

INSPECTION REPORT

**WYBUNBURY DELVES C of E (VA) PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Wybunbury, Nantwich

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111346

Headteacher: Mrs C Casserley

Reporting inspector: Mrs C E Waine
23081

Dates of inspection: 30th April – 4th May 2001

Inspection number: 190150

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bridge Street Wybunbury Nantwich Cheshire
Postcode:	CW5 7NE
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs B E Driver
Date of previous inspection:	October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23081	Mrs C E Waine	Registered inspector	Science Design and technology Information and communication technology Provision for the children in the foundation stage Equal opportunities	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9505	Mr D Haynes	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
10859	Mrs O Cooper	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Music Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
22740	Mrs M Leah	Team inspector	English Geography History Special educational needs	How well does the school care for its pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Wybunbury Delves is a popular C of E primary school that serves a village with socio-economic factors that are above the average. Very few pupils are entitled to free schools meals. It is smaller than the average primary school, with 31 children in the reception year and 142 in Years 1 to 6. The school has expanded to cater for rapidly growing numbers. There is no nursery provision in the village, although about half the children attend a local playgroup and about a third attend nurseries in a nearby town. Attainment on entry is average, overall, although children are articulate and have good knowledge and understanding of the world. There are 19 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, which is below average. Two pupils have a statement of their needs, which is similar to the national average. There are no pupils with English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Wybunbury Delves is a very effective school and its strengths far outweigh the areas for improvement. Teachers build well on the average standards on entry, raising them to well above average by the age of eleven. The key factors contributing to pupils' good achievements are good teaching, the very good attitudes of pupils and effective leadership, which provides a very clear direction to the school's work. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' results in the national tests in English, mathematics and science are very high.
- Teaching is good, overall, and promotes good learning.
- The school benefits from excellent leadership and is very well managed.
- The school supports its pupils well and enables all to make good progress.
- The excellent Christian ethos promotes high standards of attitudes, behaviour and personal development.

What could be improved

- Listening and early writing skills in the reception class.

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 October 1996 and since that time has made very good improvement and raised its standards considerably. In response to the key issues of that inspection the school has provided policies and schemes of work for all subjects and provided for assessment linked to curriculum planning. It provides a good match of challenging work for pupils and has introduced stringent procedures to check planning, teaching and pupils' progress. It has improved standards in information and communication technology and design and technology at ages 7 and 11. The roles of the curriculum co-ordinators are fully developed and they now have a clear overview of provision and standards. There is an effective programme of training for teachers.

Other improvements include rising standards in geography, history and art; improved quality of teaching and extensions to the building to accommodate the growing numbers of pupils.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			Similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	A	A*	A*	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	C	A*	A*	A	
Science	A	A*	A*	A*	

The table shows that in the national tests at age 11, in both 1999 and 2000, results in English, mathematics and science were very high, being in the top five percent of all schools nationally. The results were much higher than those in similar schools and reflected good achievement for pupils in all three subjects. When pupils enter the school, attainment is average, overall. They make satisfactory progress and, on entry to Year 1, most attain the levels expected nationally, although listening and writing skills are below the level expected, overall. Whilst children achieve satisfactorily, overall, they should achieve more in listening and writing. Speaking skills and knowledge and understanding of the world are above average. At age 7, in 2000, test results in reading and mathematics were well above the national average and in writing were average. In comparison with similar schools, standards were above average in reading, well above average in mathematics and below average in writing. Whilst pupils mostly achieved well, there was some underachievement for higher attaining pupils in writing. Teacher assessments in science show that standards were average. The school has improved its results at a faster rate than most schools nationally. It is successful in achieving its challenging targets in English and mathematics.

Inspection evidence shows that current standards of work in Year 6 are well above average, but are not as quite as high as those reflected in the previous two years' test results, particularly in English. This is a naturally variation as a quarter of pupils have literacy difficulties and are on the school's register of special educational needs. All pupils, including both lower and higher attainers and those with special educational needs, are achieving well. Evidence shows that, pupils are achieving well at age 7, particularly in reading. Although the current Year 2 contains a greater proportion of pupils whose attainment was below average on entry to Year 1, standards of work are above average, and the proportion of higher attainment in writing and science is improving. This reflects the success of the school's action to improve standards in these subjects.

Standards in all other subjects are at least satisfactory at ages 7 and 11. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are above average and are well used in other subjects. In design and technology, geography and history, standards are above average and in art it are well above average. Standards in information and communication technology, music and physical education are in line with those expected at both 7 and 11.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and work very hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good overall, in lessons and in the playground. Good in the reception class, where some children are unsettled because of teaching changes.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent personal development and relationships are very good.
Attendance	Well above average with no unauthorised absence.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are a strength of the school. They are eager to learn and thoroughly enjoy their many opportunities to take initiative, in independent learning and in a wide range of responsibilities. They form constructive relationships with staff and other pupils.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Teaching was at least satisfactory in all of the 45 lessons observed. It was good or better in 78 percent of lessons and very good or better in 38 percent. The statistics reflect the standard of teaching usually found in Years 1 to 6, which is much better than at the time of the previous inspection. Some very good teaching was seen throughout the school but that in Key Stage 1 and at the end of Key Stage 2 was particularly good and promoted very good progress. Teaching is very good in mathematics, science and art. In Years 1 to 6, teaching in English is good and the basic skills of literacy and

numeracy are particularly well taught. Pupils acquire the skills necessary to enable them to learn and teachers provide many very good opportunities for pupils to apply them independently. Teachers plan well to meet the needs of all their pupils, including those with special educational needs or those who are higher attainers. Even though the teaching observed was good, supporting evidence indicates that teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage¹ is satisfactory, overall, because there has been unavoidable disruption during long-term teacher absence. The teaching of basic skills in reading and numeracy is satisfactory but there has been a weakness in the teaching of writing and listening skills over the year. Children have not made enough progress in these areas. The school has now got a good action plan to improve this situation.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum meets all the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and for the Foundation Stage. There are good learning opportunities for pupils aged five to eleven.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision promotes good progress towards pupils' personal learning targets.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is good and that for social and moral development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils very well and monitors their academic and personal progress effectively.

The school has a very productive partnership with parents, who support their children well at home. Many also offer help in the classroom and this is very much appreciated by teachers. There is a good curriculum and with a strong emphasis on the progressive development of skills in all subjects. It is much enriched by study work, which is very well planned to include all subjects in an interesting way. Parents appreciate the way in which the school assesses its pupils and uses its information to promote good progress for them all.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent leadership by the headteacher, who is very well supported by her deputy. The roles of curriculum co-ordinators are very well developed. The staff work as a strong team committed to improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. The governing body fulfils all its statutory responsibilities and is closely involved in planning for improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school compares its standards with those of other schools and has a clear overview of its strengths and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are very well used to target improvement.

The leadership of the headteacher is the major factor in the big improvements made since the previous inspection. She works in very close partnership with staff and the governing body and they share a commitment to high standards in the setting of a Christian ethos. Learning resources are good, overall, although there are a few shortages, particularly in information and communication technology, which affect the rate of progress made by pupils. Accommodation is just adequate for the numbers of pupils, but as the school is growing rapidly in popularity, this is a concern for the future. The school is careful to ensure that it gains best value for its money.

¹ The Foundation Stage is the provision for pupils in nursery and reception classes.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are well cared for, are happy at school and develop good attitudes to work and to others. • Children make good progress and attain high standards in their work and behaviour. • Their children develop good attitudes to work and to others. • Teaching is very good and teachers have high expectations of their pupils. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons • Homework provision • Information on their children's progress

The inspection team supports the positive views of parents. In respect of the areas that a minority of parents would like to see improved the team finds that there is a good range of visits and visitors to support lessons, appropriate to the different ages of pupils. The range of lunchtime and after-school activities is also good. As there are no written comments to explain the negative points on homework, it is difficult to know whether parents think there is too much or too little. The inspection team finds that ample homework is given and it is appropriate to pupils' ages. Some parents at the meeting indicated that they did not like their children having homework in the holidays. The school has already identified this as an area for review. There are three formal parents' meetings a year. Termly written reports are of very good quality and give parents a clear picture of what their children can do and need to do to improve. In addition, teachers are freely available to talk to parents. The inspection team finds that the information on progress is very good and better than in most schools. The school could perhaps consult parents to find out what is causing them concern.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Standards are above average at age 7, and well above average at age 11, with almost all pupils working at the level expected for their age and a high proportion working at the next higher level. This has been reflected in the results of national tests in English, mathematics and science for the last two years and the school has been in the top five percent of all schools nationally. It represents good achievement by all pupils and a very significant improvement on the average standards noted at the last inspection. Since that time, the school has improved standards at a faster rate than that of other schools nationally. This is as a result of excellent leadership by the headteacher and her deputy, improved quality of teaching and the effective introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The introduction of study work, which draws all aspects of the curriculum together, has made a good contribution to improving standards in other subjects. During the inspection there was no significant difference noted between the attainment of boys and girls at ages 7 and 11. The school sets appropriately challenging targets for attainment in mathematics and English and is successful in achieving them. It has recently been recognised for its high standards by the DfEE.

2 Pupils achieve well throughout the school; those with special educational needs are well supported to make good progress towards their learning targets and higher attainers are very well challenged by the work provided for them. Pupils who are identified as very high attainers are very well supported by opportunities to work alongside older pupils and also achieve well.

