standards;
- The school's provision for spiritual, social and moral development is good;
- The school has good procedures for child protection and the pupils' general welfare;
- The pupils' attendance is above the national average;
- The aesthetic appearance of the school's internal appearance, including the celebration of pupils' work, provides a stimulating learning environment.

#### **What could be improved**

- The opportunities for investigative science;
- The religious education curriculum and the opportunities to learn about other faiths in order to prepare pupils for living in a multi-cultural society;
- Standards in information technology through improved resource provision;
- The ways that subject co-ordinators monitor standards across the school and use the information to link more closely with long-term development;
- Further develop record systems to track pupils' progress across the school;
- The provision of more equipment in science and design and technology and more books in the library;
- The written reports to parents to include what pupils can do and how they can improve;
- The systems and procedures for the Governing Body to monitor the school's work.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in the autumn term in 1996. Overall, satisfactory progress has been made since then. Standards in mathematics have improved and there has been a marked improvement in pupils' mental work and in their application of mathematics. There has been a big improvement in information technology. A policy and scheme are now in place and the profile of information technology has been raised. Amounts of hardware and software have been increased and an information technology suite has been set up. The staff's confidence has been increased through the provision of training opportunities and pupils' attainment is now in line with age expectations. There is no scheme yet in place for religious education. Standards in science have fallen because of the reduced amount of teaching time given to this subject and the lack of opportunities for investigative type activities. The reduced time available for work in art has led to a slight fall in standards, although these are still above expectations. The school now provides time for swimming lessons. The school development plan contains better detail both in the short- and long-term. Systems to monitor standards are strong in literacy and numeracy and also in evaluating curricular innovation but monitoring of standards in other subjects is less consistent. Members of the senior management team are now more involved in monitoring standards in English and mathematics from the analysis of data. Whilst written reports to parents on their children's progress meet statutory requirements the quality of them has not improved significantly. The school has good potential for further improvement because of the good quality of staff it has in post.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in	Compared with all schools			Compared with similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	E	D	D	D
Mathematics	B	D	C	D
Science	C	D	D	D

<i>Key</i>	
<i>well above average</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>above average</i>	<i>B</i>
<i>average</i>	<i>C</i>
<i>below average</i>	<i>D</i>
<i>well below average</i>	<i>E</i>

Overall attainment on entry is below average. By the age of five the attainment of most pupils is in line with national expectations. End of key stage results vary from year to year more so than in most schools because of the smaller number of pupils. The number of special needs pupils in any year is a particularly significant factor. The school exceeded the targets set by the Local Education Authority in the 1999 national tests and has set itself significantly higher targets for the current year and indications are that the school will achieve them. Taking the whole of the last four years together the pupils' attainment has been above national averages by the end of Key Stage 1 and equal to it by the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in English and information technology currently show signs of improvement by the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in information technology meet expectations at the end of both key stages. There is room for improvement in religious education through greater structure to the curriculum in the subject. In other subjects standards meet expectations but they are above expectations in art throughout the school.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy school and most have good attitudes to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is generally good. They play well together at break-times and there are very few incidents of bad behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Respectful relationships are maintained between staff and pupils. Pupils relate well to their teachers and to each other. Pupils' personal development is good.
Attendance	Pupils' attendance is good.

The pupils' attendance is better than the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. 95 per cent of the teaching observed was satisfactory or better and nearly 23 per cent was very good or better. Only two lessons, five per cent of teaching, were unsatisfactory or worse. The quality of teaching in English is good in both key stages but it is slightly better in mathematics in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1. Literacy and the numeracy elements in mathematics are taught well in both key stages. The school plans well to match the work to pupils' prior attainment, particularly in mathematics and in English, and the provision for special needs pupils is satisfactory. Work is not always so well matched to pupils' prior attainment in other subjects. The quality of teaching in Year 6 and some teaching in Year 4 is particularly strong. Materials for lessons are prepared very well by the teachers and they are clear what they want to achieve in lessons. Pupils usually work well but very occasionally the behaviour of a few pupils affects the learning of others and then these pupils were not well managed.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	In the main the curriculum meets National Curriculum requirements but investigative type activities could be strengthened in science. Insufficient provision is made for pupils to learn about other faiths in religious education. The range of work undertaken in art is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with learning and emotional difficulties is satisfactory.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for the pupils' personal education is good overall. It is good for the pupils' social, spiritual and moral education and it is sound for their cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of the pupils and procedures to ensure their welfare are good. The keeping of records of pupils' progress in many subjects is not yet sufficiently supportive of pupils' day-to-day progress but record keeping is good in English and mathematics in the Reception class. Marking of work is up-to-date and particularly thorough in English. Better assessment is made of pupils' progress at periodic intervals and the school has very good systems to analyse performance in national tests.

The school endeavours to involve parents and to keep them informed of curriculum developments but the response has sometimes been poor. Parents are more supportive of events in which their children take part. Parents are kept well informed of the school's life through regular newsletters. A few parents and other volunteers offer very good practical support in helping pupils and in improving the facilities. The school offers good provision for residential visits which supports pupils' social development and enhances their knowledge in other subjects, such as physical education and geography. Procedures for child protection are good.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher's leadership and management is sound. Generally the subject co-ordinators do not have sufficient time to support colleagues and to keep an eye on standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Many of the governors are new. Governors are kept well informed about the life of the school. They do not yet have well established procedures to monitor the school's work. They fulfil most of their statutory responsibilities but the annual report to parents has some omissions.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has very good procedures to analyse test performances in which the whole staff is involved. It has improved its systems to establish its future priorities for school improvements.
The strategic use of resources	The school has sound strategies for planning its spending.

The overall provision of staffing, accommodation and learning resources is sound. A particular strength of management is the desire to improve and an openness to new ideas. The school has sound systems for applying the principles of best value.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
Their children like school; Their children make good progress; The teaching is good; They feel comfortable about approaching the school with any problems; The children are expected to work hard; The school is well led and managed; The school is helping their children become mature and responsible.	Some parents feel that: The children do not get the right amount of homework; They are not kept well informed about how their children are getting on and are unsure how to compare their children's progress and attainment; The school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons. Whole classes are punished for the misbehaviour of one or two children; Pupils come out late and parents with children in both key stages have a long wait when meeting their children from school.

The response to the parents' questionnaire was poor and very few parents attended the parents' meeting. Consequently the more critical comments represent the views of few parents. The inspection team is of the view that the pupils get sufficient homework for their age and this is contributing favourably to pupils' progress, particularly in reading and mental skills. The team agrees that improvement could be made in the information given to parents about their children's progress. For example, the quality of reports could be improved and the school does not share with parents the outline of what the pupils are to study. There is no formal opportunity mid-year to review children's progress with their parents. The provision of voluntary extra-curricular activities is similar proportionately to most schools and includes residential visits. The school admits that on rare occasions the whole class has been punished for the bad behaviour of one or two pupils but has now reviewed its procedures. It is admitted that parents with children in both key stages have a long wait if they are collecting both children but the school states that no parent has raised this problem at the annual parents' meeting over the last few years.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. The attainment of the pupils on entry to the school is overall below average. This is partly due to the fact that the pupils who enter the school are often late birthdays but also in part due to their backgrounds. However, they make good progress in much of their work and by the age of five most pupils' attainments are in line with expectations, particularly in language and literacy and in mathematics. They make good progress in these two aspects of learning.

2. By the age of five most pupils write with identifiable meaning using a structure of words often with the correct initial letter. They separate out their writing into words and can read what they intended to write. Several pupils are beginning to write unaided assisted by their developing knowledge of letter sounds. Most can recognise a few words and a few children are beginning to read simple books. In mathematics nearly all the children can count to 20 and a slight majority write numerals to 10. A large majority of the children can read numerals to 10 and some beyond. They are developing their sense of positional language but have more difficulty with comparative language. In other aspects of their work they make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world and reach the expected standard by age five. They learn about the major parts of a plant and understand something of the conditions necessary for growth, such as the need for water. They grow their own cress seeds as an example. In their personal and social development they make satisfactory progress overall and meet expectations. The children appreciate they have feelings inside which can be hurt by what others say. They have not all learned to take turns in group and class discussion and to listen carefully to what others may have to say. The progress they make in the creative and physical aspects of their learning is satisfactory and they reach the national expectations.

3. The school surpassed the targets set for it by the Local Education Authority in 1999. Despite this, results were generally below national averages. However, the Key Stage 1 cohort was very small and only contained twelve pupils. The results of any one pupil could swing the comparison disproportionately. Results in English at the end of Key Stage 1 have generally been below average over the past four years in reading and writing and also in speaking and listening. Girls have been doing better than the boys in these aspects. In the 1999 national tests, reading attainment was overall well below average against similar schools, as judged by the percentage of free school meals, and was very low in writing. The percentage of pupils gaining the expected level was similar to the national average but few pupils obtained the higher level.

4. At the end of Key Stage 2 the trend of results has been slightly below the national average and as in Key Stage 1 the girls have been doing much better than the boys. In the 1999 national tests, the proportion of pupils gaining the expected level in English was below average and well below against similar schools, although the percentage gaining the higher level was above average.

5. Most pupils in the current cohorts at the end of both key stages are expected to obtain the national expectation but their attainment in reading is still better than in writing. Some pupils are expected to reach the higher level. Pupils make good progress in reading from a low base. This is because of the way the school expects the children to read regularly at home, often with the support of the children's parents and this is paying rich dividends. By the end of Key Stage 2 the pupils read a mature selection of texts and have good understanding of what they have read. They have good skills in finding information from books but more difficulty in finding reference books in the library. Pupils make sound progress in speaking and listening and in spelling overall but it is good in Year 6. Pupils' progress in writing is satisfactory overall. Standards of handwriting are inconsistent and some pupils could take more care.

