

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **DARESBUY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Daresbury

LEA area: Halton Borough Council

Unique reference number: 110994

Headteacher: Mrs C E Brown

Reporting inspector: Mr O L Thomas  
16041

Dates of inspection: 28 February – 1 March 2000

Inspection number: 190461

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Chester Road Daresbury Warrington
Postcode:	WA4 4AJ
Telephone number:	01925 740309
Fax number:	01925 740917
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr C Richards
Date of previous inspection:	5 November 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr O L Thomas	Registered inspector	Science Art Physical education Equal opportunities Special educational needs English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How well is the school led and managed?
Mr D W Jones	Lay inspector	Religious education	Attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils and students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Ms J B Johnson	Team inspector	English Geography History	How high are standards? How well are pupils and students taught?
Mr G Jones	Team inspector	Mathematics Information technology Design and technology Music	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Daresbury Primary School is located on the outskirts of the village of Daresbury and is much smaller than most primary schools. There are 97 boys and girls on roll. The number of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and with English as an additional language is very low. The 11 per cent of pupils on the register for special educational needs and the very small number eligible for free school meals are below the national average. There are two pupils with a statement of special educational need and this number as a percentage is above the national average. Most pupils have attended some form of pre-school facility prior to entry to the reception class and their attainment is broadly average.

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

Daresbury Primary School offers an overall effective education for its pupils within a friendly, family atmosphere. The quality of teaching is mainly good and the school is well led by the Headteacher. Pupils make good progress towards attaining expected standards by the time they leave the school. Their performance in national tests over time has been good. Given its above average costs, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- Pupils perform well in the national tests by the ages of seven and 11. This generally good performance is mirrored over the last three years.
- Teaching is good overall, especially in the important areas of literacy and numeracy and this supports pupils' learning well. The teaching of reading is a real strength.
- The pupils' attitudes to school are excellent and their behaviour and personal development are very good making them ready and willing learners.
- The school meets its aims of 'catering for individual needs' within the mixed age and ability classes very well; this is evident not least in the provision made for pupils with special educational needs, which is very good.
- The school supports pupils extremely well in their moral and social development, which contributes significantly to their preparation for adult life.
- The level of pastoral care shown to all pupils is striking.
- The vast majority of parents have a very positive view of the school and many travel some distance from other places.

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

- The standards pupils attain in information technology.
- There is scope to improve further the pupils' abilities in writing.
- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is not rigorous or regular enough.
- That the recording, analysis and use of the comprehensive range of assessments kept have a greater impact on planning and target setting.

*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 November 1996 and overall improvement has been good. Since that time a number of improvements are evident, not least that the pupils' performance in test results has improved. The quality of teaching has been raised to good overall. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour have moved forward considerably and are now a strength of the school. Improvements are also evident in the curriculum for history and geography and the school's provision for pupils' personal development. The parents' still have very positive views of the school.

In relation to the issues identified by the previous inspection report, schemes of work have been developed in some subjects although to be fair these have been superseded by national initiatives. The school's assessment procedures are now good although there is a need to improve these further to have a greater impact on planning and subsequently target setting to raise pupils' achievements.

The administrative accommodation has improved although other weaknesses in accommodation, particularly the limited size of the hall and two classrooms, still prevail. Two significant areas, which have not improved sufficiently well, are standards in information technology and aspects of English, notably in writing which were identified by the previous report.

The school's capacity to succeed further is good given the commitment and expertise of the Headteacher and staff.

## **STANDARDS**

The usual table reporting National Curriculum tests for the previous year is not relevant as there were fewer than ten pupils who took the national tests and the average point scores derived from the test results bear no statistical validity against either national comparisons or similar schools. However, it is fair to report to parents that all pupils taking the national tests in 1999 scored at the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the age of seven. Almost all attained at the expected Level 4 by the age of 11 in English, mathematics and science. This generally good performance is mirrored over the last three years.

The inspection finds that most, but not all, pupils by the age of 11 (current Year 6) are attaining at the expected Level 4 in English, mathematics and science. There is little evidence of any pupil attaining at the higher Level 5 in writing although a small number look to be on target to do well in reading, mathematics and science. These findings do make the school's targets for this year look somewhat optimistic. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that this is also the case for other year groups.

In information technology, pupils do not attain as expected by the end of either key stage. They do not learn about, develop skills systematically or use the subject regularly enough. There is insufficient evidence to make overall judgements in all of the other subjects; however, some things can be said when scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils are taken into account. In religious education, pupils mainly have a satisfactory knowledge but there is scope for improvement in understanding. In history, geography and art pupils achieve as generally as expected by the age of 11. No judgements can be made about standards in design and technology, music and physical education as lessons were not seen, but it is fair to suggest that the very limited hall accommodation must restrict pupils' achievements in physical education.

Overall pupils achieve well given their broadly average attainment on entry. The effective teaching enables them to make mainly good gains in their learning over time.

### PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent attitudes. Most are enthusiastic and show a genuine interest in their activities and lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils show an unusually high level of self-discipline. They are well aware of the expectations upon them to behave sensibly and cooperatively.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils show a strong sense of care for each other and are given ample opportunities to exercise responsibility.
Attendance	Very good levels of attendance. The Headteacher is vigilant in reminding parents of their responsibilities to ensure regular attendance.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

One hundred per cent of teaching was satisfactory or better. Thirty per cent of teaching was very good. Teaching quality has improved since the last inspection. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is mainly good but there is scope, as the school has recognised for itself, to improve aspects of writing. Main strengths of teaching include: the teachers' knowledge of the subjects, the planning of lessons, their management of the pupils in mixed age and ability classes, their expectations for pupils to listen and to settle to work, and their day to day assessments of what pupils are learning.

Areas for improvement in teaching include knowledge and use of information technology, the marking of work and the time given to and use of plenary sessions.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good, an interesting range of activities which follow national requirements and suggested Programmes of Study, and are presented creatively. The delivery of information technology does not meet requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Support by teaching and non-teaching staff is of high quality. The special educational needs coordinator has limited time to fulfil the role.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Improved since the last inspection. Spiritual and cultural are good, moral and social are very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pastoral care is very strong. This is a significant strength of the school. <b>The valuable assessments are not efficiently gathered together to allow staff ease of use and transfer of information for planning.</b>

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the Headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. Teamwork is well established and staff are clear about their responsibilities. National strategies for literacy and numeracy have been well managed and implemented. Coordinators' roles have yet to be fully developed to establish effective delegation.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory overall. Governors are active in their partnership with the Headteacher and staff and are working with them to improve the school. They have had a particular impact on improving the accommodation. Statutory responsibilities are not met for the delivery of information technology.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall. A broad range of assessments is kept to monitor performance. Not enough attention is given to the level of work pupils' produce when target setting for improvement. Although recently planned for, the monitoring of teaching and learning is not sufficiently rigorous.
The strategic use of resources	Staffing, accommodation and resources are overall satisfactory with some weaknesses in the accommodation to deliver the curriculum. The school uses its resources well. Governors are beginning to apply the principles of best value.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The standards of work achieved.</li> <li>• The progress that their child is making.</li> <li>• That the child/ren like school.</li> <li>• The quality of the pupils' behaviour which they believe is good.</li> <li>• The quality of teaching.</li> <li>• That the staff are approachable.</li> <li>• That their child/ren work hard at school.</li> <li>• That the school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• That the school helps their child to mature.</li> <li>• The strong family atmosphere.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information about how their child is getting on at school.</li> <li>• The range of extracurricular activities.</li> <li>• The school's liaison with parents.</li> <li>• The way the school is led and managed.</li> <li>• The behaviour of pupils.</li> </ul>

N.B. It is not within the remit of the inspection to take up individual complaints from parents. The areas for improvement were those highlighted by at least ten per cent of parents.