3 Children enter the school with attainment levels that are average for their age. This is confirmed by the assessments made in the children's first weeks in the reception class. Attainment varies naturally with the intake but early speaking, reading and mathematics skills are usually above the average and listening and writing are below average. They make satisfactory progress and most are on target to achieve the levels expected in most areas of learning, when they enter Year 1, ready to begin work on the National Curriculum. Many are likely to exceed the levels expected for their age in speaking skills and knowledge and understanding of the world but a significant minority will not match the level expected in listening skills or early writing skills. Pupils currently in Year 2 entered school with lower than usual levels of attainment in communication, language and literacy. Although speaking and listening skills were slightly above average, none achieved the average level expected for their age in writing and less than half attained that level in early reading. These skills were still below average on entry to Year 1.

4 In 2000, pupils' results in national tests for seven-year olds were well above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. When compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, standards were above average in reading, well above average in mathematics and below average in writing. The results represented good achievement for most pupils, who entered Year 1 with average levels of attainment in reading and mathematics and below average levels in writing. Whilst most pupils achieved well and attained the levels expected nationally, few attained the next higher level and this reflects some underachievement by pupils who have the potential for higher attainment. Results in the tests vary from year to year but those in mathematics have shown considerable improvement since the previous inspection whilst those in writing have declined. Results are similar in reading, with an improvement noted in boys' reading. The school has noted the dip in writing standards and has implemented an effective improvement plan. Inspection evidence shows that this is being successful. Despite the fact that this group entered Year 1 with lower than usual attainment levels in reading and writing, standards are similar to those in 2000 and there is a slight increase in the proportion working at the next higher level. In mathematics, current standards are similar to those of 2000, with a slight decrease in the proportion working at a higher level. Teacher assessments in science, in 2000, showed that attainment was close to the national average. Again, most pupils attained the level expected but few exceeded it. Current evidence shows that standards are similar to those of 2000, with a slight increase in the numbers working at a higher level, because of the action taken to provide greater opportunities for practical investigation and observation in all aspects.

5 Pupils' results in the national tests in English, mathematics and science, at age 11, in 2000, were very high when compared to the national average. In comparison with results for similar schools standards were well above the average in English and mathematics and very high in science. The results represent good achievement by those pupils. At age seven, in the national tests, the year group had attained above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Since 1996, results show improvement at a rate that is greater than the national trend of improvement. There are no significant differences between the attainments of girls and boys.

6 Pupils achieve well in all aspects of English. By the time they leave the school they speak clearly and confidently, using a rich vocabulary. They listen carefully and give considered answers to questions. They are good readers and enjoy reading for pleasure as well as to gain information. They explain their opinions about books by referring to points in the text. A particular strength of reading throughout the school is pupils' use of non-fiction texts to locate information on their study topics. Writing skills are not well developed when pupils enter Year 1 but are average by age seven, although handwriting is a weakness. At age 11, writing is above average; spelling and punctuation are good and pupils write at length, using a rich vocabulary. The current focus on writing is leading to improvement at age 7 and 11.

7 At age 7, pupils are developing their mental arithmetic skills well and use different strategies to solve problems. They name a variety of shapes accurately and measure with reasonable precision. They collect data and present it in the form of graphs. At age 11, pupils have swift mental recall and work confidently with numbers to solve problems. They have a good understanding of decimals, fractions and percentages and negative numbers. Their knowledge of shapes and measures is very good. At both 7 and 11, pupils apply their skills well in other subjects, in their study work.

8 At age 7, pupils have sound knowledge of the different aspects of science and are developing a good ability to experiment and investigate for themselves. They observe carefully and persevere in investigating independently. At age 11, they have very good knowledge of all areas of study and a very good understanding of how to plan and carry out their own investigations. They understand the need to keep conditions constant in tests and check their accuracy by repeating investigations. Pupils' work in independent investigation and observation is a strength of their work.

9 Standards in information and communication technology are average at both 7 and 11. At both ages, pupils have good word-processing skills and insert pictures into their work. They have a good ability to locate information from the Internet and CD-ROM and, at age 11, are beginning to use this in multimedia presentations. They control the movements of a programmable toy but, at age 11, this aspect of work is limited by a lack of appropriate programs, as is their progress in monitoring events, such as wind speeds and temperature by the use of electronic equipment.

10 Standards in art are well above average at both 7 and 11 and work displayed around the school adds significantly to the school's ethos. Work in design and technology, geography and history is above average at both 7 and 11 and this is partly owing to the good quality of pupils' study work. Standards in physical education and music are average

11 The school has made very good improvements in standards and has a very clear focus on continuing to raise standards even higher.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12 As at the time of the previous inspection, these are strengths of the school and contribute greatly to the positive learning environment that exists. Pupils' attitudes and values are very good and their personal development is excellent. They are underpinned by the school's Christian ethos, which are exemplified in its aims. Pupils are keen to enter school each morning and settle quickly into daily routines, without undue intervention from class teachers. During lessons pupils concentrate well and are enthusiastic learners, in response to the interesting work that teachers provide. They form very constructive relationships with each other and with the staff. They co-operate very well together in class and group work and support each other well, in the classroom and in the playground. Children in the reception class are not as settled into school routines as they might be but their behaviour is good, overall. They are very keen to learn and enjoy taking part in activities but the concentration of some is short and they become restless in whole class sessions.

13 Parents have a high opinion of the values and standards that the school promotes. A parent of a new pupil gave a particularly good example of how good relationships are promoted. On the initial visit, telephone numbers were exchanged and the new pupil then received welcoming calls from future classmates pupils, prior to starting at the school. This ensured that the pupil had a friendly reception. Teachers' have high expectations of good behaviour and expect pupils to work hard and pupils respond well to this. Classroom rules are displayed prominently and all pupils know what is expected of them. There are very few occasions when they have to be reminded about them and behaviour in class and in the playground is very good. Occasionally, some older pupils do not listen as well as they should in whole school assemblies and do not join in the singing of hymns. There were no incidents of bullying or other inappropriate behaviour during the inspection and neither parents nor pupils report any problems. The school is an orderly community; learning resources and property are treated with respect and there is no evidence of vandalism. Pupils demonstrate a natural courteousness to adults and relate well to each other and to all members of the teaching and non-teaching staff. They are confident in expressing their feelings to others.

14 The school's Friends' Association organises a balanced programme of activities that provides opportunities for pupils to take an active part. There are very good opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility for the day to day running of the school. For example, head boys and girls are elected and have specific responsibilities, including running the Friday morning whole school assembly. Other posts of responsibility include library monitors, house captains, games captains, environmental officers and road safety officers, as well as specific tasks for most pupils within the classroom. They accept their responsibilities with maturity and enthusiasm and are confident in taking the initiative. A successful school council discusses and acts on suggestions made by other pupils.

15 Attendance is very good. During the 12 month period prior to the inspection, overall attendance was well above the national average, with no unauthorised absence and no exclusions Registration procedures are quickly undertaken and there are very few latecomers. This ensures a prompt start to lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16 The quality of teaching is good, overall, and often very good. During the inspection, 45 lessons were observed and teaching was always at least satisfactory; it was good in 40 percent of lessons, very good in 36 percent and excellent in 2 percent. Some very good teaching was seen throughout the school but that in Key Stage 1 and at the end of Key Stage 2 was particularly good and promoted very good progress. Pupils' work, in books and displays indicates that this standard of teaching is usual for Years 1 to 6 but that teaching in the reception class is satisfactory, overall. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection, when 15 per cent was unsatisfactory and only 17 percent was very good or excellent. Staff selection procedures have been very effective and recent appointments, both permanent and temporary, have enhanced the quality of teaching.

17 There has been disruption to teaching in the reception class, caused by the long-term absence of the class teacher. It proved difficult for the school to find a suitable replacement in the spring term but a new teacher has been appointed for the rest of the school year. During the inspection, a temporary teacher from another school taught the class. Teaching observed was good, sometimes very good, but because of the unsettled pattern of teaching over the year, it is judged to be satisfactory overall. During the inspection the teacher and classroom assistant worked well together to plan an exciting and stimulating curriculum. They place a high priority on pupils' personal, social and emotional development and the teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills and provide many directed and independent activities to motivate children to learn. However, over the full year, insufficient emphasis has been given to developing pupils' listening skills and concentration or their early writing skills and children have made insufficient progress in these areas. Few are attempting their own writing, using knowledge of letters and their sounds and handwriting of many is poorly formed and of inconsistent size. The new teacher has already visited each week to assess the children and plan work to meet their needs. The school has a sound action plan to improve listening and writing skills and maintain the quality of teaching observed during the inspection.

18 Teachers in Years 1 to 6 have high expectations of their pupils and this is an improvement on the previous inspection when expectations were often too low and resulted in a lack of challenge for pupils,

especially higher attainers. They have a clear focus on helping pupils to attain the nationally expected levels in English, mathematics and science, and the teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is especially good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan interesting and exciting lessons to help pupils achieve as well as they can. Teachers constantly assess their pupils' progress and use their information well to plan work that builds upon their skills and knowledge progressively. This is an improvement on the previous inspection, when assessment was not consistently linked to planning the next steps for individuals. Planning for those who have special educational needs, or who are lower attainers, is very good and enables them to work in small groups or alongside other pupils in the classroom on the same topics at their own level. This supports their access to the full curriculum and promotes their self-esteem well. Teachers' planning for study work, encompassing the whole range of curriculum subjects, is a great strength. It ensures that pupils develop their skills progressively and apply them in independent research and investigation in an exciting and meaningful way. For example, revision work in Year 6 includes all aspects of the curriculum and is based on the Harry Potter stories, which are a particular favourite of the class.

19 In the best lessons, teachers share their learning targets for lessons with pupils, so that pupils know exactly what it is that they are expected to achieve in the lesson. Teachers set a lively pace in introductory sessions, making very good use of their resources and involving pupils well. Pupils are motivated to work hard and teachers set a brisk pace. No time is wasted and pupils complete an appropriate amount of work. At the end of lessons, time is used well to share and consolidate what has been learned. Teachers assess what individuals have learned but pupils are not always encouraged to consider for themselves if they have achieved the learning targets. Work is well marked and gives pupils points that will help them to improve. Throughout the school, relationships between teachers, other staff and pupils are of high quality and promote pupils' self-esteem effectively. Teachers assume that pupils will concentrate on learning and that behaviour will be good. Pupils respond to this positive approach, work hard and behave very well.