6. The Key Stage 1 results in mathematics in 1999 were close to the national average for pupils gaining the expected level or above. In Key Stage 2, whilst the percentage of pupils who gained the expected level or above was below the national average, the percentage of pupils who gained the higher level was close to the national average. Currently the proportion of pupils in Key Stage 2 who are in line to attain expected standards is higher and the satisfactory level in Key Stage 1 continues. Mental work and application of mathematics have improved since the last inspection and mental skills are being well developed. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils can multiply two digit numbers by each other, add and subtract decimals and have a secure knowledge of metric measurement. Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and enhanced by constant practice with number facts and the use of appropriate mathematics vocabulary. Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 2 overall but it is good in Year 6.

7. In both mathematics and English good provision is made for pupils who attain more highly and also for those who have special educational needs by a careful matching of the work to the pupils' prior attainment.

8. Standards are not as high as in the last inspection report in science. This is because pupils have insufficient opportunities to carry out their own investigations and to experiment. In part this is also due to the lack of resources for the subject. As a result standards are well below expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and overall below expectations by the end of Key Stage 2.

9. Pupils' achievements are overall satisfactory but good in art. Pupils' attainment is above expectations in art by the end of both key stages and progress is good. In the previous inspection standards were judged to be well above average. Less teaching time is now given to art and is the reason for the slight fall in standards which are nevertheless still good. For similar reasons standards in design and technology have fallen from above expectations to expected standards and progress is sound. Standards are in line with expectations in geography, history, information technology, and physical education in both key stages and progress is satisfactory. Attainment in music is in line with expectations and progress is satisfactory but Class 4 pupils, taught by the music co-ordinator, make good progress and the level of attainment for their age is above expectations. Standards in religious education are generally in line with expectations, although there is some weakness in pupils' knowledge about faiths other than Christianity. Attainment in this subject is similar to the previous inspection.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

10 The positive, caring attitude shown by the staff and incorporated in the school's policies and procedures is a significant feature of the school. Pupils feel that the school provides a safe, caring and friendly environment.

11 Attendance is above the national average. There are no discernable trends in the absence levels.

12 Pupils have respect for the school and other people's property. All pupils mix together well. There is no evidence of sexism or racism. Out of school activities are popular and are regarded by the pupils as an important part of life at the school. Pupils are encouraged to be aware of the needs of those less fortunate than themselves and have been involved in supporting a number of appeals for aid to Kososva, Bosnia and charities at home.

13 Behaviour throughout the school is generally good. Any instances of inappropriate behaviour are usually dealt with effectively. Offending pupils have to demonstrate that they understand the consequences of their behaviour on themselves and upon others. However, in one physical education lesson pupils' behaved badly and the lessons had to be abandoned.

14 Pupils move about the school quietly and safely. They are polite, considerate and confident in their dealing with school staff and visiting adults. Pupils work and play well together.

15 Pupils usually show a positive attitude towards learning. They mostly listen attentively, are confident in asking questions, and are eager to answer questions. In general, they work well when in unsupervised groups and concentrate on the task in hand.

16 There is a clearly stated anti-bullying policy. Reported instances of bullying are rare and are dealt with quickly and effectively. Although a few parents felt that there was some out of school bullying, pupils are confident that if they report any such behaviour in or out of school, it is dealt with promptly. No instances of oppressive behaviour were reported or observed during the inspection.

17 The school has put in place a number of effective schemes to engender a sense of responsibility in its pupils and to encourage the development of positive, caring relationships. Pupils learn to accept responsibility through the 'Choosing Scheme' and the 'Praise Pathways Scheme' as well as the behaviour policy. Older children look after younger children, and pupils in their final year undertake particular roles of responsibility, for which they have volunteered and been selected during their penultimate year.

18 There has been one fixed term exclusion in the past year.. The school's action has resulted in much better behaviour from the pupil who has now socialised well.

19 The standards of pupils' behaviour, attitudes and personal development are similar to those at the time of the last inspection.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20 The quality of teaching in the school as a whole is good. Almost all of the lessons observed during the inspection were at least soundly taught. 34 per cent of the lessons seen were good and a further 20 per cent were very good. Additionally one lesson was excellent (2 per cent). One lesson was unsatisfactory and one poor. This judgement is similar to that at the time of the last inspection, and accords with the parents' view that the quality of teaching is good.

21 The teaching of the under-fives pupils is mainly sound but occasionally good. It is generally good in Key Stages 1 and 2. In Key Stage 1 just over one half of all lessons were good or better and in Key Stage 2 approximately two-thirds of lessons were good or better. Pupils' learning in lessons is good overall and is closely related to the quality of teaching. The good teaching and learning are resulting in most pupils behaving well in class, developing good attitudes and working hard and as a result many pupils make good progress in lessons.

22 The highly structured approach to the teaching of literacy and numeracy is having a positive impact upon the quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics. All such lessons are very well planned and prepared and are taught at a brisk pace. The whole-class teaching sessions are generally effective and there is an expectation that the pupils complete their tasks in group work. Pupils respond well to the carefully planned progression in their work and standards of attainment in basic skills are slowly rising. This good teaching in literacy and numeracy lessons is not leading to sufficient transfer of pupils' skills in these subjects to the rest of the curriculum. For example, there is very little evidence of independent research involving reading in religious education and the foundation subjects and little mathematical calculation in science. Sometimes there is overuse of worksheets so that pupils are not explaining the conclusions they have come to in their own words. In other situations pressure of time is leading to many written records of experiences being strongly guided by teachers, resulting in lost opportunities to apply and consolidate vital skills.

23 Teachers group pupils well in mathematics and English to try to ensure that work can be targeted or support offered in an efficient way. On the occasions that pupils are required to collaborate, in lessons such as physical education or art, their skills improve noticeably as they work through the school. The practice of preparing work with different levels of challenge is not generally spread widely enough in subjects other than mathematics and English. Scrutiny of pupils' books shows that more often than not, the higher ability pupils are offered the same challenge and merely expected to work at greater length, rather than with greater complexity. An exception to this was made in a science lesson on sources of light in Year 1, when the work was well matched to the needs of individuals and an appropriate form of recording had been devised for the lower attaining pupils.

24 The liaison between the special needs co-ordinator and classroom teachers ensures that support within the school is well directed. Members of staff are aware of the identification processes and as a matter of policy identify pupils early, as soon as it appears that any extra help might be needed. The co-ordinator assists with the arrangements for pupils who can improve their attainment level with extra support at school and at home. She holds classes for parents to encourage and advise them on how they can help these children. This parental help is significant in the sound progress that special needs pupils make. Pupils with statements of special educational need are suitably supported within the classroom by the appointed support teacher and are also withdrawn under the direction of the teacher for booster sessions. Individual sessions appropriately focus mainly on improving literacy skills. Appropriate records are kept and assessment of needs is sound. Objectives in individual education plans are generally sound with only a few containing insufficient detail. Annual reviews are carried out following the Local Education Authority format.

25 Teachers' subject knowledge is generally sound and sometimes good. When it is good, as in a Year 6 science lesson on solubility, the pupils respond positively to the confident, well-planned delivery. They are clear about the challenge and work with interest and enthusiasm. There is a positive link between the detail of schemes of work and the quality of teachers' knowledge and understanding of what they teach. Where schemes of work have not been developed fully, as in religious education, there is less confidence in the teaching. In some subjects teachers have to make their own decisions about lesson content and not all have sufficient subject expertise to do this effectively without the added guidance. Where good guidance is given, as in mathematics and English, the quality of teaching is improved. Planning for lessons is consistently effective for literacy and numeracy. The quality of objectives set in other subjects depends very much upon the teacher's clarity about what is being taught and their own subject knowledge. In a Class 4 physical education games lesson, the clear learning objectives resulted in a briskly taught, challenging lesson during which all pupils were focused on improving their skills throughout.

26 Teachers know their pupils well. They have high expectations, both in terms of behaviour and in the pace and quality of work. Typical of the demand made of pupils was the Class 5 lesson on the theme of fox hunting, where the teacher required full attention and application to task throughout. High expectations were also evident in the patient support and encouragement provided for the Reception pupils as they examined, discussed and made drawings of plants in a science lesson. In such lessons the intellectual demands made are high and the good quality outcomes reflect this.

27 Teachers' management of pupils is generally good. Teachers are kind but firm and work hard to establish and maintain a good classroom atmosphere which is at its best in Years 3/4 and Year 6. In these classes the teachers establish a friendly, relaxed environment but demands made of pupils are usually challenging and result in good progress. For example, in a Class 4 music lesson the brisk pace, the teacher's good subject knowledge and the effective strategies used, including much practical work, were resulting in better standards than normally expected for their age in the subject. In a Year 6 English lesson the teacher's use of specific subject terminology was being internalised by the pupils and then being given back in their own contributions to discussion. In one Key Stage 2 physical education lesson, pupils' behaviour was not managed effectively and the lesson had to be abandoned. Weaknesses in other lessons are mainly reflected in the over-use of worksheets which do not give the pupils enough opportunities to write in their own words.

28 Teachers use a wide variety of teaching methods, several of which are seen at their best in literacy and numeracy lessons. Introductions and explanations are often lively and engaging and result in a good understanding of what the lesson is about. In Year 2 the teacher is particularly skilled at creating a 'family' feeling as pupils group around her in anticipation of her animated delivery. Questioning is used throughout lessons but particularly in group work and plenary sessions as teachers assess knowledge and understanding. Group work is characterised by well-prepared activities and energetic intervention by teachers. Group work is a significant part of most lessons and pupils show concentration and independence on many occasions. In a Year 2 art lesson, great responsibility was demonstrated by a group of pupils as they developed sketches into large paintings of their local church without any direct supervision. Good use is made of teaching assistants and volunteer helpers to spread the load of supervision and support and this helps to maintain productivity and pace of working. Resources are well used in many lessons to stimulate interest and to support pupils' learning but the reference library is under-used and, as a consequence, there are insufficient opportunities for personal research work. The teachers allocate reasonable and regular homework in basic skills.