The inspection agrees with the positive points raised by parents; although there is place to raise standards further in information technology and aspects of writing.

In relation to the areas that parents would like to see improved, the inspection finds that:

- The school provides plentiful opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress. There is some scope for reports to parents to give more detail about how children can improve.
- The range of extracurricular activities is good for the size of the school.
- Inspection evidence suggests that the school makes every effort to work with parents and there was clear evidence during the inspection of teachers being receptive to parents at the start and end of the school day.
- The quality of leadership and management by the Headteacher and key staff is good.
- The behaviour of pupils is a strength of the school both in lessons and at break sessions.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The pupils' performance in the National Curriculum tests is not reported as usual, as fewer than ten pupils were tested and the results bear no statistical validity against either national comparisons or similar schools. However, it is fair to report to parents that all pupils taking the national tests scored at the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the age of seven. Almost all attained at the expected Level 4 by the age of 11 in English, mathematics and science. This generally good performance is mirrored over the last three years.
2. The school complies with the requirements to set targets for pupils at the end of the key stage. These targets are based on careful analysis of the pupils' performance in a range of nationally recognised standardised tests. Much time and thought is given to the process and from it targets are set for both individuals and groups of pupils. However, there is a weakness in the school's projections because they place too much emphasis on test information and take too little account of the actual work produced by pupils in order to determine true potential and likelihood of achievement.
3. The inspection findings based on lesson observation, discussions with pupils and in depth scrutiny of their current work reveal that most, but not all, pupils by the age of 11 (current Year 6) are attaining at the expected Level 4 in English, mathematics and science. There is little evidence of any pupil attaining at the higher Level 5 in writing although a small number look to be on target to do well in reading, mathematics and science. These findings do make the school's targets for this year look somewhat optimistic. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that this is also the case for other year groups.
4. In English, pupils mainly speak clearly by the ages of seven and 11. A minority are very articulate and can give lucid views on, for example, the type of books they prefer to read and why. Listening skills are good and well supported by pupils' very good behaviour and enthusiasm for their learning. Standards in reading are good by the time the pupils leave the school. By the age of seven, young pupils have a broad knowledge of common words which they read by sight and of letter blends to help them with new words. They do not readily transfer this knowledge though to spelling. The oldest pupils read well. Their skills in using books to locate information are good and they have a solid understanding of strategies and cues to help them research, for example, they know how to use the Dewey system to find reference books, can describe how a CD-ROM works to locate information and all know how index, contents and glossary support their learning. Pupils' skills in writing are adequately developed but there has been insufficient progress in this aspect since the last inspection. Weaknesses were previously identified in spelling, punctuation and handwriting. Whilst pupils attain adequately in writing none attain above. Handwriting is adequate by the age of seven but few pupils have even begun to be aware of using a joined script. The impact of this is on spelling and fluency and speed of recording ideas, which restricts pupils from attaining at the higher Level 3. These issues were raised in 1996 by the inspection and although no longer below average, standards are still not high enough. By the age of 11, pupils write for a range of purposes, and standards for most, but not all, are at the expected levels. There has been considerable progress in pupils' writing abilities since the start of the academic year in Years 5 and 6. The teacher is working hard to improve pupils' abilities to raise their own performance through critical reading, editing and scrupulous marking which gets to the heart of what needs to be improved.

5. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in using and applying their mathematical understanding and standards by the ages of seven and 11. Pupils' mental skills are at least satisfactory and for a minority above. By the age of seven, pupils understand how to add and subtract numbers to 20 and can count in twos, fives and tens. Pupils in Year 6 have a good command of all four operations and are able to carry out long multiplication and division with success. They understand negative numbers and see the link between fractions, decimals and percentages.

6. In science, most seven and 11 year olds attain as expected nationally in their knowledge and understanding of the natural world and scientific phenomena. The oldest pupils understand and use fair testing procedures when investigating; most of them are capable of setting up their own lines of enquiry to prove or disprove their hypotheses.

7. In information technology, pupils do not attain as expected by the end of either key stage. By seven, they have an adequate grasp of using word processing to record their ideas but insufficient access to improve their basic skills. By 11, they have too little working knowledge of using computers to handle and interrogate data or control and modelling procedures. The standards have declined since the last inspection but it is fair to say that the subject now assumes a higher profile than before and the requirements are broadening as technology moves forward.

8. In history, geography and art, pupils achieve as generally expected by the ages of seven and 11. This is an improvement in geography as standards were below average. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of people and places, now and then, has improved but there is still room for further improvement in their skills in mapping, chronological knowledge of events in the past and in organising and communicating their work. This links to the weakness in writing mentioned earlier. No judgements can be made about standards in design and technology, music and physical education as lessons were not seen, but it is fair to make the following comments. The very limited hall accommodation restricts pupils' achievements in physical education, particularly in higher level gymnastics. The school employs a well-qualified music specialist to teach the subject weekly and planning shows suitable coverage of the elements. The provision is the same as at the last inspection and there is no reason to doubt that the high standards noted then still pertain. The limited amount of work seen in design and technology suggests pupils have sound making skills and a suitable knowledge of food technology but there is limited evidence of systematic design and evaluation skills or the use of control technology.

9. Pupils of all abilities, including special educational needs, achieve well because the teachers plan carefully for the range of ages and abilities within the classes. Given their broadly average attainment on entry. The effective teaching enables them to make mainly good gains in their learning over time.

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

10. The school has made significant progress in the development of this aspect since the last inspection. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are excellent, their behaviour and personal development are very good.

11. In the lessons seen across the key stages pupils were well behaved, eager learners who listen to the views of others and share their work. During an art lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2 they were printing using polystyrene pads. They were eager to be involved, they enjoyed sharing their work and they concentrated and persevered to do well. In an English lesson for Year 6 the pupils were engaged in shared reading. The pupils were very involved in

the story, they responded well to questions and listened to comments by the class teacher and other pupils. The pupils are eager participants in all aspects of school life including extracurricular activities. They express an eager enthusiasm for school, which is reflected in the parents' response, "the pupils love school".

12. The pupils' behaviour is very good being positively affected by the very good quality of relationships, which exist between teaching staff and the pupils. They respond well to the stimulation and challenge of their lessons and this is reflected in their conduct and responses. Despite the cramped nature of their accommodation, which does not support the learning environment, the pupils treat the building and equipment with respect.

13. The pupils are lively, confident and enjoy their school environment where they feel safe and secure and where relationships are trusting and supportive. They do not recognise bullying as a feature of their school life. They are aware of how to respond to such behaviour and will not tolerate it should it occur. During lessons and about the school they demonstrate consideration for the views and feelings of others and are sharing and cooperative in their activities. Older pupils have responsibilities, which include looking after younger pupils and assisting new entrants to settle into school. A group of senior pupils have volunteered to initiate ideas for road safety, which are presented to the whole school. The pupils are introduced to a range of other cultures and religious beliefs and enjoy gaining insight into how other people live. Many pupils display a strong sense of maturity and responsibility in their school life.

14. Those pupils who are under five years share their learning with pupils in Year 1. They have settled well into school and they are active, eager learners with good speaking and listening skills. They readily participate during lessons and respond well to the stimulating teaching. Their self-control is good and they know to put up their hand and wait their turn. They are happy to discuss and share their work with visitors.