20 Teachers often incorporate the use of information and communication technology into their lessons, particularly in literacy or for research and report writing in study work, but this is not fully developed in all subjects. For example, computers were not used in any of the mathematics or science lessons observed. This is partly because of the early stage of introduction of the information and communication technology curriculum and partly because of shortages of appropriate programs for the new computers.

21 In the parents' questionnaire, some parents indicated that they were concerned about the provision of homework. At the meeting with parents, it was said that whilst teachers made good use of homework in term time, too much was provided for holiday periods. Evidence from observations and pupils' books, shows that teachers do tailor homework well to consolidate and extend what has been learned in lessons. The headteacher has already identified holiday homework as an area for future review.

22 Overall, the quality of teaching is good. It is a major factor in ensuring effective learning and it contributes well to pupils' achievement.

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

23 The school has made very good improvements to the curriculum since the previous inspection. It offers a good range of worthwhile experiences and learning opportunities that meets pupils' interests, aptitudes and particular needs. It fully meets statutory requirements for the National Curriculum and the areas of learning for children in the reception class and prepares them well for the next stage of their education, both academically and personally. A particular strength of the provision is the way in which subjects are linked together into study units, with the emphasis on progressively developing skills, which pupils then apply successfully in different learning situations. A further strength is the way in which the school's aims are clearly reflected through the different opportunities. The curriculum is socially inclusive with all pupils having equality of access and opportunity to what the school has to offer.

24 The curriculum is well planned with a clear overview of what is being taught in each term in each class. Medium term planning has clearly identified learning objectives for each subject, linked directly to the National Curriculum programmes of study. The plan is reviewed annually to take account of the different composition of age groups in classes and the needs of the pupils. Planning shows good coverage of all

National Curriculum subjects, although there have been problems with resources for some aspects of the information and communication technology curriculum, which initially delayed its full implementation. The school has effectively adopted recent national guidelines for most subjects, which is proving beneficial to pupils' learning and standards. Teachers have started to evaluate their medium and weekly planning but some comments are not specifically related to the learning objectives and are, therefore, of limited use when planning the next steps.

25 The Foundation Stage curriculum is based upon the national guidance for this age group and meets the requirements for all the areas of learning. However, because of the current situation, programmes of work for developing listening skills and early writing skills have not been systematically introduced. This has resulted in underachievement by pupils. During the inspection week, planning was of particularly good quality and lessons were interesting and imaginative with a clear focus on developing children's skills and knowledge. The school has already noted the lack of a structured approach to listening skills and writing and is in the process of introducing an action plan to remedy the situation. The new class teacher has assessed the pupils, prior to taking up her post, to help her plan an appropriate curriculum in all areas of learning.

26 The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented very well. Additional training, beyond that undertaken by most teachers, along with visits to observe leading teachers have helped to refine the implementation of the strategies, increase staff confidence in teaching the different aspects and these steps has been beneficial in meeting the pupils' needs and maintaining and improving standards.

27 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. There are good procedures for the early identification of pupils with special needs and individual education plans are drawn up when pupils are placed on the special needs register. These plans are relevant to pupils' needs, have clear targets and time scales. All individual education plans refer to learning difficulties in literacy as no pupils have been identified as having problems with numeracy. The progress towards meeting the targets is effectively monitored by the headteacher and the procedures comply fully with the Code of Practice.

28 The curriculum is enriched through a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which extend beyond music and sporting activities to include a French club, environmental work, an art club with specific provision for any pupils showing talent and a homework club for pupils who need additional support with their work. The activities are well attended and of good quality. There are no opportunities for residential visits and very little opportunity for outdoor pursuits. The school acknowledges this and it is already included in subject action plans. There are also some visits to places of interest and visitors to the school provide additional enrichment of the curriculum, for example the Victorian and Tudor days, artists and poets in residence and musicians.

29 The provision for personal, social and health education is very good, particularly that for personal and social education, with appropriate emphasis on sex education and the dangers of drug misuse. Citizenship is included in many aspects of the school's curriculum and teachers take every opportunity to support pupils in their attempts to resolve conflicts with peers or friends. For example, a recent entry in the 'behaviour book' kept by the headteacher related to a pupil being distracted by another pupil and wanting to be moved away from them. The headteacher encouraged the pupil to remain in the same place and work at overcoming the problem, so developing skills for use in later life.

30 There are good links with the local community and with other local schools and colleges. Expertise and good practice is shared with local primary schools and Shavington High School. The links with local high schools support continuity in the curriculum and progression in pupils' learning on transfer. Local residents who have lived in the village for many years make valuable contributions to local study work and history topics by sharing their experiences, for example during World War II.

31 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Pupils' spiritual development is good, overall. Spiritual awareness is developed in lessons, and the evidence of the success of this can be seen in the imaginative displays of work that enhance the ethos of the school. There are many opportunities for developing the pupils' sense of awe and wonder. For example, the children in the reception class observe a wide range of living creatures, such as tadpoles, ants and hatching eggs, and display a sense of excitement when things grow and change. However, some opportunities are missed, such as when observing a varied collection of fish, a pupil asked if a fish has a backbone? The question was answered and the lesson moved on, missing the opportunity to consider how different fish are adapted to their environment.

Spirituality is satisfactorily promoted through assemblies and acts of worship, which are broadly of a Christian character, when opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect on who they are and their place in the world. Such an opportunity was provided when pupils reflected quietly on how they helped others.

32 The provision for moral and social development is very good and a strength of the school. Values of care, concern for others, fairness and respect are very evident throughout the school and pupils have a clear understanding of what is right and what is wrong. Pupils work to the school's code of conduct and sanctions are rarely needed. There is a strong sense of a school community, with pupils of all ages mixing together happily at playtimes. Pupils enjoy many opportunities to take on responsibility, show initiative or make decisions. For example, they organised a talent show to raise money, with a panel of judges and prizes for the winners. The school council provides a good opportunity for pupils to voice opinions and to be involved in making decisions affecting the whole school. For example, they decide on the equipment they will purchase for use on the playground at lunchtimes. Meetings are led by pupils and minutes typed up and posted in school for others to read. Pupils take on responsibilities willingly, in a mature manner and staff are frequently on hand to talk through situations and support pupils in reaching an appropriate decision. Care for the environment is promoted well through the recycling officer and funds raised are used to purchase equipment for lunchtimes. All adults provide good role models, value the pupils as individuals and treat them with respect.

33 Pupils' cultural development is promoted well through lessons in art, music, literacy and study work involving science, history and geography. The cultural traditions of the local area are promoted well. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils have studied the pottery designs of Lorna Bailey and Clarice Cliffe. Other cultural traditions are promoted through, for example, the study of Chembakolli, aboriginal and African designs in art. Pupils study other world religions and other people's beliefs, but there is less emphasis on promoting awareness of the ethnic and cultural diversity of British society. The school has identified this aspect and already has plans to remedy the situation.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34 As at the time of the previous inspection, the school cares for its pupils very well and creates a happy, secure and stimulating environment. The deputy head teacher is responsible for child protection and her detailed knowledge of her pupils and their backgrounds together with clear guidance for teaching staff provides a good level of protection. There is a very good awareness of the needs of pupils with specific medical conditions, who are well supported. The school caretaker and her cleaner maintain a high level of cleanliness and any aspect of maintenance is attended to promptly, providing for a safe learning environment. This also instils high values in the pupils that are reflected in their respect for property and learning resources. The health and safety awareness of the governors is very good, with regular safety tours and reviews. During lessons, teachers of even the youngest pupils take the time to explain the reason for working safely. This was evident in a Year 1 physical education lesson, where the importance of immediate attention to the teacher's instructions and the correct carrying of physical education equipment was explained as a natural part of the lesson.

35 The procedures for monitoring absence are satisfactory. Registers are maintained correctly and provide a clear picture of attendance patterns. Very effective procedures are in place to promote good behaviour and there were no incidents of harassment, bullying or other inappropriate behaviour during the inspection. The school's policies on all aspects of behaviour, including bullying, employ a well balanced reward and sanction system but sanctions rarely have to be applied due to the very good levels of behaviour seen both in and out of the classroom. Lunchtime supervision is good and the supervisors maintain a safe and relaxed social atmosphere. The supervisors and other non-teaching staff are valued as an essential part of school life and take an active part in maintaining the high standards of the school.

36 Procedures for assessing and monitoring the pupils' academic performance are very good. There has been a tremendous improvement on the unsatisfactory arrangements at the time of the previous inspection. The rigorous approach to assessment includes detailed monitoring of the results of termly school tests and of statutory national tests. Data gained is used efficiently to set challenging school targets. The system is used very effectively to highlight individual as well as group needs and set personal targets. The evaluation section in teachers' medium term plans identifies pupils who may need further help or extension work. This is closely

monitored by the headteacher to ensure that identified needs are met. Overall, the system of assessment is playing a significant part in raising standards in English and mathematics. Assessment in science is good and is very effective in Key Stage 2. Detailed assessment of the pupils' attainment in other subjects is carried out conscientiously at the end of each study unit and is very effective in promoting the development of skills over time.

37 The result of tests administered to reception children during their first weeks in school are used to identify particular weaknesses and to develop the curriculum accordingly. On-going observations are carried out in the spring term and tests repeated in May to check achievement.