29 Assessment is used informally throughout lessons as a means of pushing learning forward. This is particularly well done in Year 6 where pupils are monitored, questioned and challenged as they work. A weakness in teaching is the lack of consistency in systems to make notes of pupils' successes and difficulties, particularly in the skills that underpin some subjects, although there is some good practice, for example in Year 6. There is no assurance that planning for future lessons can take account of individual needs. Pupils' work is monitored regularly in most subjects but apart from the very good comments made by teachers in English books, there is very little evidence of developmental comment and on-going target setting.



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

31 Overall the organisation of the curriculum is sound. The previous report stated that the school's curriculum was generally broad and balanced for all pupils. In some respects this provision has been maintained with the addition of a separate provision for the under fives. However, insufficient attention is given to investigation in science. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and most principles of the Agreed Syllabus for religious education, although there are some weaknesses related to learning about faiths other than Christianity. Each subject is supported by a policy and all subjects have a scheme of work. However, a number of these are in need of review in order to ensure the recommendations are in line with the school's own needs, particularly where the school has adopted a scheme of work from a source outside the school. Each subject is also guided by a co-ordinator with teaching staff being responsible for more than one curriculum area. These arrangements help to promote the curriculum.

32 All pupils have full access to the curriculum. The school has implemented the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies effectively. Mathematics, English, and all other subjects are taught mainly in year groups throughout the school. The exception to this is in Years 3 to 5 where two classes contain a two-year age range. Teachers plan different work to meet the needs and ages of the pupils in these classes. In Year 6, booster classes take place in mathematics for the more able pupils and additional learning support is provided in literacy for an identified group in Year 3 and, as a result, the pupils are overcoming some of the problems they have in reading.

33 A heavy emphasis is given to the core subjects of English and mathematics which together take up just over one half of all teaching time. A balance of teaching time is being given to the foundation subjects and none is neglected but they are in some respects relatively under-developed because of the heavy emphasis being given to English and mathematics.

34 A detailed planning structure is in place. Curriculum co-ordinators, with the exception of those for literacy and numeracy, do not see the short-term plans produced by the staff. The headteacher continues to monitor literacy teaching. Co-ordinators are not yet fully involved in monitoring planning and classroom practice and do not have a direct influence on the quality of teaching and learning.

35 The school's provision for pupils with special needs is sound. Effective procedures identify and support pupils who experience learning difficulties. Individual plans are effectively co-ordinated and monitored to ensure an appropriate match with the work done in class. The school complies fully with the statutory procedures as laid down by the Code of Practice. Support from the learning assistant is good and all pupils have equal access to and equality of opportunity in the curriculum.

36 Visitors to the school and visits to places of interest supplement classroom learning. The school provides a suitable number of extra-curricular activities throughout the year, mainly in sport and music, organised voluntarily by staff and a few volunteers. Pupils enjoy these and there is an appropriate balance in the proportion of boys and girls engaging in these activities.

37 The overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. The range of assemblies, whole school and class assemblies make a positive contribution to spiritual development, as does the aesthetically pleasing and stimulating learning environment. Class discussion periods, although not established throughout the

school, make an effective contribution to spiritual development, as well as to speaking and listening skills. Teachers make good use of informal opportunities to promote spirituality, such as in Year 1 when time was made available for a pupil to share with the class the birth of a brother and in Year 6 a discussion on the re-marriage of one of the parents. Within the school community, special church services such as at harvest. Christmas and the end of terms play an important part in the pupils' spiritual development.

38 Provision for moral behaviour is good. The behaviour policy clearly rewards achievement and acceptable behaviour for all pupils. Appropriate sanctions are in place when pupils display inappropriate behaviour. Certificates and awards are presented in assembly. Of particular note are the teachers' nominations in assembly of the pupil in each class who deserves public praise for attainment or courtesy. All classes have negotiated and agreed class rules and these are clearly displayed.

39 Provision for social development is good. Personal and social development are promoted in the Reception class and this positive beginning is continued throughout the school. Pupils become motivated learners, who share and take turns and contribute to class discussion. Throughout the school, pupils are given opportunities to work in pairs and groups and the residential visits, which are available for all pupils in Key Stage 2, provide a valuable opportunity for the pupils to learn both educational and social skills in a different setting.

40. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils learn about their own culture through famous people in history, for example, Florence Nightingale and Samuel Pepys. Pupils learn a little, but insufficient, about world faiths, other than Christianity, in religious education lessons and are given some opportunities to experience other cultures through music and art. However this area is still under-developed. The lack of visiting speakers representing other cultures, the absence of a multi-cultural policy and pupils' lack of knowledge about other faiths restrict the provision in this aspect of the school's work.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

40. The pastoral care and support of pupils in the school is a significant feature of the school's ethos and maintains the good standards in this aspect reported previously. The school provides a secure environment in which pupils feel cared for and are safe. There is great emphasis on pupils' care and welfare. All members of staff have been trained in the clear and comprehensive policies and procedures for child protection and in those for health and safety.

41. Pupils are well supervised on all school premises and in the play areas and any potentially unsafe activity is quickly stopped. Members of staff deal with any child feeling unwell promptly and sympathetically and parents are quickly informed.

42. The school offers a range of extra-curricular activities, including residential visits, games coaching, sailing, country dancing and keep fit. Pupils value and enjoy these activities, which make a contribution to their personal development.

43. The school's provision and procedures for recording, monitoring and improving attendance are good. Parents are informed in the school prospectus about the school's policy and procedures in respect of attendance and punctuality. Registers are marked consistently, absences are followed up and the majority of pupils arrive punctually. The school is developing strategies to deal with the persistent lateness of a minority of pupils. Attendance at the school is above the national average with unauthorised absences below the national average.

44. The behaviour policy and related procedures which focus on helping pupils understand personal responsibility and the consequences of their actions on themselves and others, make a major contribution towards developing positive and caring attitudes and eliminating oppressive behaviour, including all forms of harassment and bullying.

45. The individual personal support for pupils is good and is in line with the caring ethos of the school.

46. The previous inspection report found assessment to be appropriate for English, mathematics and science but unsatisfactory for foundation subjects. Formal recording of progress and attainment was generally weak, although record of achievement books were found to make an important contribution to the plotting of pupils' general progress.

47. Since that time, baseline assessment of children as they enter school has been introduced and this is used to good effect in meeting their needs. A great deal of valuable work has been done on the testing, recording and analysis of pupils' performance in English and mathematics in respect of national tests and other standardised tests and, as a result, effective systems are now in place to monitor pupils' progress periodically. However, on-going assessment is not so strong. For example, few detailed records of pupils' progress are in place in reading, except in the Reception class and more advanced reading skills are only noted in Year 6. Little recording of progress takes place in information technology, religious education and science. Manageable assessment and recording procedures for the foundation subjects have not yet been developed. Apart from those pupils with special educational needs, there is no systematic recording of strengths and weaknesses in social development. A record for information technology is being piloted in one class.

48. The school continues to find time to make beautiful books in which pupils keep a record of their many different achievements in and out of school. The older pupils, particularly gain enormous satisfaction from looking back at what they could do when they were in Key Stage 1 and identifying the progress they have made since that time.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

50 Parents express satisfaction with the way the school provides for its pupils and the attitudes and values it promotes. They feel that members of staff are approachable and helpful, if there are problems or questions relating to their children.

51 Attendance at the autumn and summer parents' evenings is high and parents appreciate the opportunity to discuss their children's progress but would appreciate more information about the next stages of learning. Formal meetings, on more general topics related to the school, as with the pre-inspection meeting, are less well supported. School events, such as the Christmas productions, athletic and sporting activities, are well supported.

52 Communications from the school about forthcoming events and changes in policies or procedures through a regular newsletter and general circulars, are comprehensive. Parents are informed about pupil behaviour through an effective reporting system and are consulted in any cases of persistent or serious misbehaviour.

53 Parents are informed about general expectations in respect of homework in the school prospectus and specifically, through the homework diary system. Most parents feel that homework helps to consolidate learning and many contribute to the learning process, particularly by assisting with home reading. Pupils would benefit, however, from some more parental help with homework involving investigation or research.

54 In general parents are supportive of the school and they state that their children enjoy school. The vast majority of parents feel that their children make good progress. The parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with any queries. They believe the school is well led and managed and that it is helping their children to become mature persons. Many parents state that the school works closely with them. Some parents feel that their children do not get the right amount of homework and are not provided with an interesting range of activities outside lessons. Some parents feel that they are not kept well informed about how their children are getting on. The inspection team's view is that amounts of homework are appropriate and there is an 'open door policy' if parents have concerns. Inspectors think that parents could be better informed about what the pupils are to study and a mid-year parents' evening would serve a useful purpose in keeping parents informed about their children's progress. Annual written reports to parents could be improved so that they are more informative about pupils' strengths and weaknesses.

55 An active 'Friends of Lostock' parent group raises funds for the school through a series of well supported events and activities and has provided, for example, books for use during the literacy hour and hall staging. The recently formed Parent/Toddlers group has also proved a success and is popular with parents.