15. The school maintains good levels of attendance which, overall, are above 95 per cent. Most pupils enjoy school, as both they and their parents claim, and this enthusiasm to attend supports their learning well. There is no significant level of unauthorised absence.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

16. The overall quality of teaching is good with instances of very good teaching within both key stages. The impact of the teaching enables pupils to achieve well in their learning given their broadly average attainment on entry. In 100 per cent of lessons teaching was judged to be satisfactory or better. About one third of lessons showed very good teaching, mainly in the reception class and for the oldest pupils in the school. Teaching quality has improved since the last inspection. A notable point of improvement identified previously is the quality of teachers' on going assessments of what pupils know, understand and can do, which enables them to plan more carefully for the diverse needs within the classes. All teachers have very good relationships with their pupils, without discrimination and there is an excellent sense of care for them. This secures equal access for pupils of all ages and abilities.

17. In the early year's class, the teacher has excellent understanding and secure knowledge of how young children learn and of their needs. Consequently, the children feel secure and rapidly gain confidence in their personal and social skills. They are actively involved in daily routines and are required to tidy away their own resources, which supports their organisational skills and use of initiative. For example, being encouraged to select their own equipment before settling down to their work. Putting 'Teddy's' into the correct number sets supports their ability to develop independence and make choices. In all areas of their

learning the children are well motivated by the lively, creative approach of the teacher. The teacher's skilful questioning when reading the story of 'Billy the Duck' directly improves the children's knowledge about punctuation and extends the children's thinking about how to read, focusing on expression and fluency. The children's intellectual capacity is challenged when the teacher sets up investigations about how beans grow. The children can trace the forecasted route of the growing plant towards the light, prompting them to understand that light is an important factor in plant growth. The teacher makes mainly good use of the highly skilled support staff, particularly in meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs successfully. There is scope to make better use of them during shared discussion sessions in literacy and numeracy when the introduction is sometimes too long for these young children to concentrate and the teacher wants to develop more complex skills with the older pupils in the class.

18. The quality of teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is good overall, with some very good teaching in mathematics and history in Key Stage 1, and English and science in Key Stage 2. A significant feature of teaching which impacts most directly on pupils' learning is the very good planning, which precedes the effective management of groups so that work is well matched to pupils' needs in these mixed age and ability classes. An interesting and creative introduction prompts the pupils to watch, listen and become active participants in sharing what they have learned about the past when the teacher takes on the role of a 'granny' long ago in history in the reception and Year 1 class. In Years 1 and 2 practical activity is used well to enable pupils to learn estimation skills in mathematics followed by discussion focusing on vocabulary such as 'more than' and 'less than'. The teachers have high expectations for pupils to listen and there is very good use of subject vocabulary for example in Year 3 and 4 when the pupils reinforce their learning about the differences between an index, contents page and glossary. These expectations support the productivity of the pupils' learning and the pace of the lesson. In Years 5 and 6 the pupils are taught valuable lessons about work ethic and the teacher challenges them to think for themselves, consider their work and not to waste any time; thus heightening the output, depth and quality of what is produced.

19. The teaching of literacy and numeracy are good overall and most striking in the upper juniors. The teaching of reading is a real strength of the school and pupils quickly learn to make sense of text and many learn to read well and enjoy sharing and retelling stories. Lessons are well structured and planning follows the recommended guidance with sufficient flexibility to cater for the range of age and need in the classes. There is scope in all classes to make more of plenary sessions in all subjects to check on what pupils understand they have learned, clear up misconceptions and identify targets for improvement in learning. On occasion the plenary session is not given sufficient time and is rushed, diminishing this valuable aspect of the lesson to reinforce and consolidate learning. Scrutiny of work reveals that there is some inconsistency in the teachers' expectations for handwriting and presentation, including their own, and also that marking of work is not always helping pupils to improve their own performance or correct errors. The quality of marking in the Year 5 and 6 class is first rate and puts an onus on pupils to reconsider their work, edit and improve it. This high quality marking regularly praises pupils but never fails to point out to them when productivity is not good enough or depth and quality lacking.

20. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs, particularly those who have a statement of need, is good. The individual educational plans profile the pupils' needs very well and targets address the pupils' specific learning accurately. The teachers fine-tune work to support and reinforce particular weaknesses and to challenge the higher attaining pupils. The work of the support staff is well planned and focused to aid progress.

21. Overall, the quality of teaching supports pupils' learning well and the teachers in this school are very receptive to considering how they can improve their performance to support the pupils.

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

22. The school provides a good curriculum for the children who are under the age of five. It is planned to the recommendations of the Desirable Learning Outcomes and provides the children with a smooth transition to the National Curriculum at age five.

23. The curriculum for the remainder of the pupils in the school is broad as it includes French, but does not meet statutory requirements in that its provision for information technology is unsatisfactory. It provides sound coverage of work in religious education, which is directly related to the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

24. The school provides well for the pupils' personal, social and health education, although it has not yet completed arrangements for covering work in drugs' misuse. It does touch on the subject in its work in science, but the school is waiting now to use the expertise of a new adviser in order to complete its arrangements for this work. Although some members of staff have attended a course on "Circle Time", where pupils sit in a circle and discuss personal and social issues, this is not seen very much in evidence in the school. In spite of this, teachers provide good role models for their pupils and are at pains to discuss any issues relating to their personal and social development.

25. The school has agreed not to teach sex education as a separate subject. It uses aspects of the science curriculum, where growth and reproduction are discussed within appropriate topics. In the final year, the school often makes use of the school nurse to discuss particular issues with both boys and girls, then with them separately.

26. Good and effective strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy, in line with the national guidance for those subjects, are evident in practice. All teachers are confident when working with the material and their planning is completely in line with recommendations. The work is proving effective with aspects of numeracy, especially number work, showing signs of improvement.

27. The good quality planning in many subjects provides all ability groups of pupils with tasks, which challenge them. The added difficulty of having two and in some cases three different age groups within the class has been well considered and the school provides relevant work for all pupils through its two-year programme of planned work. Planning for information technology is unsatisfactory and, as a result, reduces the overall effectiveness of the planned curriculum.

28. The provision of work and support for the pupils who have special educational needs is very good. Those pupils who require regular and specific support receive this well from the class support adults. Wherever possible, class teachers not only meet the challenge of different age groups within their class, but also provide effective support for the special needs pupils and higher attaining pupils. Some of the youngest and most able pupils in Years 3 and 4 change classes for their mathematics lessons, in order to work with older pupils, thus raising their own levels of performance.

29. The school, although in quite an isolated position, tries hard to involve the community in its work, and itself in the community. It is currently developing stronger links with the local

church, with the vicar coming in to the school regularly and the school making more use of the church for its more important celebrations. The school invites the local community to share in its work with an "Open Day" in the autumn, in which many members of the community, including older former pupils, can come and look at the work of the school. The pupils also raise money for both national and local charities, such as the National Children's Homes and a local hospice.

30. The Headteacher works well to keep good relationships with schools in the area, in spite of the very recent reorganisation, which has placed some strains on relationships as a number of schools are now in different authorities. The local parent/toddler group meets in the school and the Headteacher is chair of a local playgroup, thus cementing good relationships with possible new pupils to the school and providing pupils with a confident start to their time at Daresbury.

31. The school has good links with Chester College and during the course of a year, several students, training to become teachers, will visit the school. This not only benefits the students, but also keeps teachers up to date with current thinking in training and has a positive effect on their own work with pupils.

32. The school provides well for pupils' extracurricular activities. It offers pupils in all year groups the opportunity to visit places of interest. The Key Stage 2 classes visit the museum at Widnes, while the younger pupils visit the museum at Warrington in connection with their history and geography topics, offering them good opportunities for first hand study of material and information. An annual visit from a theatre group does much to bring to life work in literacy through experiencing plays and readings. In this respect, visits and visitors have a positive effect on the progress pupils make in their learning in associated subjects.