38 The headteacher and deputy headteacher are meticulous in analysing the school's performance over time and in identifying trends. Account is taken of gender and of ability. Good use is made of this information to plan further improvement. For instance, from its own analysis, the school has identified writing as an area for development, and has implemented a detailed initiative in all classes to promote specific writing skills.

39 Rigorous assessment is used to identify pupils with special educational needs, especially in literacy. Their progress is kept under constant scrutiny and their individual education plans reviewed to ensure that they make good progress.

40 The thorough monitoring of academic attainment is reflected also in the careful monitoring and support of the pupils' personal development. The school's strong moral ethos and aims promote attitudes of mutual respect. Through its policy for pastoral support, the school ensures that all staff act consistently and promote supportive relationships. The headteacher monitors behaviour through her daily incident diary. The teachers prepare termly progress reports for parents, which include comments on personal development. The very good support for the pupils' personal development is influential in promoting positive attitudes to learning and so promoting the pupils' achievement.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41 Parents' views of the school, expressed in the parents' questionnaire and in particular at the parents' meeting, are very positive. This is a strength of the school and an improvement since the previous inspection. Parents particularly appreciate the open door policy, the approachability of staff and their accessibility at the start and end of day and the aims and values fostered by the school.

42 A minority of parents expressed dissatisfaction with the information provided by the school. Inspection found that overall the quality of information provided to parents was very good and that there are also very good opportunities for parents to approach the school for additional information. The annual written report to parents is supplemented by two other progress reports during the year. It contains details of achievement in all curriculum subjects and personal and social skills and includes clear targets for further development. The briefer termly reports inform parents of their children's progress towards these targets. Each report provides an opportunity for school, parent and pupil comment, although in all of the reports scrutinised little use had been made of the comment sections. There are regular school newsletters and class newsletters detailing topic work and class specific information provided most terms for older pupils. The school prospectus fully meets statutory requirements and is comprehensive and easy to read.

43 Parents of children with special educational needs are well supported with individual education plans that are regularly reviewed. A home/school agreement is in place and parents benefit from guidance on activities that can be undertaken at home to support learning in school. Homework is regularly set but there is a lack of consistency in the use of homework or reading diaries and they are under-used as a means of two-way communication with home. Parents regularly help in school providing help with reading, cooking and with after school clubs. During the inspection, parents and helpers were observed baking, preparing 'Giants Trousers' and bathing a five-week-old baby. The school values highly the help given by parents and the impact that it has on the progress the children make.

44 The school benefits from a very strong and active Parent Teacher Association that organises a well-balanced mixture of fund raising and social activities in conjunction with the school. These include both parents and children and promote a community awareness as well as raise valuable funds for the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45 At the time of the previous inspection, the headteacher had only been in post for six weeks. Since that time, she has displayed excellent leadership skills in achieving very good improvements in provision and standards. She has a strong commitment to promoting high standards and pupils' personal development in a Christian environment. The headteacher works in close partnership with a very able deputy head and has built a strong and enthusiastic staff team, who share her commitment. She has the full support of the staff and governing body and parents and pupils express confidence in her. Relationships within the school are very good and the staff create a stimulating learning environment, effectively fulfilling the school's aims.

46 At the previous inspection, the role of curriculum co-ordinators was underdeveloped but this is now a strength. Subject co-ordinators have time to fulfil their roles; they check the quality of teaching and learning by observing lessons and examining pupils' work. They have a very clear overview of their subjects and are effective in promoting improvements. The co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage is new but has very quickly assessed what is needed to improve and developed a good action plan to achieve its goals. At the previous inspection, policies and schemes of work were not in place for all subjects but these are all now firmly established and well linked to the school's assessment procedures.

47 The governing body is knowledgeable and effective and its members work well as a team to fulfil all their statutory duties. They manage the school very well, sharing the commitment of the headteacher and staff to high standards, in the context of a Christian community. Governors are closely involved with the school's developmental planning and direct their financial resources to the identified needs of the plan. At the time of the previous inspection the development plan was inadequate and did not identify clear priorities for action. It is now a very supportive document, which gives a clear picture of how the school intends to continue its improvement. Long-term financial planning is very good and governors target money to important priorities, such as the provision of costly extra classrooms. The accommodation is currently adequate for the number of pupils and is well used. It has been attractively extended since the previous inspection but still poses a concern for the immediate future, as the school roll is to increase yet again this autumn. Governors have already appointed a teacher for a seventh class but there is no available classroom. However, there are plans for a further extension, which are awaiting financial support. Governors compare the school's standards carefully with those of other schools, understanding its strengths and knowing what it needs to do to improve. They work hard to ensure that they get the best value that they can for their pupils.

48 There are appropriate levels of well-qualified staff and very good use is made of their individual expertise. The whole staff team supports new staff very well; including those who are newly qualified teachers. Their induction includes a sharp focus on helping them to teach basic skills effectively. New performance management procedures are in place and all staff have identified targets, linked to provision of training. Learning resources were unsatisfactory at the previous inspection but are now good and of good quality. There are a few shortages, such as sufficient balls for the larger class sizes and some information and communication technology equipment. However, these have been identified and are being dealt with.

49 Satisfactory use is made of modern technology in classrooms and in the administration of the school. Administrative procedures are very efficiently handled by the school secretary, which allows the headteacher and staff to concentrate on educating the pupils.

50 Overall, the headteacher, staff and governing body form a very effective team that achieves the school's aims of promoting high standards in a Christian community.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51 In order to improve still further the school should raise the standard of listening and early writing skills in the reception class by:

- (i) implementing a consistent approach to establishing school routines that encourage children to listen to adults and respond appropriately;
- (ii) fully implementing a structured programme to progressively develop pupils' writing skills.

(Paragraphs 3, 17, 25, 52, 57, 58)

The governing body should also consider the following minor issue for inclusion in the action plan.

(Paragraphs 9, 24, 28, 33, 69, 103, 104, 105, 116)

Handwriting could be improved in the infants;

Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have limited access to computers and there are some gaps in programs to support the use of information and communication technology across the whole curriculum;

Pupils' understanding of aspects of life in modern multicultural Britain are under-developed;

Pupils have little opportunity to take part in outdoor pursuits;

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

47

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

24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	32	42	24	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	Not applicable	173
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Not applicable	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	Not applicable	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	Not applicable	19

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	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	11	22	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	9	10
	Girls	20	20	21
	Total	30	29	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (81)	88 (95)	94 (95)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	10
	Girls	20	20	20
	Total	30	30	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (76)	91 (90)	91 (95)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (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
	2000	8	7	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	7	8
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	15	14	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (89)	93 (89)	100 (100)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	7	8
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	13	14	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (89)	93 (89)	100 (94)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (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	0
Chinese	0
White	139
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	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.7
Average class size	28.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	54

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	245478
Total expenditure	245454
Expenditure per pupil	1659
Balance brought forward from previous year	17796
Balance carried forward to next year	17820

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	173
Number of questionnaires returned	76

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	28	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	27	9	3	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	35	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	41	20	4	0
The teaching is good.	49	37	10	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	39	24	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	38	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	31	4	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	34	49	15	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	55	35	6	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	39	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	32	18	1	1

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

52 Children enter the reception class at the start of the year in which they are five. There is no nursery provision in the village but about half of the children attend a local pre-school playgroup and a third attend nurseries in a nearby town. The attainment levels on entry to the school are not as high as at the time of the previous inspection and are average, overall. Whilst the children are articulate and have above average knowledge and understanding of the world, the more formal early listening and writing skills are below the average of those in the local education authority. This is confirmed in the results of the assessments made on entry to the school over the last three years. Provision is satisfactory and children achieve appropriately; they are on target to attain the levels expected for their age in personal and social skills, reading, mathematics, and physical development when they enter Year 1. Their speaking skills, creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world are above average but listening and early writing skills are below average.

53 During the current school year, there has been unavoidable disruption to teaching and children's learning because of the long-term absence of the class teacher. This created some difficulties for several months because of the shortage of appropriately qualified supply teachers. It affected children's learning and their ability to follow school routines. However, the school has managed the situation and made sound arrangements for the future. Teaching observed was good, overall, and sometimes very good, but other evidence shows that over the year it has been satisfactory, overall, with some weakness in the teaching of listening skills and writing. However, considerable improvement has been made. Lessons are well planned and often exciting. A well informed classroom assistant provides effective support.

54 A good policy for the Foundation Stage provides for an appropriate curriculum, which follows the national guidance for this age group. However, because of the circumstances during the current year, structured plans for developing listening skills and early writing skills have not been systematically taught. The school has recognised this and is taking appropriate action.

55 The accommodation is good and greatly enhanced by imaginative displays of children's work. During the inspection week, the classroom became The Beanstalk and The Giant's Castle and provided a very stimulating and exciting learning environment. There is access to secure outdoor play areas, both hard and grassed, and a very good range of attractive, good quality resources.

56 Relationships between school and home are good but parents have rightly been anxious about the teaching situation. The school has met with them and the vast majority of parents are very supportive of the action taken. Several help in school and all support their children by hearing them read at home.

Personal, social and emotional development

57 There is a good programme of visits to the reception class before the children begin school, to help them to become familiar with the teacher and the classroom. Most settle into school routines sensibly but a minority finds it hard to sit and listen or to concentrate on activities for an appropriate period of time, unless very closely supervised. This applies in particular to some of the relatively young boys in the class. During the inspection they were well supported by additional attention from the classroom assistant in whole class sessions and are now making good progress. Children are independent in dressing and undressing themselves at playtimes and for physical education. Teaching was good during the inspection but is judged to be satisfactory, overall. There are good opportunities for children to work and play together. Children have very good relationships with each other and with staff; they co-operate well in groups, sharing equipment appropriately. During the inspection, they had many opportunities to develop independence in choosing their activities or resources. Most are likely to attain the levels expected on entry to Year 1.