56 The school has issued a home-school agreement and is seeking further ways to improve the partnership. Following a parents' evening about the national tests, an evaluative questionnaire was sent to them to seek their views on the usefulness of the evening. Such kinds of initiatives are being used to inform future strategies relating to the involvement of more parents in the work of the school.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57 Overall, the leadership and management of the school are sound. The headteacher gives sound leadership. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher and they work together co-operatively in their management partnership. The quality of leadership is similar to that reported in the previous inspection. The senior management team also includes the particular expertise of the assessment co-ordinator and it is particularly effective in developing strategies to improve standards through the thorough analysis of national test results. The school has put in place very good systems to analyse periodically pupils' performance, particularly in mathematics and English, and to set targets for improvement for individual pupils and groups of pupils. These analyses enable the staff to predict future performance and to identify individual pupils who need to receive concentrated teaching to improve to expected levels and also those pupils who can aspire to the higher levels in national tests. The school is beginning to involve parents as partners in the drive for improvements in individual performance. The setting of targets by the senior management team and individual teachers is becoming increasingly effective in raising standards in the school by close and careful attention to individual pupils' performances in end of year tests. The school has been profiting from adopting successful strategies which have been trialled elsewhere. One of the strengths of the school's leadership is its openness to new ideas, its keenness to improve standards, its willingness to accept advice and its use of the expertise and ideas provided by others.

58 Staff meetings and senior management meetings are held at appropriate intervals. A written record is kept of all meetings. Whilst staff meetings are regular they are not yet sufficiently well planned in advance and tied in to the overall school development plan and to co-ordinators' individual action plans.

59 The school development plan includes a range of opinion in its formulation and the priorities within it are decided democratically. Its structure is good and includes costings, success criteria, and evaluation strategies. However, as yet, the plan does not give sufficient attention to tying in priorities and cost to the longer term. The priorities are appropriate for the school's stage of development and it is currently on target. The school's aims have recently been reviewed but not yet formally adopted. The stated aims in the prospectus are being met. It has recently reviewed its aims and is meeting most of these but there is scope for development in striving to meet the provision of a 'rich, high quality, broad based, well structured organised curriculum' and 'the promotion of independent learning' and 'access to good quality learning resources'.

60 Monitoring of teaching and learning is improving. It is best in mathematics and in English in which the co-ordinators are taking a particularly active role in checking planning and evaluating standards of work across the school. However, subject co-ordinators have not been enabled to monitor classroom practice and they are not able, therefore, to give immediate practical advice or to appreciate other teachers' difficulties at first hand.

61 The Governing Body is very supportive of the school, although several members of the Governing Body are new to their positions, including its chairperson. The school has much difficulty in recruiting new governors and currently the Governing Body is short of two governors. The governors are clearly aware of some of the school's strengths but the informal visiting arrangements do not allow its members to become aware of those aspects of the school's work which could be sharpened up. Its system of working parties is efficient in preparing business for the termly meetings. The Governing Body is keen to become better informed about the way the school operates and to become more involved in whole school planning issues. It fulfils its statutory duties in large measure but the annual report has some omissions, for example the school's arrangements for special educational needs are not included. Targets have not yet been set for the headteacher and deputy headteacher.

62 Overall learning resources in the school are unsatisfactory. Whilst resources are satisfactory in mathematics, physical education, geography, special educational needs and the under-fives, they are unsatisfactory in science and design and technology. This is having a negative effect on the quality of teaching in those subjects. The school has few of its own resources in history and religious education and inadequate numbers of reference books in these subjects but borrows artefacts from the local museum service to compensate. The number of computers is barely adequate and they are old and unsatisfactory for developing the curriculum further. Musical equipment, whilst being good in range, is old and much is in disrepair. Art materials are adequate but reference sources are borrowed from the Local Education Authority's library and museum service. In English resources are barely adequate. There are insufficient thesauri and dictionaries and the library is sparse and does not offer pupils an adequate diet of literature. The reference library is not sufficiently well stocked and there are few reference books to cater for younger and less able readers.

63 The school receives satisfactory levels of support from the Local Education Authority for financial services and advice and the school secretary's day-to-day management of the budget is good. Careful accounts are kept of spending on specific grants and all are used for their intended purpose. The school spends some of its own money to supplement the grant for pupils with special educational needs. Office systems are good and filing systems easy to access. However, the school does not yet have electronic coding systems to facilitate quick analysis of the spending on different subjects of the curriculum and as a result it is not easy to keep a check. The finance working party considers the budget termly and the Governing Body's clerk, also the school's financial adviser, informs full Governing Body meetings of spending to date. Budget planning includes provision for school initiatives. Whilst this is resulting in small class sizes on the whole, from which the pupils are profiting, the amount left to spend on resources is considerably reduced. In the past the finance working party has largely approved budget recommendations made to it and has not scrutinised sufficiently whether costs can be reduced. The school does not yet have thorough systems in place which evaluate value for money on what has been spent.

64 The school has a draft policy for equal opportunities. There is a natural awareness among the staff of the importance of equal opportunities in practice and, as at the time of the last inspection, all pupils are given equal access to the curriculum. Pupil groupings in classrooms, and support provided for those groups, ensures that attention is given to all who need help, whether with learning or behaviour difficulties. The teachers are well aware of these special needs and make both long- and short-term adjustments in provision to cater for them. Great trouble was taken to adjust several groups in a science lesson, in order to be able to move one particular boy with behaviour difficulties, without drawing attention to his problems. Some of the wider implications of implementing an equal opportunities policy have not yet been tackled. For example, there has not been a library audit in order to ensure that it is free of sexist or racist material.

65 The school is staffed generously with appropriately qualified teachers, including a part-time special needs co-ordinator, but it has limited numbers of learning support assistants and ancillaries. The teaching staff has the experience and commitment to match the demands of the curriculum. The decision to maintain such a generous pupil:teacher ratio gives little financial flexibility for the governors to employ extra support staff. Whilst those learning support assistants in post are giving valuable assistance to pupils and teachers, they do not work sufficient hours to meet the needs of all pupils with special learning or behavioural needs. Class teachers principally support pupils with special educational needs and mainly match the work to meet their needs. Only a very limited amount of additional support is available within the school and this is directed towards the younger pupils. The school is fortunate to have a number of volunteer helpers who offer particular skills, improve the adult:pupil ratio and also make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. The school makes effective provision for initial teacher training and is well placed to do that. A satisfactory induction process for new members of staff has been introduced recently. The decision to suspend teacher appraisal has reduced staff management largely to informal arrangements. This is true also of head teacher appraisal for which the Governing Body has not yet made the arrangements required by law. No performance targets exist for any staff.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

To build on the sound progress which the school has made since the last inspection and to improve standards further the school should now:

- improve standards in science by:
  - a) giving more emphasis to investigating and experimentation;
  - b) giving pupils more opportunities to use language and mathematics in science work;
  - c) allowing pupils to record their work in a variety of ways and to become less reliant on worksheets. (Paras 8, 97)
  
- creating a better structure for work in religious education by:
  - a) creating a scheme of work which is built on the Agreed Syllabus;
  - b) ensuring greater attention is given to imparting knowledge about world faiths other than Christianity. (Paras 9, 31, 132)
  
- improve standards further in information technology by:
  - a) updating the equipment available for the teaching of the subject;
  - b) extending the use of information technology across the curriculum;
  - c) developing a system for assessing and recording pupils' progress in the subject. (Paras 62, 120, 123, 124)
  
- strengthen the role of curriculum co-ordinators so that:
  - a) they can support colleagues based on first-hand knowledge of classroom practice and standards;
  - b) the cohesion between the school improvement plan, staff meetings and co-ordinators' individual action plans is much closer;
  - c) they are empowered to influence school practice more effectively through planned contributions to school based in-service training; (Paras 34, 60)
  
- improving the quality of school assessment systems which inform day-to-day planning by:
  - a) establishing more consistency in the quality of reading records throughout the school;
  - b) creating manageable records in science, religious education and information technology and the foundation subjects which track pupils' skill development;
  - d) using the information to plan lessons which match pupils' learning needs. (Paras 30, 48)
  
- increase the school's resources and the amounts of books. (Paras 62, 86)
  
- improve the quality of reports to parents so that:
  - a) they meet legal requirements and
  - b) are more informative about pupils' progress and in what respects individual pupils need to improve. (Para 54)

In addition to the above key issues the following minor issues should be considered for inclusion in the school's action plan;  
the development of pupils' awareness that they are living in a multi-cultural society; (para 40, 139)  
the development of the governors' role in shaping the future direction of the school. (Para 61)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

44

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

29

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	20	34	39	2	2	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		145
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		26

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	14

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.4
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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



***Attainment at the end of***

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	99 (98)	5	7	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	3	2	4
	Girls	7	6	7
	Total	10	8	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	[83] ( ( ) )	[67] ( ( ) )	[92] ( ( ) )
	National	[82] ( ( ) )	[83] ( ( ) )	[87] ( ( ) )

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	2	4	4
	Girls	6	7	7
	Total	8	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	[67] ( ( ) )	[92] ( ( ) )	[92] ( ( ) )
	National	[82] ( ( ) )	[86] ( ( ) )	[87] ( ( ) )

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

***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2***

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	99(98)	12	21	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	4	4	6
	Girls	16	17	16
	Total	20	21	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	[61] ( ( ) )	[64] ( ( ) )	[67] ( ( ) )
	National	[70] ( ( ) )	[69] ( ( ) )	[78] ( ( ) )

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	5	5
	Girls	17	18	17
	Total	22	23	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	[67] ( ( ) )	[70] ( ( ) )	[67] ( ( ) )
	National	[68] ( ( ) )	[69] ( ( ) )	[75] ( ( ) )

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	0
White	145
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	
Black – African heritage	0	
Black – other	0	
Indian	0	
Pakistani	0	
Bangladeshi	0	
Chinese	0	
White	1	
Other minority ethnic groups	0	

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.7
Average class size	24.2

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	42

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	99//00
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	£
Total income	289473
Total expenditure	284635
Expenditure per pupil	1924
Balance brought forward from previous year	2277
Balance carried forward to next year	7115

**Results of the survey of parents and carers**

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out

145

Number of questionnaires returned

27

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	30	4		
My child is making good progress in school.	56	30	11	4	
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	59		7	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42		12	8	
The teaching is good.	59	33	4	4	
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23	46	23	8	
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44	52	4		
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67		4		
The school works closely with parents.	38	46	8	8	
The school is well led and managed.		59	4	4	
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	41	4		
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	42	19	8	8

Note: because of rounding up, not all rows may add up to 100 per cent.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

66 Most children begin their schooling in the September preceding their fifth birthday. At the time of the inspection ten children were still under five. The children receive a curriculum which is based on the national recommendations for young children's learning. An unusually high percentage of the children in the past few years have had their fifth birthdays in the summer term. Overall, their attainment on entry is below expectations in all aspects of learning.