33. The school's programme for extracurricular activity makes a significant contribution to their learning. A good number of clubs are offered to the pupils, to the extent that well over half of the pupils can be involved during the course of a week, due to the time given freely by all teachers. These include after school clubs for example, book club, art club, gardening, music and a number of sporting activities including rounders, netball, football and keep fit. Whilst most of the activities are directed towards the pupils in Key Stage 2, parents at the initial parents' meeting spoke positively about the activities offered. Some of these clubs are run with the assistance of parent helpers. Educational visits take place as part of topic work, for example; pupils from Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 have visited the Catalyst Museum at Widnes; pupils from Years 2 and 3 visited Walton Park as part of their topic work for science and art.

34. The school makes good provision overall to cultivate pupils' personal development. This is an improvement from the previous report findings, which recorded these aspects as satisfactory.

35. The development of pupils' spiritual values is good, being achieved through the curriculum in art, science, history and geography. In science, pupils from Years 1 and 2 have studied forces and movement and in Years 3 and 4 have made paintings following the style of Matisse. Their spiritual development is supported through acts of collective worship, which follows a two-year cycle of Christian themes presented in stories relevant to their daily lives. Each class leads an assembly during the school term. Acts of worship are in accordance with statutory requirements. The importance of the family is emphasised through services held in the village church to which parents and the community are invited. The pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong which is apparent in their very good behaviour. They have collaborated in the formulation of classroom rules for behaviour and they are involved in agreeing home/school contracts. The school's success in developing pupils' moral value is

evident among the older pupils as they accept responsibility and carry out tasks on their own initiative. The school takes pupils on a number of visits to outside venues, which requires them to demonstrate moral values and to integrate socially within the community. These visits occur within the local community and wider afield such as residential visits.

36. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. Within school the pupils are cooperative and supportive with one another and courteous yet confident with adults. Older pupils take particular responsibility for younger pupils and a group has volunteered to present road safety initiatives in which the whole school participates.

37. The pupils are offered opportunities to study a broad range of cultures both their own and others and this provision is good overall. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have studied the history of Ancient Egypt. In Years 5 and 6 the pupils have studied World War II and looked at a day in the life of children around the world. Class 1 pupils have visited the local museum at Warrington for a history topic.

38. The youngest pupils who are under five years share their learning with pupils from Year 1. These young pupils show very good levels of development. During a religious education lesson they listened to the story of the boy who cried 'Wolf'. When offering their thoughts on his behaviour, they reveal their growing understanding for right and wrong behaviour. Their sense of awe and wonder can be seen in their response to the growing of bean shoots and sunflower seeds in their classroom. They behave well in the classroom and about the school and are seen to be sharing with each other and cooperative in lessons.

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

39. The school is successful in providing a learning environment where pupils are safe and secure in spite of some weaknesses in the accommodation. The high quality of pastoral relationship enables staff to support pupils' educational and personal development. The quality and use of formal monitoring and assessment are satisfactory. The school maintains good levels of attendance. Records of attendance are completed to a high standard and provide for easy visual check of patterns of attendance. The school is active in seeking parental support for consistent prompt attendance. The school has a first day contact system for non-attendance. The Deputy Headteacher is the nominated child protection officer and the school's procedures for child protection are very good. Although not all staff have attended in service training for child protection, their high level of pastoral knowledge ensures the delivery of strong support. The high standard of pupils' behaviour is testimony to the school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. Bullying is not an issue for pupils who are secure and positive of support should it occur.

40. The youngest pupils are well supported by the school's provision for health and safety. This includes the support of older pupils who also look after their interests. No area for separate play is available for pupils who are under five years.

41. The school has good and effective arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. This indicates a very positive move forward since the last inspection.

42. Procedures for assessing pupils on entry to the school are carried out very effectively with a "Baseline" assessment. A battery of 30 tests, taken over a period of time, gives the school a good understanding of the abilities of its new children. The information gained from these tests is revised during the course of the first terms at school, resulting in a useful document entitled "All about me", being completed and shared with parents.

43. Within the reception class, clear records are kept, which relate to the recommended Desirable Outcomes of Learning; these show the progress children make in their first terms at the school and their readiness to move to work in the National Curriculum.

44. The school then makes regular use of tests during the time the pupils are at the school, in order to track their progress in aspects of English, mathematics and science. This information includes details of national assessments, tests put forward by the local authority and other nationally acceptable tests. What is missing, is information from lessons to support the judgements made about pupils' progress. Whilst these are noted at the end of both key stages, because the school does not have accurate, moderated examples of pupils' work levelled against the standards noted in the National Curriculum, they are only looking at how pupils perform in tests.

45. The school is endeavouring to use the material it collects in order to inform its planning of work for its pupils. Currently, however, the results of tests are not presented clearly enough to show at a glance, the progress individual pupils are making. The school is setting targets for individuals and groups of pupils in order to extend potential and involve pupils in their own targets. However, they are often based solely upon the test information and take too little account of the actual work produced by pupils.

46. The school recognises the need to monitor and support pupils in their personal development and build on the good records it collects when the pupils first join the school. It involves them in their learning through discussion and through target setting and provides activities within lessons to promote personal development. In a science lesson at Year 6, pupils were totally involved in their learning and were not only explaining the outcomes of their experiments, but were discussing further experiments which would take their own learning further. This happened through good focused teaching, which gave the pupils good opportunities for personal development. This links well with pupils' own involvement in "Reflections Day" and in their "ladders of achievement".

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

47. The school receives a high level of parental support and approval for its procedures to inform and involve parents. This aspect has been sustained as a strength of the school since the last inspection. However, some parents express dissatisfaction with the quality of information and opportunities to be involved. The level of personal contact between teachers and the parents is very good. Parents have access at the start and end of the school day and each Wednesday afternoon from 3.15pm - 3.45pm is an open period for parents to drop in and discuss their child's progress. During the year, three formal evenings are held, for discussions on the pupils' progress. A good level of information is provided through the school's newsletters. The school actively seeks the support of parents and a number assist in the classroom and with extracurricular activities. A group of parents have been involved in assisting in the formulation of school policies. The home/school contract and home/school diary have helped to focus the parents' role in the pupils' learning. These links which the school has with parents have a good effect on the pupils' learning.

48. The school makes good provision to integrate young pupils into reception with parental support. A parent and toddler group is held in the school hall each Tuesday afternoon. Parents are welcomed into school at the start and end of the school day.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The overall quality of leadership and management by the Headteacher and key staff is good. The day to day management of the school is well supported by the secretary who deals extremely effectively, in limited time, with school administration. The previous report paid tribute to the clear aims and vision of the then, recently appointed Headteacher. These attributes have since become shared and agreed to by staff and governors and have been instrumental in promoting the quality of learning, equality of opportunity for all pupils, standards of attainment and the pupils' personal development. The school has made good progress since the last inspection on these areas. The vast majority of parents are positive and supportive to the values, which the school promotes.

50. The effective leadership by the Headteacher provides clear educational direction for the school. She has worked hard to establish a team spirit and a corporate approach to learning. The school development plan is an agreed five year outline of the school's intent. Year 1 is specified in some detail, with quantifiable targets. It is appropriately focused on curriculum, standards and the pupils' personal development and welfare. Progress in meeting targets is variable and in some areas, such as English, and also monitoring by management, work has not been rigorous enough since the last inspection. Staff and governors through a programme of systematic review are actively involved in the process of identifying and meeting priorities.

51. The school's budget is extremely tight and finances are managed very well to meet priorities. For example, all four classes are taught by full time class teachers to support continuity in pupils' education and there is now a more equitable distribution of support staff, who support pupils' learning very well and which was criticised by the last inspection. As with all small schools unit costs are high. Given its staffing, accommodation, resources, the levels of attainment and the progress made by the pupils the school continues to give satisfactory value for money.