Communication, language and literacy

58 Teaching observed during the inspection was very good but, over the year, it has been satisfactory, overall. Teaching is sound in speaking and reading and children make satisfactory progress. They are confident in speaking aloud to the class and use a good range of vocabulary but about a fifth do not listen carefully to what others have to say and listening skills are below average. This is partly as a direct result to the changes to the class routines that have occurred over the year. There are many good opportunities to extend children's language further, such as in the role-play areas of The Giant's Castle and The Beanstalk Cafe. A scheme for teaching children the names and sounds of the different letters of the alphabet promotes sound progress and higher attainers begin to use this knowledge in their reading and writing. Most recognise a satisfactory number of simple common words and read books independently. Most children write their names accurately but few attempt other writing independently. The majority copy the teachers' writing but handwriting is immature and letters are not well formed or of consistent size. Over the year, the teaching of

writing has been unsatisfactory and pupils are not achieving as well as they could. The school has recognised this and there are firm plans to improve standards.

Mathematical development

59 Teaching is satisfactory and children make satisfactory progress. They are likely to achieve the levels expected at the end of the reception year. They sort objects by shape and colour and order them by size. They copy and continue simple patterns. Many children count to 9 and learn to order towers of cubes in number order. Lower attainers count to five whilst higher attainers order numbers correctly and begin simple practical addition. Many children recognise and name basic shapes, such as circles, triangles, and squares. They learn a good range of mathematical language, which they use when comparing size, length, volume or weight. They sequence events in their own day and gain an appropriate understanding of time. Children apply their skills well in other areas of learning. For example, they use their measurement skills when observing their seeds growing.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

60 Teaching is satisfactory, overall, and children achieve appropriately. During the inspection week, teaching was good and pupils made good progress. Overall, attainment is above the level expected when children enter Year 1. Children talk about their homes, families and school with confidence. Much of their work is linked to study work topics, such as growth and change, and children express a sense of wonder when they discuss the creatures that they observe closely. They use magnifying glasses to observe ants at work and talk about the life cycles of frogs and butterflies. They wait for their eggs to hatch in an incubator with excitement. Children learn to respect these creatures and handle them with care. They note how they themselves have grown and changed since they were born. During the inspection, two mothers brought in their babies and talked to children about their needs and stages of development. Children have many good opportunities to explore for themselves and develop observational skills through experiments, such as when testing objects that float and sink. They use equipment, such as construction kits, independently to build models and design and make simple products, such as a purse for the giant. All are familiar with information and communication technology and use the computer and cassette player independently. A parent is well used in teaching them basic skills and they play word and number games independently and create pictures, using the mouse and keyboard. A range of trips and visits, such as to the farm, support the curriculum well. Children learn about religious education and celebrate religious festivals, particularly those of their own faith.

Physical development

61 Teaching is satisfactory, overall, but during the inspection week, it was good. Children make satisfactory progress and attain the levels expected when they enter Year 1, although in the current year group about a fifth of pupils have below average skills in using a pencil. This is linked to the lack of structured development of handwriting skills. The children have good opportunities for developing physical skills in movement, climbing, balancing and riding, both in physical education lessons and in the outdoor play areas, where the resources for energetic play are particularly good. They develop good control of their bodies and show an awareness of space as they move around. Children's dexterity is promoted satisfactorily through the use of puzzles and construction kits. They use scissors safely to cut out shapes and they manipulate plasticine and dough, such as when making gingerbread men.

Creative development

62 Teaching is good, overall, and during the inspection week it was very good. Children make good progress, overall, but very good progress has been made recently. The teacher has provided excellent resources to stimulate children's imaginations. In art, children develop good skills and paint recognisable pictures. For example, in their topic on living things they have produced detailed paintings of skeletons, closely observing a life-sized one. During the inspection week, there were ample opportunities for pupils to express themselves creatively and very imaginative stimuli were provided. For example, in the role-play corners children dressed up enthusiastically in the giant's boots and clothes, entering into their roles with gusto. Staff took every opportunity to enrich their vocabulary and develop imagination. Children sing a variety of traditional songs enthusiastically and learn to play a range of percussion instruments correctly. They are likely to exceed the levels expected when they enter Year 1.

ENGLISH

63 Standards in English have improved considerably since the previous inspection. Evidence from the current inspection indicates that ages 7 and 11, standards are currently above the national average. Pupils achieve well throughout the school because of the strength of the curriculum, the high quality of the teaching, and the rigorous approach to assessment. The National Literacy Strategy is implemented thoroughly by all teachers, and supports learning in a systematic way. Exciting cross-curricular topic work supports the development of literacy skills very effectively. It motivates pupils to practise and improve their speaking and listening, reading and writing through purposeful and interesting studies in other subjects, such as history and geography.

64 In the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000, pupils' standards in reading were well above those found nationally, and above those of similar schools. In writing, standards were in line with the national average, but below those of similar schools. At present, because of the particular nature of the year group, standards of seven-year-olds in reading, whilst still higher than in most schools, are not quite as high as last year. In writing, standards have been maintained, and are beginning to show a slight improvement due to the school's well directed initiative to promote writing skills. This is encouraging and shows good achievement, considering the well below average writing standards recorded when these pupils entered school. The school is aware, however, that there is still work to be done in order to raise the percentage of pupils who reach the next higher level.

65 In the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000, standards were in the top five percent of all schools nationally. Standards are currently higher than in most schools, but are not quite so high as last year. This is due to the high percentage (25%) of pupils in Year 6 who have special educational needs in literacy. Very high standards have been maintained over the last three years and targets set by the school and the local education authority have been met.

66 The performance of individuals and year groups is carefully assessed as they move through the school. Regular and frequent monitoring of progress helps all pupils to achieve as well as they can in almost all areas. Particular care is taken to identify pupils who have special educational needs in literacy. They make good progress, alongside their peers, towards the targets in their individual education plans. Effective support is provided unobtrusively through appropriately graded work and increased adult attention. All pupils have full access to the curriculum. Very good, sensitive provision is made for pupils who show particular talent in English. When appropriate, flexible arrangements enable pupils to be 'fast tracked' to work in older classes where suitable challenge is provided.

67 On entry to Year 1, listening skills are not well developed and some pupils do not always listen as well as they might. The school, therefore, puts great emphasis on the development of speaking and listening skills. As a result, at the age of seven and eleven years, standards are above those found in most schools. Teachers plan frequent well-organised opportunities for pupils to join in discussions in large and small groups in all classes, and in all subjects. At age 7, most pupils are articulate and confident. They listen attentively to adults and to each other, and show understanding through appropriate responses. Most speak clearly in well-constructed sentences using a wide vocabulary. Higher attainers are sophisticated in their organisation of language, describing Wybunbury as 'surrounded by fields', and explaining the meaning of 'herd' as 'a big group of the same animals together'. By age 11, most pupils are confident to put forward and support their own point of view in debate. When conducting an interview, they are beginning to organise their questions carefully to find out as much information as possible. Year 6 pupils take part in a storytelling/drama day, with increasing confidence in composing and narrating parts of the story to the rest of the class. They are good at making up and enacting appropriate dialogue in pairs. However, a small group of lower attainers are unimaginative and use limited vocabulary. Higher attainers are particularly articulate in contributing to discussions and in challenging the ideas of others.

68 The school promotes positive attitudes to literature. Pupils read for information and for enjoyment. A very good range of attractive books is provided and the acquisition of study skills, especially research in books, is a strength of pupils' reading. Literature is often at the centre of study units and junior pupils particularly enjoy stories told as serials. For instance, in Year 6, the study of the Harry Potter stories has recently filled the pupils with enthusiasm and provided an excellent stimulus for learning. At age 7, most pupils read a range of texts confidently. They use their knowledge of letters and their sounds, together with context and picture clues to decode unfamiliar words. Some lower attainers lack confidence, stopping to sound out words too often and losing the meaning of the text. The vast majority of pupils are adept in library skills, locating specific information in non-fiction books confidently using contents and index. Some pupils are reluctant to express preferences and their knowledge of children's authors is not well developed. However, by the age of 11, most pupils are independent readers and are familiar with the works of famous authors, like Shakespeare and Dickens, and of children's writers, such as Jacqueline Wilson and J. K. Rowling. Average and higher attainers show a deep understanding and use examples in the text to explain their deductions. Many express a preference for non-fiction texts.

69 At age 7, most pupils write several sentences independently, at the expected level, in a range of forms, from lists to descriptions, from instructions to poetry. They are becoming more reliable in using basic punctuation including capital letters, full stops and question marks correctly. When reminded, they are thoughtful in choosing appropriate adjectives. Most make use of their good knowledge of letters and their sounds to make reasonable attempts at spelling. Lower attainers are becoming aware of the use of full stops and write in simple sentences. Few pupils are working at a higher level and do not often undertake longer pieces of narrative writing. Very few write in joined script and, in general, handwriting skills are not well developed. The school has recognised that some pupils could do better in this area and has an action plan to improve skills. By age 11, most pupils are competent in a good range of writing skills. Higher and average attainers take useful notes, picking out main points efficiently. They present an argument, such as about the merits or otherwise of cycling, showing both sides evenly, as well as their own point of view. They are aware of the use of questioning and exaggeration in persuasive writing, and use these strategies in their own advertisements for *A Great Day Out*. Higher attainers choose words such as 'breathtaking', 'spectacular' and 'tantalising' to promote a desired effect. Lower attainers show less imagination and use simpler vocabulary. Standards of spelling and presentation are

good. Most pupils use their knowledge of spelling patterns to build up complicated words with some accuracy. They write fluently and neatly in joined script.