#### **Language and literacy**

67 By the age of five most children's attainments meet the national expectations and they make good progress. All can recognise and write their first names and can recognise a few letter sounds. About one-third know all their letter sounds. Most can recognise a few words and about two-thirds can read simple books unaided and express themselves clearly in speech, listen well and comprehend instructions. Several pupils know the purpose of a contents page and can use it to find sections in a simple class book that they have made. Nearly all pupils show an interest in books, read from left to right and listen attentively to story. They are beginning to write unaided and most demonstrate in this way that they know the initial letters of words and are using letter sounds to try and write the words. About one quarter of the children are still at the very early stages of writing and what they write does not recognisably relate to what they would like to write. For the majority there is a good match between the number of words written and what they intended to write and some sounds are evident within the words. They separate out the words so that they are identifiable. The quality of teaching in this aspect of their work is good. The good teaching of phonic knowledge enables pupils to write independently, gives the children confidence and enables many to make good progress in writing.

#### **Mathematics**

68 By the age of five most children meet national expectations for this aspect of learning and their progress is good. Nearly all can count to 20, a slight majority can write numerals to ten and a small number of children can write numerals to 20. A large majority can read numerals to ten but less than half can read numerals to 20. All pupils can recognise common two-dimensional shapes, such as triangle and circle, and most can also identify either one or two commonly used three-dimensional shapes. About half the pupils can order by size and they are becoming familiar with positional language, although their comparative language is less good. Most know the days of the week in order. The majority of children can recognise and recreate simple repeating patterns. Most understand full and empty and have a good concept of half-full. The quality of teaching in this aspect of their work is sound. Occasionally the work is too difficult for younger children, for example the work and language on capacity in the whole class sessions but in general the teacher makes good use of records to progress their knowledge. A good feature of the teaching is the particular attention given to number formation which helps the children to speed up their work.

#### **Knowledge and understanding**

69 The children make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world and the teaching of this aspect is good. Good attention is given to learning from real things and this aids the children's understanding. Their attainment is broadly in line with expectations. They become familiar with the parts of a plant and can identify the leaf, stem, flower and appreciate that some flowers are scented. They handle dry and wet compost and have some knowledge of the conditions necessary for growth, such as the need for water. They know that seeds produce plants. They are beginning to develop a notion of past and present in their own and others' lives and compare the toys which they play with compared to those from a local museum.

### **Personal and social education**

70 The children's progress in this aspect is satisfactory. The children share, take turns, work co-operatively in groups as, for example, when they work together in the water and sand trays. They respect musical instruments and control them well. Their behaviour is generally good but they are still developing the ability to listen to others in group discussion and to take turns in answering. A few children can be noisy in free play and have not yet learned how their actions can affect others. They discuss moral issues and they describe feelings as being inside you. They are able to express how the behaviour of any one pupil can affect others. They appreciate how they are responsible for one another and how their feelings can be hurt by, for example, name calling. The teaching of personal and social education is sound and the children's attainment in this aspect of learning is broadly in line with expectations by age five.

### **Creative development**

71 Pupils' creative skills are appropriate for their age and meet national expectations and their progress is satisfactory. The teaching of this aspect is sound. The teacher gives the children appropriate experiences in music and art. They can identify a piano and a violin on recorded music, although they have more difficulty in identifying the sound made by the flute. They know the names of common percussion instruments, such as tambourine and triangle. They are beginning to be able to choose some instruments to represent particular movement sounds for example a two-tone wood block to represent someone's footsteps and castanets for chattering sounds. They enjoy singing and sing reasonably tunefully for their age. In art work they paint boldly and choose bright colours to decorate their three-dimensional snails and snakes made from dough. They respond to music in movement satisfactorily as they replicate the movements of animals in Saint Saens 'Carnival of the Animals'.

### **Physical development**

72 The children are making satisfactory progress in their physical development and by the age of five the children's attainment meets national expectations. The teaching of this aspect is sound. Their fine motor skills, required in letter and number formations, are developing satisfactorily. They take suitable care in the formation of their letters and numbers and control their pencils well with appropriate techniques. They are developing suitable skills to handle brushes and paste spreaders. In physical education and movement their skills are satisfactory for their age. They catch bean bags and throw underarm to a partner with suitable accuracy for their age. Their running, hopping and skipping techniques are appropriate.

73 Overall the teaching of the under-fives is sound. The teacher is trying hard to manage the wide spread of ages in the class and balancing the demands of the literacy hour against the children's ages. Overall the curriculum is balanced but at times the curriculum is too structured for the youngest pupils and they sometimes have to sit for long periods of time and can become restless. Some are still needing a more practically based curriculum. However, the children are making particularly good progress in some aspects of their work, such as writing and reading. The standards being attained by age five are similar to those at the last inspection.

## ENGLISH

74 The English curriculum includes all elements of the National Curriculum programmes of study, including the provision of drama which is achieved through regular school productions. The school has made good progress in the implementation of the National Literacy strategy.

75 Despite the good curriculum offered, the school's results in national tests in the past four years have generally been below the national average in reading and writing in Key Stage 1 and the girls, almost consistently, have been outperforming the boys in both these aspects of the subject. Speaking and listening skills have also been below average. In the 1999 Key Stage 1 national tests, the performance of the pupils in reading was well below average in comparison with similar schools and very low in writing. The percentage of pupils gaining the expected level in reading was similar to the national percentage but few pupils attained at the higher level. The school's Key Stage 1 1999 results have to be treated with caution because the cohort of pupils was small and any one pupil's score affected the results by eight per cent.

76 The pupils' results in the past four years in Key Stage 2 in English have generally been slightly below the national average with the girls doing significantly better than the boys. In the 1999 national tests pupils' attainment was below average against similar schools, although the percentage obtaining the higher level was above average. Against all schools nationally the school's performance was below average.

77 Overall, standards in English are sound and are similar to those in the last inspection report. Currently most of the pupils at the end of both key stages are expected to attain the national expectations, despite which reading standards are better than those in writing in both key stages. Pupils make good progress in reading throughout the school from a low base. Additionally the teacher/parent meetings arranged at regular intervals by the school for Year 1 parents encourage and enable parents to help their children with their work.

78 By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils can express simple opinions about what they read, understand what they read, appreciate terms such as illustrator and author, are familiar with the contents page of a book and know how to use it. They have developed good strategies to help them with unknown words met in a text. They are developing regular reading habits and most read regularly at home to their parents and this is helping their standards of reading.

79 By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils are in line to reach the expected standard for their age. They read regularly and develop good reading habits. Some pupils exercise mature choices of reading, for example, autobiographies. About half the Year 6 pupils belong to local libraries. Several read confidently and, when reading aloud, do so with suitable expression and appropriate attention to the punctuation. They have good strategies for deciphering unknown words, for example by using the context of the writing. They have good comprehension of what they have read and they can indicate the reasons for their favourite characters in the stories they read. They have good strategies for selecting books. Their understanding of non-fiction books is good and they can use an index quickly and can scan pages to retrieve specific information.

80 Pupils' speaking and listening skills are satisfactory overall in both key stages and they make sound progress in this aspect, although progress is better in Year 6. Pupils gradually acquire new vocabulary and in Year 6 progress accelerates because of the deliberate strategy of the teacher to infuse new vocabulary which the pupils acquire and begin to give back in their own speech. Standards in speaking and listening are supported by opportunities for pupils throughout the school to speak publically. For example, pupils make personal presentations in assemblies, such as those by the pupil road safety representatives and pupils have opportunities to explain some of the work they have been doing during the week.

81 Progress in pupils' writing skills is in the main satisfactory in both key stages but it is good in upper Key Stage 2 because of the greater opportunities provided for writing, attention to improving work and the different styles of writing which are encouraged. Standards vary according to the different cohorts of pupils in the school. Most pupils currently in the final years of both key stages are in line to achieve the expected levels for their age, and some are expected to attain the higher levels. Pupils in both key stages write with developing maturity for a variety of purposes throughout the school. They write with increasing competence, for example, to explain or to report events, to provide facts, to give instructions and to persuade. In Key Stage 2 they learn to plan imaginative stories by detailing the characters and the order of the plot. They use drafting procedures well, particularly in Key Stage 2, to try out ideas and to improve their writing. They also make good attempts to write poetry, sometimes influenced by their work on residential visits. Standards of spelling are generally sound in both key stages. Handwriting standards are variable, despite the recently introduced handwriting scheme. Some pupils could make better progress in the neatness of their handwriting. Teachers give good attention to spelling and assist their progress by combining words that have similar spelling patterns and teaching pupils to look carefully at the composition of words. Progress in spelling is sound.