52. The Headteacher and teaching and non-teaching staff work well as a team and have a strong, shared commitment to the pupils. Individual members are clear about their responsibilities and fulfil them well. National strategies for literacy and numeracy have been well managed and implemented. Shortcomings in the previous report in the other subjects such as geography and religious education have been addressed and the recently appointed coordinator for these subjects has a very clear vision of how to develop the subject further and has already begun to make a positive impact through policy formulation.

53. The process of monitoring teaching and learning is at an early stage, too general and overall is not satisfactory to fully identify where improvements are needed. Coordinators have begun to review the planning in their subjects and the Headteacher is gaining an insight into how the literacy and numeracy are being taught by working alongside teachers. However, there is no clear focus for monitoring and evaluations and areas for improvements are not shared or formalised sufficiently well to impact on achievement. Future targets, outlined in the school development plan, aim to involve coordinators in gaining first hand knowledge of the delivery of their subject within classrooms and in the use of information gained to consolidate strengths and overcome weaknesses. An area requiring greater attention in the immediate future is a more rigorous approach by the Headteacher to the monitoring of classroom practice and to the scrutiny of teachers' evaluations of pupils' work. There are no targets for teachers to help them improve their own or pupils' performance and this is not satisfactory.

54. The governing body takes an active role in holding the school to account through a

well-structured committee framework. Through regular visits and participation in training sessions they are able to be informed of the day to day life of the school and gain an insight into the challenges facing staff.

55. The governing body meets its statutory obligations except for the delivery of information technology. They have complied well with target setting for improved performance. Governors are beginning to apply the principles of best value within their financial planning. Test results and assessments are used to set targets for pupils and baseline assessments are being used to measure added value. However, there is an imbalance between the use of test results and actual pupils' work when setting targets. There is scope for the recording of assessments to be more manageable and for the process to support target setting and tracking of pupils more effectively.

56. The governors have worked particularly hard to improve the accommodation. Administrative accommodation has been improved. With the support of parents the school has purchased two 'temporary' classrooms and these are of reasonable quality and size for the older pupils. However, weaknesses in the accommodation still prevail. The hall is not a suitable space for the safe delivery of physical education and is overcrowded with equipment and furniture. It also houses the school library. The two indoor classrooms are small for the ages and needs of the pupils in Key Stage 1. The classroom for children under five is not nearly large enough to cater for the full range of their learning needs, particularly physical. There is no access to a safe, secure outside play area where children can use large toys and equipment to develop their gross motor skills. Inside this classroom there is no suitable space for wet and dry activity or to construct large play equipment or use 'messy' materials for creative work. The toilet facilities are situated too far away from all classrooms particularly for the youngest children. In the other Key Stage 1 classroom space is cramped and leaves very limited opportunity for practical activity, a quiet reading area or creative play space to further develop the language of these still relatively young pupils.

57. Working together as a team, the Headteacher, governors and staff are well placed to take the school further forward.

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

The governors, Headteacher and staff should include the following matters in their post-inspection action:

### **Raise standards in information technology by:**

- ensuring that the full National Curriculum Programmes of Study are systematically developed and taught;
- reviewing the time allocated for the direct teaching of subject skills and pupils' access to computers;
- including specifically in planning the subjects how information technology will be used;
- improving the teachers' confidence and competence to teach the subject.

*Reference to the above weaknesses can be found in paragraph numbers: 7, 23, 27, 102 and 112*

### **Raise standards even further in writing by:**

- identifying more clearly the specific weaknesses in pupils' work;
- reviewing the allocation of teaching time to handwriting and spelling skills to aid fluency and speed in recording ideas;
- ensuring pupils transfer the skills which they have been well taught in literacy to all subjects;
- extending opportunities for pupils to write independently and creatively;
- developing pupils' abilities to self check their work for improvements;
- sharing the very good practice which already exists in the school.

*Reference to the above weaknesses can be found in paragraph numbers: 4, 67 and 70*

### **Improve the regularity and focus of monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure that:**

- there is an agreed programme of formalised monitoring by the Headteacher and key coordinators;
- the focus and criteria are specific to improving quality in teaching and learning;
- the information gained is used to set performance targets;
- the success of the targets is regularly evaluated and reported to governors.

*Reference to the above weaknesses can be found in paragraph numbers: 50, 53 and 74.*

### **Improve the recording, analysis and use of the comprehensive range of assessments kept to ensure that:**

- the valuable information which has been gained is presented in a more manageable form so that staff can quickly access knowledge of pupils' overall progress in order to plan;
- that before targets are set all available information is used to diagnose specific future learning needs;
- there is greater consistency in marking of work and target setting to make clear to pupils what is good and what needs to get better.
- the information is used to provide a broader picture for parents of how their children can improve.

*Reference to the above weaknesses can be found in paragraph numbers: 44, 45, 46, 47, 55 and 71*

Reference to other minor weaknesses the governors will want to address can be found in paragraph numbers: 56 and 71

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	22
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	9

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	30	43	27	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)		97
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		11

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

#### 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	15

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.0
National comparative data	5.7

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	9	7	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	16	16	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 ( 100 )	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	16	16	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	6	2	8

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	5	6
	Girls	2	2	2
	Total	7	7	8
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (86)	88 (79)	100 (86)
	National	70 (65)	68 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	4	5	4
	Girls	2	2	2
	Total	6	7	6
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (79)	88 (64)	75 (86)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	1
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	98
Any other minority ethnic group	

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

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

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

*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)	5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.4
Average class size	24.25

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

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	59.75

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999
	£
Total income	183,055
Total expenditure	174,984
Expenditure per pupil	1,881
Balance brought forward from previous year	6,343
Balance carried forward to next year	14,414

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	97
Number of questionnaires returned	60

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	32	2	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	45	0	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	43	0	3	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	52	38	8	0	2
The teaching is good.	63	32	2	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	45	13	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	27	3	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	33	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	47	37	13	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	55	35	2	7	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	37	2	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	35	15	2	3

## **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**

58. The school's admission policy requires parents to enrol their children in the September of the school year of their fifth birthday. At the time of the inspection nine out of 23 of the children in Class 1 were under the age of five.

59. The provision for the youngest pupils overall is good and provides a secure and positive start to their school careers, although the classroom space is too small and there is no adjacent outside area. This weakness in the accommodation restricts the children's physical development and causes the teacher considerable frustration in planning a broad and balanced curriculum.

60. The teaching overall is good. The teacher has an excellent knowledge and understanding of how young children learn and of their needs. She provides an appropriate range of practical experiences to support learning. Children are encouraged to be independent and responsible. On going assessments are accurate and are clearly informing planning for groups and individuals. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. The teacher provides a warm, secure and caring environment. Parents appreciate the open door policy of being able to share in their children's learning and in the progress being made, which is very good since they started school and means that most are well on the way to reaching the standards expected before they are five. A weakness is that sufficient reference is not made to the Desirable Learning Outcomes in planning. A recognised baseline assessment scheme is effectively used and information gained from this assessment is used well to plan suitable work for the children and it also confirms that most pupils are of average attainment on entry.

61. Provision for children's personal and social development is very good and attributed to the very good teaching quality of this aspect. The children work and play together well. They have formed very good relationships both with their teacher, the classroom assistant and with each other. The 'Buddy' system of being paired with a 'friend' in Class 4 works very well and supports the school's aims of creating a friendly, family atmosphere. They have limited opportunity for free play within the classroom, but nevertheless they cooperate well in the confined space and share equipment well. The children are displaying independence in selecting materials and growing in confidence to talk aloud in front of others when answering questions and offering ideas in group discussions.