70 The quality of teaching in the infants is very good, overall. It was never less than good and was very good in half of the lessons observed. In the juniors, teaching is good overall. It was consistently good in two-thirds of lessons observed and very good in one-third. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection, when it was satisfactory. Very good teaching in Key Stage 1 and the end of Key Stage 2 promotes especially good learning. There is considerable strength in the teamwork between staff, which ensures a consistent approach to teaching and learning based on a wholehearted commitment to high standards. Teachers establish the school's high expectations in calm working atmospheres that are conducive to learning. Pupils respond positively, work hard and give of their best. Teachers use their good knowledge and understanding of the subject to plan carefully so that pupils build systematically on what they already know. Group work is well organised and the tasks set provide appropriate challenge for pupils of differing attainment in each class. Pupils are co-operative and helpful and generally collaborate well. Supportive relationships give pupils confidence in their own ability and successfully encourage independent learning. Teachers use questions effectively to extend pupils' learning and to assess what they know. Teaching assistants and other adult helpers are well briefed, and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. The use of individual white boards to try out spellings or draft sentences is very helpful to pupils in providing a quick check of their work, so that they learn efficiently from their own mistakes. Teachers value the pupils' contributions and provide sensitive feedback that increases the pupils' self-esteem, so that they try harder and make good progress. Marking is very detailed and clear, and especially in class 6 tells pupils constructively how to improve. Plenary sessions consolidate learning well.

71 The curriculum co-ordinator provides excellent leadership, and through careful monitoring of teaching and learning in the classroom, has established a supportive atmosphere for professional development. This is reflected in the staff's commitment to continuous improvement. Very good assessment systems are used to identify pupils with special educational needs, areas for curriculum development and to set targets for individuals and year groups. The school's efficient analysis of test results and tracking of pupils' progress over time is effective in raising standards. All pupils in the juniors are aware of their targets and older pupils have been involved in setting their own.

MATHEMATICS

72 Standards are above average at age 7, and well above average at age 11, and have improved since the previous inspection. Given the average standards on entry to Year 1, pupils achieve well throughout the school. In the national tests for seven-year olds, in 2000, results were well above the national average and the average for similar schools, with almost half the pupils exceeding the level expected for their age. Results of national tests for eleven-year olds in 2000 showed standards to be very high in comparison with the national average and well above the average for similar schools. The school was in the top five per cent of schools nationally with the proportion of pupils exceeding the level expected being more than double the national average. Inspection evidence shows similar standards, despite the proportion of pupils with special educational needs.

73 The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented very successfully and this is a major factor in the improved standards. Teachers have undertaken additional training in specific aspects of the strategy where they did not feel confident and have observed leading teachers in other schools. These steps have been beneficial in improving the teaching and pupils' learning. Additional staff help to boost the performance of selected pupils and homework classes are held after school to provide further support. There are arrangements for pupils who show particular ability to work with older pupils and several do so, which caters well for their learning needs. The subject is very well managed and the school has a good overview of the strengths and areas where further improvement can be made. A thorough analysis of pupils' performance in annual tests is carried out, any gaps in teaching identified and action taken to amend the curriculum where necessary. The monitoring of teaching helps to highlight areas where teaching could be improved and further training is provided.

74 At age 7, pupils are developing their mental recall skills well and begin to use different strategies for solving problems. They ask logical questions when trying to identify a mystery number, such as 'Is it larger than a given number?' or 'Is it an odd or even number?' Most pupils are confident in working with numbers to 99 and are starting to use all four rules of number. They order larger numbers to 999 but sometimes write them incorrectly. They apply their knowledge to money problems, for example, when putting out given amounts of money using the smallest number of coins. Occasionally, lower attaining pupils are given the same tasks as other pupils, and these sometimes involve too much writing when recording answers. Consequently very few questions are completed and pupils do not make as much progress as they could. Pupils investigate different ways of making a number using the four rules of number confidently. They identify and name two-dimensional shapes and measure accurately in centimetres. They know the days of the week, months of the year and what they are likely to be doing at different times of the day demonstrating a good understanding of time. They collect data such as about favourite toys and present it in simple graphs.

75 At age 11, most pupils are confident in using the four rules of number in solving both oral and written questions. They recall multiplication facts with speed and accuracy and this helps their work in other aspects of the subject. They have good understanding of fractions, decimals, percentages, negative numbers and a sound understanding of probability. Pupils also have a good understanding of three-dimensional shapes and their properties. For example, they identify different quadrilaterals, such as a trapezium, parallelogram and a rhombus and know the difference between them. They draw and measure acute, obtuse and reflex angles accurately. They collect data and present the information clearly in line graphs to show the difference between the two localities. Lower attaining pupils understand the four number operations and work with smaller numbers; for example, they divide by one digit numbers. The marking of pupils' work identifies where they have problems and further teaching helps them to overcome them. Individual tasks are prepared to meet pupils' needs where activities for the rest of the class are too demanding and this helps all pupils to achieve their best.

76 The quality of teaching is very good for pupils in Key Stage 1 and is good in Years 3 to 6, with very good teaching at the end of Key Stage 2. This is reflected in the pace of learning, which matches the quality of teaching. Pupils enjoy the numeracy lessons, particularly the brisk introductory mental arithmetic sessions and their interest has a positive effect on the pace of their learning. Teachers are secure in their understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy, very competent in teaching the basic skills and manage pupils very well. These features help pupils to make good progress. Lessons are well planned and activities are lively, interesting and challenging. The challenge of activities for pupils in the Year 5 and 6 class is a particular strength; pupils are required to use previous learning in different aspects of the subject and apply it in different situations. For example, when revising quadrilaterals they had to recall their knowledge of angles and lines and use correct terminology. Teachers write the lesson objectives on the boards and usually share them with pupils, to give a focus to the lesson. The time towards the end of lessons is used effectively to check on what pupils have completed and learned, but pupils were rarely asked how much they had felt they had learned. Pupils are taught carefully how to measure and this leads to secure understanding of the different units of measurement. The scrutiny of pupils' work did reveal examples of the use of information and communication technology, such as presenting information in pie charts and calculating percentages using spreadsheets but computers are generally under-used. For example, there is no evidence of lower attaining pupils using computers to help improve their speed and mental recall of number facts. Resources such as number fans and whiteboards are used effectively during introductory sessions to enable teachers to check the accuracy of pupils' mental calculations and to see those pupils in need of support. This helps all pupils to make good progress in their learning.

77 The previous inspection reported that there was an over-reliance on the completion of examples from textbooks and worksheets and an under-emphasis on using and applying their mathematical knowledge and skills to different situations in other subjects. These points have now been remedied.

78 Pupils use their skills effectively in other subjects. For example, they calculate distances between countries in geography, use timelines in history, present findings in science and measure accurately when making models in design and technology and measuring the length of jumps in athletics.

SCIENCE

79 At age 7, standards are average but, at age eleven they are high, with all pupils working at the level expected and the majority working at the next higher level. This is a very big improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were in line with level expected but higher attainers made inadequate progress. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well by age 11 because of the very good teaching and a sharp focus on developing skills progressively.

80 In the national teacher assessments for seven-year-olds, in 2000, pupils' results were in line with the national average but below that for similar schools. Few pupils exceeded the level expected and this reflected some underachievement by higher attaining pupils. The school identified this as a development area and concentrated on improving achievement for those pupils, through a greater emphasis on independent, practical investigation. Inspection evidence reflects similar standards but with a slight increase in the proportion of pupils working beyond the level expected. As this year group was below average, overall, on entry to Year 1, this indicates that their actions have been effective in promoting sound achievement for all pupils.

81 In the national tests at age 11, in the past two years, results were very high in comparison with the national average and that for similar schools. In 2000, the school was in the top five per cent of schools nationally with almost 90 percent of pupils exceeding the level expected. This is a remarkable achievement and the school has improved its results at a faster rate than of most schools nationally. Currently standards are high but they are affected by the fact that in the current Year 6, a quarter of the pupils have special educational needs and there is a slight drop in the proportion of pupils working at a higher level. However, because of the good support for the pupils with special educational needs, with the literacy aspects of their work, they achieve well and are successful in working at age-appropriate levels in science. A very good programme of independent, investigative science revision supports the high standards attained in

national tests. All pupils have very good knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. They are competent in devising fair tests to investigate and find out for themselves and understand that conditions must be kept the same for each item tested. They sensibly repeated their tests to check that their results are accurate. For example, when Year 6 investigated gravity and friction as forces, they encountered an unexpected result and repeated the test several times to ensure that they had conducted it fairly and measured accurately. They make good use of their numeracy skills when observing and measuring.

82 Teaching in science is very good throughout the school. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and plan well to develop skills and knowledge progressively. They have very high expectations and give pupils as many opportunities as they can to investigate and find out for themselves, providing a good range of resources to enable them to make decisions. Lessons are exciting and challenging and pupils take part with enthusiasm, developing their own investigational skills well. They learn to ask questions and enjoy the challenge of finding ways to work out the answers. For example, Year 2 pupils were challenged to light up a bulb and were given appropriate resources. They experimented with various ways of connecting wires and batteries and questioned why the bulb did not work. They worked well in pairs until they achieved success and then proceeded to try to light more than one bulb, noticing that the strength of the light changed with each extra bulb and trying to explain why this had happened.

83 The co-ordinator manages the subject very well. Regular checking of the quality of teaching and pupils' work gives the school a clear picture of the strengths and areas that might be further improved. Since the previous inspection, the curriculum has been much improved and there is now a very good emphasis on practical and independent investigation. Although science is mainly taught as a separate subject, it is also carefully planned into study work wherever possible, which gives pupils an insight into its place in the world. A new system of assessment has been introduced and is particularly well developed in Years 3 – 6, where end-of-study unit assessments give the teacher a clear idea of pupils' progress in relation to National Curriculum levels. The further use of information and communication technology is an area identified for development and programs have already been ordered to support this work.