82 The quality of teaching in English is good. It ranges from very good to good in Key Stage 1 and from very good to occasionally satisfactory in Key Stage 2. All teachers prepare their lessons very well. They make good choices of text to share with the pupils which attract the pupils' interest, for example excerpts about fox hunting, cruelty to circus animals and how a training shoe works. Lessons are always well structured and the activity work is well matched to pupils' needs. Very occasionally, too much is attempted so that pupils cannot take in the different ideas being presented. Time limits are often given to the activity part of the lesson which result in pupils working with concentrated effort to achieve the task in the time available. Good questioning helps to keep pupils interested often seeking their opinions and explanations which in turn assists the development of their speaking and listening skills. Teachers are always encouraging of pupils' efforts which develops their confidence and self-esteem, their cooperation in the lessons and their contributions to lessons. A particular feature of all lessons is the use of adult vocabulary and subject terminology, for example use of such words as 'definition', and 'connectives'. In the best lessons teachers' careful explanations of the tasks ensure that pupils know exactly what they have to do. These explanations are imparted well. The outcomes often involve considerable intellectual effort and a pride in meeting the teacher's requirement. Pupils are well managed, preparation is extremely thorough so that no time is lost, and the pace is very good. The overall good teaching is enabling the pupils to think carefully about what they are writing, developing their reading skills and giving pupils technical language which they are then able to give back in their own work.

83 Suitable use is made of English across the curriculum but in some lessons the use of worksheets, particularly in science, inhibits pupils' opportunities to write in their own words. The arrangements for teaching pupils with special needs are satisfactory. Whilst teaching of groups of pupils withdrawn from class is satisfactory, good support is provided regularly for a few individuals on a one to one basis by volunteer helpers.

84 Nearly all pupils show good attitudes to their work, persevere, listen carefully to the teacher and show good levels of interest and involvement.

85 Teachers' marking of work is good. Marking is up to date and thorough. The pertinent comments which teachers make about the work helps pupils to make further improvements and are a particularly good feature of the marking. For example, 'You need to concentrate on less speech and develop your description to move the plot on' and in another 'Always make sure the rhymes are there for a purpose and make sense.'

86 The co-ordinator has worked hard to establish English as a well taught subject. She has trained the staff, gives constant informal support and advice and has very good expertise and subject knowledge. Her own teaching of the literacy hour provides a very good example to others. The quality of resources has been considerably improved but this has resulted in a shortage of books in the library, because many unsuitable books have been discarded. Despite recent purchases, materials for the literacy hour are still in short supply which often results in teachers giving large amounts of time to producing their own materials in order to ensure that the lessons are of good quality. There are also some shortages of group readers. Record keeping is not yet well established in the subject to assist in the planning for individual needs, although some good examples were noted of individual pupils' letter knowledge in the Reception class. Despite some areas for development, much of the quality of work in English is good.

## **MATHEMATICS**

87 In the 1999 national tests for seven-year-olds the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level or above was close to the national average while the percentage achieving the higher level or above was above the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected level or above at the end of Key Stage 2 was below the national average while the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level was close to the national average. These results reflect closely the satisfactory achievement at Key Stage 1 found during the inspection. Pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 have improved this year and are currently more in line with national expectations. Overall, standards are similar to those at the time of the last inspection but pupils' mental work has improved.

88 The school has achieved its targets set for 1999 and test results overall have improved steadily since the last inspection. Pupils have made sound progress in both key stages. Pupils' mathematical knowledge has broadened and their understanding has deepened since the school began to implement the National Numeracy Strategy over a year ago.

89 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have developed sound number skills. The pupils' mental arithmetic skills are being well developed. There is good coverage of National Curriculum attainment targets for mathematics, with an appropriate emphasis on number and algebra. Higher attaining pupils are able to describe the properties of two-and three-dimensional shapes and have a secure grasp of odd and even numbers and multiples of 2, 5, and 10 and sharing by 2. Pupils can interpret time from digital and analogue clocks and recognise halves and quarters. Pupils use mathematical vocabulary appropriately and they understand a range of mathematical symbols, including 'greater than' and 'less than'. Lower attaining pupils can sequence numbers to 100, order numbers and have a basic understanding of place value to 100. They can add and subtract coins to a value of 50p but are not yet able to solve problems involving the use of coins. All pupils collect and use data in the production of block graphs and tables.

90 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils generally have a sound grasp of all tables to 10. They can multiply two figure digits by two figure digits and four figure digits by any single digit, add and subtract decimals to two decimal places and understand the process of long division of four figure digits by single digits. They have a good understanding of symmetry, area and volume. They produce accurate bar and line graphs of data and have a secure knowledge of units of metric measurement. Lower attaining pupils are developing an understanding of the relationship between numbers and have a satisfactory understanding of shape and space. They use the correct mathematical language and they use trial and improvement methods to approximate answers.



91 Pupils' progress in Key Stage 1, at all levels of achievement, including those pupils with special educational needs, is generally satisfactory. A very high profile is given to all areas of mathematics, including numeracy, and this is reflected in the volume of work that pupils do and the improving standards they achieve. Progress is enhanced by the constant reinforcement of number facts and mathematical vocabulary, whenever the opportunity arises. Early identification by the school of pupils who are underachieving and focused work with these pupils assists in their overall sound progress. Parents make a significant contribution to the progress made. The pupils make good progress in Year 6, although it is satisfactory overall for Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress. Progress is satisfactory across all attainment targets in mathematics. A good emphasis has been placed upon the development of mental strategies and this has much to do with the school's positive response to the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. A contributory factor to the good progress recorded in Year 6 is the booster class for mathematics that takes place during the year.

92 Pupils have a positive attitude towards the subject. They are keen to answer questions and show sensitivity when wrong answers are given. Pupils enjoy explaining strategies they have used to solve mental tasks posed by their teacher. They generally concentrate well and sustain interest. Pupils work collaboratively, often in pairs, and support and help each other.

93 Overall teaching is good. It is at least satisfactory with some good lessons in Key Stage 1 while in Key Stage 2 teaching in almost all lessons was good. Teachers set clear learning objectives which pupils understand and emphasis is placed upon interactive oral work with good use being made of resources to support mental calculation. Teaching is particularly effective when teachers use their good subject knowledge to help pupils relate their current learning to the knowledge and understanding that they already possess, and where tasks are carefully sequenced to unfold or to increase the challenge as the lesson proceeds.

94 The subject co-ordinator who guided the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has worked very hard to ensure its success. Effective lesson planning is in place and assessment procedures are developing. Good use is being made of statistical data from national and other tests and monitoring of pupils' progress is developing. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has been well supported through training arrangements and the contribution of the co-ordinator has been of great value, not only in organising and delivering the training but also in producing documentation to assist colleagues with the teaching of mathematics. Further developments are planned with the focus on continuing to raise standards. The co-ordinator monitors and evaluates the planning for mathematics and provides both oral and written comments and suggestions to colleagues. She does not, however, have the opportunity to observe teaching within the classrooms.

## **SCIENCE**

95 Attainment in science is well below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. This represents a fall in standards since the last inspection, when attainment was judged to be good at the end of Key Stage 1 and above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2.

96 This fall in standards in Key Stage 1 is partly due to the subject having been given a lower priority during the introduction of the recent initiatives in literacy and numeracy. The drop in standards is confirmed by teachers' own assessments of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 when, no pupils attained the higher level overall in science, in comparison with a national average of 20 per cent.

97 Despite overall attainment in Key Stage 2 classes being below national expectations, attainment in knowledge and understanding in national tests has been steadily rising over the past four years. In 1996 attainment was well below average. Since that time the school has pushed performance up much closer to the average and teacher assessments carried out recently indicate further improvements. However, inspection judgements include judgements about experimental and investigative science which is not assessed in national testing. Study of pupils' work and observation of lessons shows experimental and investigative skills to be poorly developed. Year 5 and 6 pupils are at least a full National Curriculum level below expectation for their ages. This aspect of work is an important element of the science curriculum and thus pulls overall attainment below national expectations.

98 The lessons observed in Key Stage 1 all show that year groups have the potential to attain sound standards overall in science. In the Reception class, small groups of pupils demonstrated recognition of the conditions that plants need in order to flourish. They also know that seeds produce plants and can describe parts of plants using correct vocabulary. They are recording what they see and know in ways appropriate for their ages. In this lesson their attainment was in line with national expectations. In Year 1, pupils showed satisfactory understanding of the difference between shiny and dull objects. In the same lesson they carried out individual experiments and recorded their findings in simple terms. These pupils are tackling experiment and investigation at an appropriate level. Their workbooks show that they have often worked practically in other lessons. Year 2 pupils, after some weeks of observing frog spawn in the classroom, show a sound understanding, at an appropriate level of life and living processes. They are keen to make the necessary observations and know the order of the developments from spawn to frog. They can explain how frogs lay spawn, why the eggs are surrounded by 'jelly' and have deduced the order in which legs appear on tadpoles.

99 In Key Stage 2, attainment in lessons seen was more varied. Class 4 pupils were showing good knowledge and understanding of the function of teeth and the importance of dental care. They were not able to demonstrate skills of experiment and investigation in a formal lesson led by a visiting dental health educator. However, their workbooks show evidence of carrying out regular practical work, making observations and recording their findings, in several different ways. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils demonstrated a clear understanding of the process of separation of solid from liquid by filtering. They also knew the difference in behaviour of soluble and insoluble solids in water. Their attainment was held down by the tight control exercised by the teacher and in a very well organised lesson, the activity was prescribed, partly due to the lack of resources. Pupils had no decisions to make and their part in the process was limited to following instructions and making observations. The pupils were insufficiently challenged in the important skills of planning, obtaining evidence and considering outcomes. Year 6 pupils, carrying out investigative work in an otherwise excellent lesson, are still not able to recognise the need for, or to set up their own fair tests. Pupils can talk with confidence about the separation of mixtures of materials and can answer questions about sieving, filtering and evaporation. The work they do to obtain and record this knowledge is still heavily teacher-led. Work seen in their books is thorough, accurate and detailed but lacks the richness that comes from finding their own way through investigation, from personal research, from the use of information technology and from the application of their findings from real life issues. Overall, pupils' progress is sound in Key Stage 2 in their understanding of knowledge but they have insufficient opportunities to make satisfactory progress in investigation.