62. The teaching of literacy is good and well focused on effective questioning at a suitable level for these young children. The timetable is organised to provide a well-balanced programme of activities so that the children have both quiet and active sessions. They speak confidently and communicate well. They are beginning to listen to stories for longer periods and are developing their abilities to concentrate. However, some find the length of time they sit and listen during shared text sessions in the literacy hour overwhelming. Quite a few display tiredness and some distraction after a short time. The children enjoy reciting rhymes, which they do well. When listening to the story of 'Billy the Duck' they show that they can recognise initial letters and some key words such as 'I', 'my' and 'the'. A few remember punctuation points such as exclamation marks. Most can write their names with some letters correctly oriented although most are still erratic in size. They mainly hold pencils correctly. Most children know how to hold and handle a book, turning the pages from left to right. The children are well on target to achieve as expected in this aspect of their learning.

63. In mathematics, the children are well on target to achieve in line with recommended Desirable Learning Outcomes by the age of five because of the good teaching. Some children are already working within the National Curriculum. They can use numbers to count objects correctly, for example, in representing numbers by selecting and counting the correct number of 'Teddies'. They are able to sequence random numbers correctly when faced with a number line extending to ten and above making it evident that they can count in sequence and identify numbers in different contexts. Scrutiny of their work shows that they can follow a pattern, match numerals to objects, and draw lines from words such as circle to the correct shape.

64. The children have a good knowledge and understanding of the world around them, which is evident when they talk about the wide range of activities provided for them. They know about growing things, including themselves, plants and baby animals. They improve their observational skills in looking at leaves and plants closely, identifying shapes and colours. A shoe box set up to show the stem of a plant will seek out light provides them with awe and wonder as they worked out the path it would take. The children are familiar with using a mouse to control images on screen and also can use the arrow keys. They help each other with directions and give advice freely on how to achieve success. During a lesson about the past they handle artefacts that might have been used in a kitchen long ago and the classroom display skilfully set up enables them to reinforce their learning through the week. Most make good guesses about probable usage. Many can say what their families use at home. The children can find their way around the classroom, and they also know their way to the secretary's office and the hall. Where teaching was observed, it was very good and stimulated the children to listen well and share their knowledge.

65. As described in the previous report the children's physical and creative activities are undertaken with the pupils in Year 1. Planned opportunities cover all aspects of the learning and are based on developing skills through practical activity. These are no longer linked in respect of free expression as described in the previous report. Play activities are limited within the teachers' planning because of the demands of the literacy and numeracy teaching which causes the teacher concern in catering for the broader needs of these young children. The children make good progress in their learning in exploring colour, texture, shape and form in a wide variety of ways. Through art, music, stories and imaginative play they show an increasing ability to use their imaginations, to listen and to observe. The small amount of teaching seen was good and supported pupils well in meeting the expected targets for these aspects of the Desirable Learning Outcomes.

## **ENGLISH**

66. Most pupils, aged seven and 11, attained at the nationally expected levels of 2 and 4 respectively in 1999 end of key stage tests. No national or similar school comparisons are made as the test results must be treated with caution as less than ten pupils took the tests; this figure gives rise to concerns about the statistical validity of any comparisons. Nevertheless, the proportions attaining the expected level shows an improvement in standards since the last inspection report.

67. The inspection finds that most, but not all, Year 6 pupils are on target to attain the expected Level 4 in English, but there is little evidence of any pupil attaining at the higher Level 5 in writing although a number look to be on target to do well in reading. Standards in speaking are average overall with a minority of pupils who are above average, and listening skills are generally better than nationally found. These findings do make the school's targets for this year look somewhat optimistic and are confirmed by in depth scrutiny of pupils' work. There are weaknesses in the pupils' skills in writing which were identified at the time of the previous inspection and which, although now adequate, are still not high enough.

68. Pupils mainly speak clearly by the ages of seven and 11. A minority of seven year olds are very articulate and can give lucid views on, for example, the type of books they prefer to read and why. The oldest pupils are able to explain with some detail the information they have gained when researching the life of penguins; one Year 6 pupil says, *'I was amazed to find that a penguin can recognise the call of its own baby even in a crowd of thousands of penguins'*. They use subject-linked vocabulary with ease such as *'We have been looking for similarities and differences between human and animal babies'*. Their listening skills are good and well supported by pupils' very good behaviour and enthusiasm for their learning. By the age of seven, pupils can listen carefully enough for concentrated periods to answer specific questions about 'Granny's Island'. They are able to use a good range of words to describe how 'granny dresses' and what type of character she is, for example, 'scruffy', 'disgusting', 'dirty' and 'jealous'. By the age of 11, pupils have begun to listen critically, drawing information from the discussions to fulfil their tasks. They listen well to both the teacher and each other and a few have developed the higher skill of waiting their turn to interject to make a point.

69. Standards in reading are good by the time the pupils leave the school. By the age of seven, young pupils have a broad knowledge of common words which they read by sight and of letter blends to help them with new words. They do not readily transfer this knowledge though to their spelling. They read together to share a class story and use a range of cues to help them with unknown or difficult words, for example, looking at the picture, initial letters and a few scan ahead to help them. They are able, in discussion, to pull out the main points of a story and make sensible predictions about what might happen next. The oldest pupils read well, their skills in using books to locate information are good. Most have a solid understanding of strategies and cues to help them research, for example, they know how to use the Dewey system to find reference books, can describe how a CD ROM works to locate information and all know how index, contents and glossary support their learning. Dictionaries are not used regularly enough to help pupils find out for themselves the meaning of unknown words. Pupils have ample opportunities to read together in literacy sessions, to themselves in quiet reading time, they take books home to read and many parents support their children in reading with them. The school also stimulates pupils' interest in reading through book fairs, book weeks and the older pupils complete book reviews to express preferences. More attention could be given in some classrooms to creating more attractive book corners to show new books and favourite ones to entice the pupils to sit and read voluntarily.

70. Standards and skills in writing are broadly in line with national expectations by the ages of seven and 11 but there has been insufficient progress in this aspect since the last inspection. Weaknesses were previously identified in spelling, punctuation and handwriting. Whilst pupils attain adequately in writing none attain above. Pupils by the age of seven can write personal accounts in their diaries and are beginning to use capital letters and full stops, but most rely on conjunctions. The higher attainers attempt the use of speech marks. Pupils of all abilities are able to re-tell at varying depths the story of the 'The Turtle who danced with the Crane'. They can write lists and label the parts of a spacesuit when studying Neil Armstrong in history. Handwriting is adequate by the age of seven but few pupils have even begun to be aware of using a joined script. The impact of this is on spelling and fluency and speed of recording ideas, which restricts pupils from attaining at the higher Level 3. These issues were raised in 1996 by the inspection and although no longer below average standards are still not high enough. By the age of 11, pupils write for a range of purposes and standards for most but not all are at the expected levels. Pupils can write a synopsis of 'The Wind in the Willows', which gives the main points of the plot but spelling and punctuation are weak. They can retell stories such as Great Expectations by Charles Dickens, and Hamlet by William Shakespeare. The most able use describing words and similes to frame the basis of a poem, for example, 'as still as an Egyptian mummy' and most are also able to write initial drafts before presenting a final copy to draw

comparisons between Christmas in Daresbury in the past and now. Pupils are encouraged to use their literacy skills in the other subjects to read, find out and record what they know. However, at times particularly in history, geography and religious education, too much guidance on how to organise and present the work is given or worksheets are used to fill in and this restricts pupils in using their own imaginations and in learning how to set out work for themselves. The teacher in Year 5 and 6 is working hard to improve pupils' abilities to raise their own performance, particularly in extended and imaginative writing. Too often the pupils' early attempts fail to grip the reader and pupils do not readily engage in critical reading and editing to make their work better. There is some but limited evidence of pupils' writing from the perspective of others or of persuasive writing. There has been considerable progress in pupils' writing abilities since the start of the academic year in Years 5 and 6.