ART AND DESIGN

84 Standards are well above the level expected nationally for seven and eleven-year olds. Pupils achieve as well as they can to reach these standards which represent a significant improvement since the previous inspection. The key factors in the improvement have been the drive and enthusiasm in leadership, the quality of teaching, and the wide and rich experiences and opportunities that pupils have to explore materials and techniques and develop their creativity. Pupils' sketchbooks are of good quality and are used regularly to practise and improve their skills.

85 By the age of seven, pupils are confident in selecting the materials they wish to use and in pursuing their own ideas. They openly discuss how they are going to approach their task, for example when building up facial features on paper sculpture masks. They have a good understanding of colour mixing and their designs of African jewellery showed many attempts at getting the exact colour required. Their observational drawing skills are very good for their age with close attention to detail in patterns and good use of line, shape and shading as seen in the drawings of fish in Year 1 and African masks in Year 2. They have good understanding of the use of texture and apply bold colours, which they have mixed themselves, to their textured boards to create eye-catching African pictures inspired by the work of Tony Hudson. They apply paint skilfully with glue spreaders to create a mingled effect. They have a good understanding of how to use wool to make felt pictures, of weaving techniques using shades of one colour to give a good finished effect and of how to create their own batik pictures to decorate the front covers of their study books. Three-dimensional work on display shows pupils use chicken wire and paper sculpture and card to create body shapes very successfully. All work is finished to a high standard.

86 Pupils continue to build on these good foundations in Years 3 to 6 and by the time they leave the school they acquire knowledge and skills at a good rate and are very confident in approaching tasks in any aspect of the subject. The front covers of their study books show a wide range of techniques have been used including quilting, padding, collage, drawing and modelling. Pupils in Year 3 improved their skills in printing when producing a wall hanging using press prints from tiles of Anglo Saxon patterns. They use seaweed to create patterns and sea sculptures, which they incorporate tastefully into their display about the Titanic. Pencil sketches of a human skeleton show accurate proportion and pictures of cats inspired by the work of Andy Warhol have captured a feel of a superior cat very effectively. In Year 6, pupils design containers, based on ideas from the work of Lorna Bailey and Clarice Cliffe. All designs are different; some are complex and require modification as pupils proceed to make a prototype out of card. They follow designs carefully and evaluate their work sensibly as they proceed. They explore the use of tape, string, raffia and thread to add further effect to their card models by, for example, plaiting and twisting. The quality of observational drawings of fungi and herbs are of a particularly high standard.

87 The quality of teaching is very good for pupils in Key Stage 1 and good in Years 3 to 6, with very good teaching at the end of the key stage. The consistently good teaching enables all pupils to learn at a good pace. Teachers are generally very secure in their subject knowledge, confident in teaching the skills and techniques and set challenging

tasks. The good quality and range of resources available enables appropriate teaching methods to be used. Teachers sometimes work with whole classes and at other times with small groups, where more attention can be given to developing specific skills and techniques. For example in Year 2, four different tasks were set up to enable the teacher to support those transferring their designs onto large painting frames, whereas in Year 5 and 6 the whole class worked on the same task, with support given to individuals when needed. Because the activities are interesting, pupils enjoy and take pride in their work and the management of pupils is very good whether working indoors or out of doors.

88 The subject is very well managed and staff are well supported by the co-ordinator. Teaching in all classes has been monitored and demonstration lessons given. Areas for improvement have been identified and effective support given to develop teaching. Artists visit the school to enhance pupils' experiences. The weaknesses identified in the previous report, in the limited range of materials and few opportunities for older pupils to evaluate and adapt their work in the light of intended outcomes, have been remedied. However, there is little use of computers to create graphic designs and pictures and this is now an aspect for development. Work in art and design contributes much to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

89 At ages 7 and 11, standards are above average, with most pupils working at the levels expected in the National Curriculum, and a good proportion working beyond them. This is a great improvement on the unsatisfactory standards noted at the previous inspection. The quality of most of the finished products is very good and much enhanced by pupils' use of their individual creative skills.

90 Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 1 and at age seven, design their products well and make suitable choices about their resources. They cut and join an appropriate range of materials, using simple tools and construct their products carefully. Year 1 design and make their own puppets to a very high standard. Pupils in Year 2 translate their designs of Roman Chariots to simple working models with axles and wheels. The quality of finish to these products is very good. Pupils talk about the problems they encountered when making up their designs and what they could change to improve their product.

91 At age 11, pupils, including those with special educational needs, have built well on their skills, observing real life products carefully to establish the basic features they need to include. They follow their designs to produce products with moving parts, such as cams and gears, adapting them as they encounter any difficulties. They make sensible choices about materials and give due thought to the suitability of the article for its intended purpose. Completed products seen during the inspection in Years 3 to 6 were attractively finished. For example, the Indian instruments made by Years 5 and 6 are colourful and bright as well as being strong and very well suited to their purpose. Pupils learn how to join materials securely, using different types of fixers, appropriate to the materials. They test their products to evaluate the success of their designs and identify areas where they could improve. Mathematical skills are used satisfactorily in accurate measurement. Pupils enjoy the design challenges, which are carefully linked to their study topics and show enthusiasm for their work. This was particularly noticed when Year 3 designed and made healthy and appetising sandwiches, from a wide range of foodstuffs.

92 Three lessons were observed during the inspection and teaching was good overall and very good in one lesson. Teachers have good subject knowledge and provide many opportunities for pupils to design and make their own products. Design briefs are well linked to their study work and are suitably challenging. Teachers provide a good range of resources to enable pupils to make thoughtful decisions. The teaching of the design process includes some good practices, such as when pupils disassemble products to find out how they are made. For example, Year 4 and 5 pupils took apart torches when considering how they might make their own. Pupils enjoy practical work and talk enthusiastically about their constructions. They show great pride in their finished products. Teachers are now beginning to use information and communication technology to enhance pupils' work. For example, when making African hats, Year 2 pupils downloaded African images to apply to materials.

93 Since the previous inspection, the profile of the subject has been raised across the whole school. The quality of teaching and pupils' work is regularly checked and this gives very good overview of both provision and standards. Good leadership has led to considerable improvement to the subject since the previous inspection when the full range of the National Curriculum was not taught and standards were unsatisfactory. There are good resources, which are very well organised.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

94 At ages 7 and 11, pupils attain standards that are higher than those found in most schools and exceed those expected by the National Curriculum. This is an improvement on the average standards reported at the time of the previous inspection.

95 Almost all pupils achieve well due to the well-organised curriculum, the good quality of teaching and the pupils' positive attitudes. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress alongside their peers. All pupils become increasingly competent at asking questions and finding evidence from books, from artefacts and from information technology, as they move from class to class. Policies and schemes of work in geography and history are now in place and provide for good progress in the acquisition of skills and knowledge over time. The curriculum is carefully organised into integrated study units where several subjects are planned around a particular theme. This interests pupils and motivates them to learn. The ethos of the school and the skill of the staff are instrumental in promoting purposeful and enthusiastic attitudes to learning.

96 In geography lessons, pupils in Year 2 have secure knowledge of the locality. They know their own addresses and make simple maps of the village. They use geographical language to describe the route to school and write directions with reference to geographical features. They are becoming aware of locations other than their own. When looking closely at photographs of a village in Eritrea, they ask and answer questions and make interesting comparisons with life in Wybunbury. Pupils in Year 5 collaborate enthusiastically in groups to investigate ways in which people damage the environment through noise pollution and through litter. At age 11, pupils talk knowledgeably about areas studied and have good map skills. The work produced by their in-depth study of Chembakolli, a village in India is of a high standard. Pupils are thoughtful and perceptive in identifying similarities and differences between life in rural India and life in Wybunbury. They generate their own questions and gather information independently on different aspects, which they share with others. There are good links with the mathematics curriculum as they work out distances on flights from London to Delhi and around India.

97 No history lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that by the end of Year 2, the pupils are developing a good sense of the past through studying their own village. They are skilled in making comparisons and recognising change over time. They compare farms and farming methods today with those of 100 years ago. They chart the changes in Wybunbury Tower from today, to 100 and to 250 years ago. Almost all pupils have good knowledge of the Roman influence on Britain, and describe aspects of Roman life, from their customs and gods to their roads and soldiers. Pupils in Year 3 work in groups to investigate their own questions about childhood pursuits for rich and poor in Victorian times. Older pupils compare images of celebrities, such as The Beatles, from the 1960's with images of pop stars today. They are beginning to recognise ways in which images are presented, and know how they affect and reflect society. They collate information from photographs with evidence from oral history provided by people with first-hand experience of the 60's, to gain a wider view. By the end of Year 6, pupils have good appreciation of the impact of the railways on Victorian society. They use census data to find out about life in Wybunbury in 1891.

98 The quality of teaching is good overall. In both geography and history, half of the lessons seen were satisfactory and half were good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when teaching was sound. The curriculum is well planned, so that pupils learn skills and acquire knowledge successfully. Teachers use questions effectively so that pupils reflect and extend their own ideas. Teachers establish secure and supportive relationships, which encourage the pupils to give of their best. Pupils are confident and enthusiastic to learn. Group-work is usually carefully planned and pupils co-operate successfully. However, a few younger pupils in the juniors lose concentration when left to work independently for too long and the pace of learning slows. Occasionally lesson objectives are not focused enough to develop subject specific learning. For instance, when monitoring noise pollution, more emphasis was put on the mathematical skills of handling and presenting the data than on the implications of the research. Teachers set high standards and pupils respond by presenting their work extremely well. They are justifiably proud of their study books.