100. The teaching seen ran through all qualities from satisfactory, good and very good to, in one case, excellent. It is sound in Key Stage 1 and good overall in Key Stage 2. Overall it is sound. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the science curriculum content and present their lessons confidently. Planning is clear and detailed and lessons are well prepared and well organised. Classroom routines have been established well for science. Pupils are well motivated by

science, respond with interest to discussion and are responsible in group-work. Those with special educational needs are supported naturally within the context of the lesson and all complete their tasks and make satisfactory progress. Insufficient work is planned to meet the different needs of groups of pupils. The majority of the work provided is the same for all, with differences in learning arising from pace of work and quantity and quality of recording. This is partly due to the fact that the school has not developed ongoing assessment and recording systems for science and therefore it is not possible to target work accurately. Marking of books is usually limited to monitoring work that has been completed. No developmental comments were found in books, nor are targets set for improvement. The school has recently adopted a national scheme of work for science

101. Science appears to have taken a 'back seat' recently and the co-ordinator has had no opportunity to instigate review and development. National guidance materials have been put in place without critical examination and teachers are already finding difficulties with the scheme. The school has adopted a class teaching approach to science without upgrading the resources from the time that pupils were taught in groups. There is a major deficiency in quantity and quality of resources including reference books. No time is provided for the co-ordinator to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning in the subject. Science is ready for a major injection of attention and funding.

## **ART**

102. At the time of the last inspection pupils were found to be making good progress in art as they passed through the school and to be attaining standards well above national expectations by the end of each key stage. They are still making good progress in both key stages, despite the time available for the subject being greatly reduced due to other pressures on curriculum time. This is largely due to the knowledge and enthusiasm of the co-ordinator who is determined to maintain a significant presence for art in the life of the school. Her influence can be detected in most classrooms, either through her personal involvement in the teaching or through the content of lessons. The school is packed with high quality pieces of work and projects undertaken in previous years. The school clearly has a strong tradition in the subject.

103. In the Reception class the pupils are given a good range of experiences to build up their understanding of different media and processes. The value of this early work is seen in Class 1 where the pupils show confidence in the use of different media. These young pupils are using sketch books well to record their experiences and to work through early ideas. Their collages, based on drawings of their favourite toys and involving several weeks of work, are of a very high standard. Year 2 pupils have recently studied the work of Piet Mondrian and made paintings in a similar style. Their most impressive work, however, has arisen from a residential visit to Delamere Forest where they found stimuli that have led to very good quality drawings of animals, trees and their camp fire. At the end of Key Stage 1, work is above National Curriculum expectations.

104. There is some excellent work in the sketch books of the pupils from the Year 3/4 class. They have recorded something of the lives and work of famous artists, such as William Morris, as well as making experiments in the style of their work. The pupils in the Year 4/5 class have sound but less stimulating experiences in class lessons. Years 3 and 4 pupils have benefited from some exciting collaborative work done during a residential visit to Llandudno. This work was strongly guided by an artist in residence and resulted in some bold, expressive drawing. Year 5 pupils produced some vibrant, multi-media panels when being taught by the art co-ordinator. These illustrate the potential the pupils have when taught by a confident and experienced practitioner. The pupils show their potential, however, through the excellent painted and embroidered fabric used to cover their record of achievement albums.

105. The quality of the small amount of teaching seen was at least sound and mostly very good. In the Year 2 class a group was introduced to using clay to make 'pinch' pots. The teacher guided but did not dominate the activity and the pupils, having learnt the basic techniques, were left to make their own decisions about design and manufacture. At the same time, a second confident group transferred sketches of the local church into large-scale paintings with strong use of line and colour. In Year 6 the art co-ordinator led a group in the exploration of repeated patterns on printed surfaces. Through animated discussion, pupils acquired the knowledge and understanding which then enabled them to apply the principles to their own prints. Relationships were good in all classes and the pupils responded by concentrating well on their practical tasks.

106. There is a policy for art and valuable guidance materials but no scheme of work to offer security to teachers who may lack confidence in the subject. Skill development has not been identified nor is there any means of checking pupils' progress.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

107. At the time of the last inspection pupils at both key stages were found to be making good progress in design and technology and attaining above national expectations. Pupils in their final year of Key Stage 2 were attaining well above national expectations. The subject has low priority at the present stage of school development and is allocated very little curriculum time. It is taught in two blocks in each year in just two of the six half-terms. It was possible to see only one group working in one lesson and completed work was available for scrutiny in only three of the classrooms. Progress is less assured when there are months between projects, but the work seen was all at least satisfactory in standard and in some cases good.

108. In Year 1 the pupils had planned moving pictures with drawings, had made little sliding figures and fitted them into pictures and written short accounts of the process. This is sound work for pupils of that age group. In Year 2 the making of puppets constituted a major project and the pupils' notebooks showed that they had been offered wide choices of characters, type of puppet, materials with which to make them and the nature of decoration and embellishment. There were finger, hand, stick and string puppets on display, confirming the quality of the pupils' experiences. Progress has been satisfactory in Key Stage 1, despite the time constraint.

109. Evidence of work in Key Stage 2 was not available in three classes as work in the first half of the year had focused on foodstuffs. In Year 6 a splendid wooden fairground wheel, driven by cogs and containing suspended chairs, had been made as a class project early in the year. Groups of pupils had made it under the direction and supervision of volunteer parents. Some valuable skills were acquired as individual pupils made contributions to the whole. During the inspection pupils were seen making contributions to a fabric wall hanging intended to illustrate key events in the history of our nation since 1930. Again, volunteers were supervising the activity. Finer skills of needlework were being used in this work which linked well with a project planned to follow on. Planning shows that the pupils are to develop their needlework skills as they design and make pairs of carpet slippers during the last half-term of the year.

110. The co-ordinator has been in post only since the start of this school year and has been unable to take any initiatives with the subject so far. She is looking forward to re-establishing design and technology as an important part of the curriculum in the next school year. A draft policy is ready, but decisions have not yet been made as to how curriculum content will be allocated to the year groups, how it will link to other subjects and how it will build to give continuity of progression and experience.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

111. Pupils in both key stages make sound progress in geography and attainment is broadly in line with expectations, a similar judgement to that in the previous report. An appropriate programme of work has been arranged for pupils throughout the school which gives them a suitable foundation of knowledge about place and location, world contrasts of climate, weather conditions and the influence of climate types on the way people live. It also includes some elements of physical geography and the effects of natural phenomena on the landscape.

112. By the age of seven pupils compare the ways people live in small island communities and contrast these with life in their own town. They make links with geography in their studies of other aspects of work as, for example, when they learn about countries in Africa which receive the benefits of Vision Aid. By the age of eleven most pupils know some of the terminology applied to river features from source to mouth and gain a particularly good understanding of meanders and river deposition by making first-hand studies of the River Dee. They learn about some other rivers such as the River Nile and how it is a major feature of the transport system in Egypt and a source of water for irrigation. They appreciate on their residential visit to Llandudno how a seaside place has particular features that contrast with their own environment and they carry out beach studies to good effect. They also learn to appreciate how new development can bring advantages and disadvantages.

113. No lessons could be observed during the inspection and therefore it is not possible to comment on the overall quality of geography teaching.

114. Resources for the subject are adequate, although there are some shortages of aerial photographs and video material to support pupils' understanding. The co-ordinator has worked hard to provide a suitable programme of work throughout the school. Pupils would obtain a greater appreciation of place if there were a greater exposure to globes and political and physical wall maps around the school.

## **HISTORY**

115. Owing to the school's time-table arrangements, it was only possible to observe three lessons during the inspection. Judgements were made on the basis of a scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils to assess their recall of the previous term's work. The overall attainment of pupils is in line with the standards expected of pupils in both key stages and pupils make satisfactory progress, similar to the judgements made in the previous report.

116. The lesson observed in the Reception class reflected the interest and enjoyment that pupils experienced in using toys from the past. They are beginning to draw a distinction between the present and past in their own and other children's lives. The spinning top and the successful throwing of the quoits on to the pegs fascinated the children and led to a great deal of discussion and experiment. In Years 3 and 4 the teacher had made resources available to enable the pupils to make a comparison of the railway station at Paddington at the time of Queen Victoria and the present day and during the lesson some good discussion took place between the pupils. The use of grandparents as first-hand sources of evidence in Year 6, as they recalled their personal memories, was making the Second World War period come more alive for the pupils. An excellent collection of artefacts is being studied by the pupils and they are aware of the value of having primary sources as evidence.

117. Year 2 pupils are able to recall the previous term's work on the Norman Conquest and talk with interest about the invasion and the Battle of Hastings. They are able to talk about the Bayeux Tapestry and use a print of it to help them recall the life and times of that period. Discussion with pupils in Year 6 indicates that they have a sound recall of their study of Ancient Egypt. They can talk about the Jarrow March and explain the reasons behind it. Their main interest, however, is their present topic on Britain since 1930 and they express a great deal of interest in their assignments.