99 The curriculum is enhanced by interesting visits such as those to Chester and to Blist Hill Museum, which bring the subject to life. There are close links to literacy, when pupils prepare for debates, produce factual and imaginative writing, and read purposefully to carry out research. Opportunities to practise mathematical skills through data handling and presentation in graphs and through use of co-ordinates and time-lines are well organised. Pupils make good use of their information and communication technology skills to search the Internet and CD-ROMs for information.

100 Visitors such as a Hindu storyteller also make a valuable contribution. Ongoing geography work in following Barnaby Bear's holidays around the British Isles in Years 1 and 2, and in keeping up with What's In The News in Years 3 to 6, provide day to day interest and extend learning well.

101 The curriculum co-ordinator monitors standards of teaching and learning in class. She has initiated recent in-service training in geography, which has improved confidence and skills. Attainment is carefully assessed at the end of each study unit so that skills are built up systematically over time.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

102 At ages 7 and 11, pupils are working at the levels expected by the National Curriculum. This represents an improvement on the standards noted at the previous inspection, which were below average. This is a good achievement in view of the fact that the school has experienced considerable difficulties with the reliability of computers bought with money from national grants.

103 At age seven, pupils are familiar with the keyboard and mouse. They locate the software they need using computer menus and icons and enter their information confidently. They write reports, poetry and stories and higher attainers apply simple punctuation. They enter data and present this in the form of simple block and bar graphs. They create pictures using graphics programs. Pupils print and save their work independently. They learn to control the movement of a simple programmable toy. Computers are used to find information about pupil's study topics, using the Internet and CD-ROM, such as in their work on the Romans. In both Years 1 and 2, there is only one computer in each room and it is difficult for pupils to access the bank of computers. This means that pupils have limited opportunities to practise and apply the skills that they learn and this limits the progress that they make.

104 At age 11, pupils have good word processing skills, which they use to produce interesting work, often linked to their study work. They enter their data independently and convert it into a range of graphs but have only limited experience in working with spreadsheets. Pupils are familiar with the Internet and use it to gain information in many subjects, such as history. They use graphics programs to create pictures and insert illustrations into their writing, using a scanner. They co-operate well together to produce simple multimedia presentations, such as on Indian instruments, but have not yet added sound or video-clips. As well as controlling the movement of a robotic toy and moving an object about the screen, pupils have had limited experience of controlling other events through the computer, such as operating switches in models made using a construction kit. However, the program does not work with the new computers and the school is awaiting delivery of a new program that will enable better progress to be made in this area. Similarly, their use of electronic equipment to measure and collect data, is limited by a lack of programs, which are currently on order. They undertake extensive research work using CD-ROM and the Internet and the new bank of six computers provides very well for this work. Pupils are keen to further their work in the computer club and another club is working on developing the school's own website.

105 Although only one lesson was observed, other evidence indicates that that teaching is satisfactory, sometimes good, throughout the school. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve appropriately. There have been new resources and a new curriculum, since the previous inspection, which combined with sound teaching skills are providing for good progress in the upper juniors, where pupils are rapidly making up for lost time. Teachers have undertaken a programme of training to give them sound subject knowledge of the new curriculum. They use this to plan their lessons well and to provide good opportunities for pupils to apply their skills independently, such as in literacy and study work, but the narrow range of programs available for the new computers limits work in some subjects. Pupils enjoy the activities, are enthusiastic and work together productively.

106 The leadership of the subject is very good. Teachers are well supported and the quality of teaching and learning are regularly checked by observations of lessons and examination of pupils' work. This provides a clear view of strengths and how provision can be further improved. The school has had additional funding for national initiatives and spending has been effective in improving facilities and teacher expertise. The school has adopted the national guidelines for teaching the subject and these are now being implemented. A new system of assessment is being developed and some new programs are on order. Staff are undertaking a programme of training and, as their expertise improves and the range of resources is extended, standards are continuing to rise.

MUSIC

107 At ages 7 and 11, standards are in line with those expected nationally and have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6. At age 11, standards in singing are not as high as other aspects of the subject as a significant minority of pupils, notably boys, lack interest in joining in singing. This was evident in lessons and during assemblies. For the small minority of pupils involved in extra-curricular activities such as the choir, recorder club and peripatetic music tuition standards are higher and their ability to read musical notation is above the level expected.

108 By the age of seven, pupils have a repertoire of songs they enjoy singing and create group compositions. For example, they represent different types of weather, showing their understanding of how different effects are created by selecting and using appropriate instruments, such as drums and cymbals to represent a thunderstorm and chime bars and triangles for a starry night. They work together well in small groups with one pupil taking the lead during the performance. They demonstrate good understanding of how the combined musical elements of pitch, dynamics and tempo can be organised and used expressively within the structure of their compositions. Pupils name a range of instruments accurately and hold them correctly when performing their compositions. Listening skills are good; pupils sit

with their eyes closed and offer good suggestions as to what the composer is trying to portray. Their skills in evaluating their own work are not so well developed, but are improving through discussing their work with the teacher.

109 At age 11, pupils record their compositions using graphic notation and sing from their repertoire of songs with clear diction and in tune when accompanied. Their ability to sing unaccompanied is not as good as it should be. Pupils in the Year 4/5 class demonstrated this when a significant number could not sing nursery rhymes in tune. Choir members sing two-part songs tunefully, maintaining their part with an awareness of other performers. Opportunities to develop skills in singing are focused on certain times of the year, such as Christmas and Easter, and do not provide consistent practise. Pupils develop their listening skills further and explain their own ideas and feelings about music with confidence, although their knowledge of famous composers and their music is limited. For example, pupils in Year 6 could name Mozart and Beethoven as composers and the 'Nutcracker suite' as a famous piece of music but did not know who wrote it. They have good understanding of all the musical elements and combine them to communicate moods and ideas for example when Year 3 pupils created compositions depicting scenes from 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland'.

110 All lessons are taught by a subject specialist and contain a good balance of tasks that are effective in promoting pupils' skills in listening, composing and performing. The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good and promotes good progress. It is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 and the pace of learning is satisfactory. Pupils have better attitudes up to the age of nine and lessons proceed at a brisker pace, as pupils move to tasks and settle to work more quickly. All lessons are well prepared with the instruments positioned around the hall for ease of access. Pupils work in the same groups each time so no time is wasted in deciding who will work together. However, Year 4 and some Year 5 pupils took too long exploring the sounds made by instruments before working together on performing a nursery rhyme and this slowed their learning. There is little evidence of the use of information and communication technology being incorporated into lessons for pupils to explore how music is produced in different ways.

111 The previous report identified a weakness in the scheme of work that has been overcome. The co-ordinator is new to the role and is developing good teaching methods that have the potential to raise standards and achieve more positive responses from older boys. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development, but opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge about famous composers and their works are lost. For example, music is played as pupils enter the hall for assembly each day but is not referred to, or written up for pupils to focus on whilst waiting for the assembly to start. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop speaking and listening skills in lessons.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

112 A small number of lessons in dance, games, athletics and gymnastics were seen during the inspection. Judgements are based on the lessons seen, teachers' planning, pupils' records and discussions with teachers and pupils. Standards are in line with national expectations for pupils aged seven and eleven and have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in all aspects of the subject, although opportunities for outdoor and adventurous activities are limited to orienteering within the school grounds.

113 At age 7, pupils throw, catch and dribble balls showing satisfactory control and co-ordination and good use of the space available. They demonstrate sound physical agility when moving through hoops and travelling along apparatus using different levels and shapes as they do so. They put out the apparatus with good awareness of health and safety issues and of the need to work closely with others in moving benches and mats. They are beginning to play simple invasion games and understand the need for rules and fair play. Pupils observe others and copy what they have done in order to improve their own skills. Pupils are aware of the need to be active and describe how their bodies feel after warm up sessions and after physical exertion. A small number of pupils who show talent in sport are not sufficiently challenged in lessons and do not achieve their potential.

114 At age 11, virtually all pupils swim 25 metres unaided. They use different starting positions for running to decide which is most comfortable for them including which foot it is more natural for them to lead with. Their running shows good arm and leg actions. Jumping skills are satisfactory, they practise taking off and landing in order to improve. Pupils practise to try and improve upon their techniques and previous best performance in the Year 4 and 5 class but few showed an ability to sustain physical effort for the whole lesson in the Year 5 and 6 class. No gymnastics lessons were seen in the juniors. In dance, pupils create and perform class dances. For example, Year 3 worked well together in small groups and as a class to represent events in the story of 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland'. They developed good opening movements to represent a pack of cards falling away. Pupils are aware of the effects of exercise on their bodies and why wearing appropriate clothing and being hygienic is good for their health and safety.

115 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the school, with occasional good and very good lessons, where teachers are more secure in their subject knowledge and the teaching of basic skills is better. All lessons include appropriate 'warming up' and 'cooling down' activities. In good lessons, a wider range of activities is planned, for example in the Year 4 and 5 class where speed running, throwing, hurdling and baton passing were included and pupils improved their skills and techniques in all these aspects. All lessons are well prepared and pupils are managed

well, but, as at the time of the previous inspection, there is a lack of opportunities for pupils to evaluate their work in order to improve. A very good example of the benefits of this was seen in a very good gymnastics lesson in Year 1. Good use of demonstration and evaluation of their movements enabled all pupils to make good progress, as they improved the control and poise of their bodily movements using apparatus. There are insufficient resources available for all pupils to be involved in activities in throwing and catching and this hinders pupils' progress in developing these skills.

116 The subject is effectively managed. There has been some monitoring of teaching in gymnastics that identified areas for improvement and support has been given to overcome them. Pupils have some opportunities to participate in competitive and friendly sporting fixtures with other schools. These contribute well to pupils' social development. There are no opportunities for residential visits that include outdoor pursuits.