118. The quality of teaching is sound overall with one lesson judged to be unsatisfactory. The teachers' subject knowledge is good and in lessons there is generally good questioning about previous work. Scrutiny of pupils' completed work showed a reliance on worksheets in some of the classes. In the unsatisfactory lesson a number of pupils were off task for a prolonged period of time and were a disruptive influence within the classroom. The school makes good use of museum visits and this helps to develop pupils' knowledge of artefacts and how they might be used in the past. Most pupils have satisfactory attitudes to history.

119. The school has recently reviewed the scheme of work for history and is now in the process of updating the history policy. The co-ordinator does not have the opportunity to monitor the teaching of the subject. Since the last inspection the school has not made any progress in developing a system for assessing or recording pupils' progress.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

120. Attainment at the end of both key stages is in line with national expectations. This is an improvement on the findings of the last report when attainment was assessed as being below national expectations across the school. The last report indicated a need for the school to develop a policy and scheme of work to ensure the continuous and progressive development of the subject and the inclusion of information technology in schemes of work for all subjects. A policy and scheme of work have been produced and information technology is being included across the curriculum, although there is still room to develop this further. The previous report also indicated that the school should increase the amount and range of computer software available and provide further professional development and training opportunities. These requirements have also been addressed and a computer suite with additional hardware and software has been established and in-service training for individuals, as well as for the whole school staff, has been undertaken. However, the quality of hardware provision has limitations.

121. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. For example, they know how to control a mouse, can use a keyboard and know what a printer is. They type in text and are able to move items across the screen. They learn to use the mouse control to access icons correctly to create designs. Pupils are aware of some other uses of computers, including word-processing and playing games. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils can use word-processing software to produce, for example, autobiographical writing. They can also use a CD-Rom drive to search for information. They can enter information into a database and print from this database using different fonts and colours and they have produced attractive displays of such work in their workbooks. Year 6 pupils satisfactorily develop their control skills. They apply their mathematical knowledge of angles and shapes to create squares, triangles and hexagons on the screen by using logo. Pupils are aware of the Internet and are involved in a project with the local secondary school, which requires pupils to send and receive e-mails. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and also make satisfactory progress.

122. Insufficient teaching of information technology took place in Key Stage 1 during the inspection to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching. In Key Stage 2 teaching is satisfactory. Planning provides clear objectives for each lesson but expectations for higher attaining pupils are not yet sufficiently high. In the computer suite demonstrations are given to show pupils what is required before they experiment themselves. This direct teaching before investigation leads to better progress being made. The assessment and the recording of pupils' progress are unsatisfactory. The attitude of pupils to work is good. They work at a good pace and work well in pairs sharing information and resources.

123. Although provision for the use of information technology is improving, there are insufficient links with other areas of the curriculum. There is some use to support literacy and numeracy, history and geography but links with other areas of the curriculum are under-developed. The co-ordinator provides sound leadership and has made a valuable contribution to helping improve standards within the subject. The subject policy and scheme of work are useful documents for all staff to follow. The co-ordinator has a clear vision of the needs of the subject and, when appropriate, supports less confident colleagues effectively.

124. Since the last inspection the school has converted a room to become a computer suite with enough computers for a whole class to work in pairs. Equipment for the room has in part been obtained by using discarded computers from a local company and by obtaining printers, for example through a supermarket scheme for schools. The efforts of staff, pupils and parents have resulted in the school now having valuable resources to support learning, although some of these resources are now outdated.

## MUSIC

125. Suitable arrangements are made for the music curriculum and a balance of activities is sustained. Pupils make satisfactory progress in music in most classes and good progress in Class 4. Attainment is in line with National Curriculum expectations by the end of both key stages which is similar to the judgement made in the previous report. All pupils have opportunities to sing, compose and perform and to listen to music and to think about the mood created. A small number of pupils receive instrumental tuition, including the recorder. A small recorder ensemble plays with a good tone and technique. Opportunities are well taken in assemblies to listen to music, and the music supports the sense of occasion, although a little more information about the composer and title and the particular piece of music would benefit the pupils' knowledge.

126. In addition to these regular features, which are additional to class music teaching, the pupils perform at school productions annually and several pupils take part in a day of communal singing each year when, together with other local primary schools, they are taught to sing in harmony.

127. Insufficient observations could be made of music lessons to give an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. However, a particular feature of the teaching in the two lessons observed is the way in which pupils learn correct music terminology. In the best teaching observed in Class 4, a range of musical elements was introduced. Pupils were prepared by the teacher for listening to music and this resulted in very careful listening, to which pupils made good response. They were able afterwards to describe the different moods of the music as 'scary', and 'crashing'. They could identify bar lines in a piece of notation, clap a rhythm from the board and maintain a steady beat. A variety of techniques kept the pupils interested and actively involved. At one stage of the lesson, pupils were able to cooperate and rehearse in pairs in clapping different parts of a rhythm and then clap them together.

128. The co-ordinator has very good musical knowledge and skills and her enthusiasm and teaching techniques have much to do with the pupils' interest in music and their enjoyment of singing. A good policy is in place and guidance for staff is also afforded by the Local Education Authority's music scheme.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

129. The school provides a broad range of activities for physical education, including swimming and outdoor pursuits, and pupils in both key stages make sound progress. Pupils throughout the school enjoy physical activity and in most lessons pupils work enthusiastically. They play fairly and are cooperative in most instances both with each other and with their teachers. Occasionally, immature behaviour on the part of a few pupils spoils the effectiveness and interferes with the pace of lessons but, overall in both key stages, the behaviour and attitudes of the pupils are good. Pupils' attainment in physical education meets expectations by the end of both key stages. Standards are not as high as at the end of Key Stage 2 as reported in the previous inspection.

130. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection in physical education was sound overall in both key stages. It was sound in Key Stage 1 and overall sound in Key Stage 2 where it ranged from very good to poor. In the poor lesson, pupils' behaviour disrupted the learning and the teacher, who remained calm throughout, consequently abandoned the lesson. In the best teaching every moment is used to good effect, including changing time when pupils are reminded about the organisation of the lesson and procedures for health and safety. Clear parameters were set in the outdoor lesson so that all pupils remained within ear shot. Groups were organised quickly and the lesson proceeded briskly. Skills are clearly demonstrated. The activities enable all pupils to be continually active and to practise skills and, throughout, the pupils are coached and encouraged and, as a result, they show good progress in catching, fielding and throwing techniques. A parent helper assists and gives very good skilled support.

131. The coordinator is keen and enthusiastic and has obtained published gymnastics materials to help the teachers to prepare their gymnastics lessons with increasing development of skills. The pupils engage in an appropriate range of sporting tournaments and engage in competitive sporting fixtures on a friendly basis.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

132. Attainment in religious education is generally in line with the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus at the end of both key stages, although with weakness in knowledge and understanding of religions other than Christianity. Attainment is similar to that found at the time of the last inspection.

133. Year 2 pupils have completed sound factual work during the year and can talk about the Old and New Testament stories they have recorded in their books. At the time of the inspection they were recording their impressions of a visit to the local church through a lively art activity. They produced bold, strongly coloured church images which were later shared at the whole-school assembly. The school works hard to develop pupils' relationships with their local Anglican church. Discussion with pupils reveals that they have positive attitudes towards these services even though their families are not churchgoers. This is helped by the regular involvement of the vicar in school assemblies. The vicar had welcomed this Year 2 group into the church to learn something about baptism. The pupils had taken part in a mock baptism and were observed discussing the purpose of the celebration during a follow-up lesson.

134. By Year 6, pupils have developed a wide appreciation of many Old and New Testament stories. Their exercise books contain personal accounts of stories heard, together with some sound reflective written work on issues arising from those stories – such as 'selfishness' and 'stealing'. In the one lesson seen the pupils were interested and attentive as the teacher promoted thinking beyond



factual information. A mock letter from the disciple Peter to his family led the pupils to discuss why he was likely to continue to spread the Christian message following the death of Jesus. They displayed a good appreciation of the events of Easter time and what happened after and their discussion showed that they had developed considerable empathy with Peter. In their following written work they were required to reply to Peter's letter and offer him encouragement. Some pupils did this with sensitivity and perception.

135. School assemblies play an important part in reinforcing religious and moral messages. The atmosphere in assemblies is good and the pupils are receptive.

136. There was no evidence in any class of work done on religions other than Christianity in the current year, although some Year 3 pupils spoken to could recollect being introduced to Judaism in the previous year. The school has produced its own rolling programme of topics based on the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. Many opportunities have been missed to weave references to other faiths into units of work clearly intended to be treated that way by the authors of the Agreed Syllabus. For example, the unit on 'Church buildings and artefacts' offers the opportunity to look at both the local Anglican church and compare it with a building serving a different faith. This is not done. The current programme offers all pupils a unit of study on another religion, during the summer term, once every two years which is insufficient. As at the time of the last inspection, there is still no detailed scheme of work for religious education. The rolling programme provides titles only and individual teachers decide upon the detail of content. This reduces the opportunities for a structured approach to the subject which enables the pupils to build on previous learning.

137. The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' progress in literacy. Written work is done for different purposes and there are many opportunities to speak in different situations and to offer thoughts and ideas in front of classmates. Pupils are encouraged to express their feelings in a confident manner.

138. The quality of teaching seen in the five lessons observed was sound in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Overall, the teaching in religious education was good. All lessons were well prepared and led to sound or good learning. In Years 5 and 6 both teachers made the role of Peter in the spread of Christianity into a presentation that the pupils followed with interest. It was evident from verbal contributions that pupils had attended well in earlier lessons.

139. Currently there is no permanent co-ordinator for religious education and is one of the reasons for the lack of a balanced programme of topics and a detailed scheme of work. The school has few resources other than Christianity. It currently borrows artefacts from a local resource centre. While this is a sensible arrangement, the school cannot readily draw on its own core supply of artefacts to support incidental multi-cultural work across the curriculum.