71. The quality of teaching in the lessons seen is good overall and the teaching of reading is a real strength. It is good in Key Stage 1 and mainly very good in Key Stage 2. The teachers' subject knowledge is secure but most notable in Class 1 and Class 4. All teachers have clear objectives for lessons and they make these known to the pupils, which is a strong feature in pupils' understanding of what they are doing. The planning follows closely the structure of the literacy hour but teachers do adapt sessions to develop teaching points more carefully or to devote more time to certain aspects where needed. The school's approach to teaching literacy is overall effective. Technical points, subject vocabulary and phonics are given good attention. The teachers' expectations of pupils to pay attention are very high and this is well conveyed and consistent through the school. The marking of work is not however. Whilst all staff are conscientious in marking work and praising effort, this is not enough to aid improvement, and there is insufficient critical comment. Marking in the Year 5 and 6 class is first rate, because it requires pupils to interact with the marker's comments and take action to remedy weaknesses. The teacher's comments place demands on pupils to challenge their own ideas, improve vocabulary, structure and presentation of work to suit the purpose and audience. Pupils themselves say that they know they have *'got much better in this class at writing because they have to think harder about what they write'*. This scrupulous marking gets to the heart of what needs to be improved. In some classes the plenary sessions need to be given more attention as at times they are rushed and this diminishes the opportunity to consolidate pupils' learning and assess progress and understanding.

72. Together with the good teaching the pupils' positive attitudes and enthusiasm for their learning support their achievements very well. In Key Stage 1, the reception class teacher improves the pupils' knowledge and understanding of using prediction through effective questioning and prompting them to look for clues and, by identifying punctuation and its importance in fluency when reading 'Billy the Duck' during shared text work. The pupils contributed what they knew from previous learning, offered ideas about what might happen and furthered their phonological awareness of how to read words with double letters. The teacher's creative approach in this class stimulated pupils to write their own letters to 'the bear in the attic' and reinforced their abilities to write for a purpose. By the age of seven, the pace of the teaching enables pupils to make sound progress in using their phonic knowledge to sound out words, and tap out syllables. Direct teaching about describing words, prompts the pupils to search for adjectives in the text. The teacher presents a good role model for handwriting when using the blackboard, which supports pupils in shaping letters correctly. But this is confined to printing and joins are not introduced even for the higher attainers. Pupils concentrate carefully on what the teacher has to say. Pupils can easily describe what it is they have to remember when working. In this class the teacher's lively reading of 'Katie Morag and the two Grandmothers' encourages pupils to improve their own expression when reading.

73. In Key Stage 2, pupils in Years 3 and 4 make good progress in understanding about conjunctions because of the teacher's careful explanations and emphasis on reading work to make sense. Reading skills of locating information are supported very well when this teacher questions very thoroughly the pupils' knowledge of where we would look for types of information and strong emphasis is placed on technical vocabulary such as, 'contents' and 'index pages', 'headlines', 'title' and scanning text. When working on task to mark conjunctions in newspaper articles the pupils concentrate hard, share ideas and work very well independently. In Years 5 and 6 the teacher's quiet, calm but firm style leaves the pupils in no doubt that the expectation is for attention and involvement thus ensuring that the learning moves at a good pace with no time wasted. Texts are used which stimulate the pupils' interests, excellent questioning extends their thinking and triggers them to recall previous learning. The activities are well matched to pupils' needs including those with special educational needs and support pupils in being successful. The teacher's questioning, the broad range of activities and regular intervention to check on progress ensure that the learning is productive. By the end of the lesson, pupils have gained a much better understanding of the need to respond in sentences, reading aloud fluently and the ability to distinguish between factual and narrative writing.

74. The delivery of English meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The subject and particularly the implementation of the literacy hour have been effectively managed. Although teachers share pupils' work informally, formal monitoring of both teaching and learning has not taken place to identify the most effective practice and to set targets for areas where improvements could be made. The library has recently been reorganised and is being improved. This is necessary to provide pupils with a broader range of reading matter at a range of levels. The Year 6 teacher is released to make use of the "Booster" funding to raise standards prior to taking the national tests. There is a broad range of tests and systems of assessment for reading and spelling on a regular basis. However, when setting targets the outcomes of the tests take priority over the pupils' work. Not enough importance is given to the teacher's on going assessments of what pupils know, understand and can do, or of moderating levels against the National Curriculum descriptors in judging the projected level pupils will reach.

## **MATHEMATICS**

75. Almost all pupils attained at the expected Level 4 or above in the 1999 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6. No national or similar school comparisons are made as the test results must be treated with caution as the number of pupils taking the tests was below ten, which gives rise to concerns about their statistical validity. Nevertheless, the proportions attaining the expected level shows an improvement in standards since the last inspection report. The current inspection evidence shows that the majority of the pupils in Year 6 are on course to achieve the national target of Level 4, whilst a significant minority of pupils would achieve at the higher level. As the total number of pupils in this group is small, the pupils with special educational needs in the group will undoubtedly have a significant effect on the overall results, which should not detract from the overall sound standards achieved.

76. At Key Stage 1, the National Curriculum assessments showed that every pupil achieved the expected Level 2 or higher. The percentage achieving the higher Level 3 score was equally very high. The same caution about validity applies to results at both key stages. Evidence from the current inspection shows that the vast majority of the pupils are working at a level in line with national expectations. By the time these pupils take their National Curriculum assessments, a significant minority of the small group may well be working at a level higher than this.

77. Throughout the school, pupils are making satisfactory progress in using and applying their mathematical understanding. They meet, through their core books, a number of good opportunities to investigate number problems. Although these opportunities are good, they are

rather too directed by the commercial schemes in use and do not give pupils, especially older ones, enough opportunities to follow “real” investigations driven by their own interests.

78. The successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has had a positive effect on standards in pupils’ work in number. Not only do they enjoy the interest and excitement of the oral and mental work; seen at the start of numeracy lessons, but they are making good progress in this aspect of learning. The youngest pupils can order numbers to ten and sometimes beyond. They recognise all the written numerals and when numbers are jumbled, they can sort them accurately. Pupils in Year 6 have a good command of all four operations and are able to carry out long multiplication and division with success. They understand negative numbers and see the link between fractions, decimals and percentages.

79. In work on shape space and measure the oldest pupils have made sound progress through the school, so that they can measure the perimeter of shapes accurately and can calculate the areas of both regular and irregular two-dimensional shapes. They can measure angles with accuracy and understand that there are different types of triangles.

80. The progress in work on data handling is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 6 can understand train timetables and when they are given imaginary information presented on graphs; they can take off the information they need in order to answer questions. They are able to construct their own graphs, but rarely use information technology to help them in this work. They have sound knowledge of using tally sheets and understand such terms as mode and median.

81. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support during their work in mathematics. Class teachers make good use of adult support in their classes. The work of the Headteacher in supporting pupils with lower ability during lessons is having a positive effect on their progress.

82. Sound links are made throughout the school between numeracy and other subjects. These are mainly noted in science, design and technology and history. Following an investigation on friction, older pupils produce a chart showing how “vehicles” move across different surfaces. They also chart the absorbency rate of different materials, showing good links to their work in data handling. Most classes have a “time-line” appropriate to the period in history they are studying, whilst in design and technology, accurate measuring is noted when pupils design and make Christmas cards and calendars. The links with information technology are patchy across the school. Lower ability children in reception were working well with an adult on number work, while pupils in Years 3 and 4 were practising their tables using a new CD-ROM. However, this work is quite new and pupils are not seen regularly enough using this type of technology to support their learning, especially in such areas as data handling and graph work.

83. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory, with a third of the lessons good or very good. The good and very good lessons were confined to the classes of the oldest and youngest pupils. The teaching here had a very positive effect on standards. The teachers plan well and their lessons give a balance between the teaching of basic skills and providing suitable opportunities for pupils to discuss and respond to quite challenging questions. In a lesson with the youngest pupils, the good use of a number line, together with the use of a white board to gather their thoughts and answers gave a good structure to pupils’ learning and helped them make good progress. In the lesson seen in Year 6, the teacher consistently uses correct mathematical vocabulary, such as symmetrical, axis and reflective, and has high expectations of pupils to do the same. Pupils live up to this expectation and make good progress. The work in this class, is clearly set to suit the various ability and ages within the class. This is an extremely demanding task as there are pupils in the class from three different age groups. However, the

tasks are demanding, and as a result, the pupils all make good progress in their learning.

84. Because work through the school is usually well targeted to the various ability groups of pupils, they are well motivated and their behaviour is good and often very good in numeracy lessons. The pupils react well to the oral and mental work at the start of lessons and continue this positive response as a result of the good relationships established with their teachers and their peers. The control and management by the teachers are good and seldom very obvious. As a result, the maximum part of lesson time is utilised for work, with little if any time lost through pupils being off-task. This in itself has a significant effect on the progress, which the pupils make in their lessons.

85. There has been improvement both in the teaching of mathematics and in pupils' attainment since the previous inspection particularly at Key Stage 1. Throughout the school, planning for the numeracy hour work is consistently good, and ensures that pupils move through the work systematically, thus helping their progress. Good use is made of "Booster" classes in order to raise standards prior to taking the national assessments. There is a good system of assessment of pupils' ability as judged by the results of regular tests. Currently these results are not being placed alongside assessments of class work to get a better overall picture of pupils' progress. The quite recently appointed coordinator for mathematics is enthusiastic and knowledgeable. She has helped organise a group of parents who work hard producing resources specific to the needs of the school's work in mathematics. Whilst she has had opportunities to check her colleagues' planning, she has not yet had opportunities to monitor the teaching of numeracy across the school. This would have highlighted one or two deficiencies in the teaching. This is noted mainly in the lack of use of the final part of the numeracy lessons for reinforcing the learning, together with the lack of consistency across the school in asking pupils to explain their thinking and their strategies when responding to questions. A further minor issue, which is not helping pupils to make progress, is the inconsistency in the marking of work in mathematics. Although all work is marked, it does not regularly enough point to where and how pupils could make progress in their work. It often stops at the point of telling pupils what is right and wrong.

## **SCIENCE**

86. All pupils attained at the expected Level 4 or above in the 1999 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6. The trend over the last three years has been constant, with pupils attaining above the national average, but the caution mentioned earlier about the size of the cohort applies. Boys slightly outperform the girls.

87. The inspection evidence shows that the majority of the current Year 6 pupils are on course to achieve the national target of Level 4 by the end of the key stage. There are only a small number who are capable of higher attainment.

88. The results of teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 show that the pupils' attainment was above the national average at the expected Level 2. Currently the majority of Year 2 pupils are attaining in line with the national average with a significant minority likely to achieve above the national expectation by the end of the key stage.

89. Pupils in Year 6 understand and use fair testing procedures well, for instance when investigating what happens when water is poured over different materials. They are able to put forward ideas, make simple predictions, carry out relevant observations and measure quantities accurately although their ability and tendency to use information technology is not a common feature of the process. Through scrutiny of work and discussion with pupils, it is evident that they have a working knowledge and understanding of the structure and function of the different

parts of a plant, and the human body; materials and their properties and physical phenomena such as electricity. Detailed assessment tasks confirmed their good knowledge and understanding of "Forces". Pupils in Year 2 with help, conduct investigations, involving both natural and physical scientific phenomena within a well-structured programme of topics. For example, in investigating the movement of different objects in terms of speed and direction, pupils are beginning to generalise about and explain that both pushes and pulls are examples of forces and that either can make things speed up, slow down, change direction or even stop.

90. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls; pupils of all ages and abilities, including those with special educational needs, have equal access to work, which is appropriate and challenging.

91. The quality of teaching is good overall with instances of very good teaching within both key stages. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and understanding of the investigative process. This is evident in the pupils' understanding and use of scientific enquiry methods. Teachers have a creative approach to the delivery of topics which highly motivates the pupils who are eager to be involved in the activities and at times overwhelmed by what they are experiencing. For example, when the youngest children witness the growth of Sunflowers from their tiny seeds and older pupils recall their investigations into light sources. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their work supporting the pupils to gain a good deal of independence and responsibility for their own actions, although scrutiny of work shows that a more rigorous 'sharing' by the teachers of the pupils' written work is needed to establish and maintain a clearer expectation of an acceptable level of presentation and handwriting. Planning is detailed and covers all aspects of the subjects' requirements. Lessons are generally well prepared and effectively resourced. Introductions are often lively and stimulating, which has a positive effect on the pupils' attitudes and concentration. Teachers encourage the pupils to develop a feel for fair testing procedures, and to take responsibility for their own line of enquiry from an early age. They systematically encourage pupils to predict and hypothesise before they conduct their investigations, which strengthens their subsequent learning. Lessons generally have good pace, and time is given for pupils to reflect on what is happening before having to determine their findings. This gives the pupils good opportunity to use their speaking and listening skills to express their ideas and to argue and debate their reasoning. Plenary sessions are used effectively, particularly in upper Key Stage 2, where effective questioning extended the pupils' thinking, and findings from different pupils were used to make specific teaching points. The good quality teaching causes pupils of all ages and abilities to make good gains and on many occasions very good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of natural and physical scientific phenomena and how to carry out fair tests to prove or disprove their hypotheses.

92. Both the quality of teaching and the pupils' attainment have improved since the last inspection. The delivery of the subject has been the focus of a review and subsequent development since the last report. The policy statement and scheme of work has been influenced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Agency documentation and are supportive of the good practice. The subject has been efficiently managed. Good use has been made of external advice and support in establishing a more cohesive approach to the subject and in trialling a system of monitoring pupils' progress and teaching quality, both of which have had a positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning. The recent reorganisation of responsibilities has given the newly appointed coordinator little time to gain an insight into the delivery of the subject throughout the school. However, she has monitored colleagues planning, reviewed resources and is scheduled to attend in-service training in the near future. Accommodation and resources are well used, although the lack of space in the Key Stage 1 classrooms and lack of a water supply in the Key Stage 2 classrooms does make it difficult for teachers to organise practical activities. Good use is made of the local environment, visits and

visitors to extend the range of experiences offered to the pupils. All teachers use homework effectively and parents express delight in being able to be involved in the process. The subject makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' personal development. The delivery of the subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.

## **ART**

93. Only one lesson was observed at Key Stage 1. During the inspection, past work, displays and teachers' planning were scrutinised and discussions held with the coordinator and pupils. This evidence makes it possible to give a view that the standards of work seen are as generally expected for pupils of primary school age, with some high quality work, particularly printing, being achieved within both key stages.

94. In the lesson observed, Year 2 pupils listened attentively during a detailed introduction on printing using polystyrene pads and rollers. They concentrated well and persevered in developing their skills when producing their own prints. Most have good eye and hand coordination which enables them to complete the task successfully and to produce the desired effect. The quality of teaching was satisfactory, with specific skills being taught effectively. However, more could have been gained if the pupils had been allowed more freedom to experiment and been encouraged to develop their initial designs further. The limited space in the classroom had an adverse effect on the pupils' progress during the lesson despite the best endeavours of the class teacher and adult helper. Only a small number could complete the task at any one time.

95. Since the previous inspection a subject coordinator has been appointed and a well-informed policy statement and scheme of work have been successfully introduced. This has provided the teachers with an effective set of guidelines, which has resulted in a more systematic, skills based approach being made by teachers throughout the school. The coordinator has also been able to influence the nature of the subject through the running of an art club after school, which is well attended by pupils of all ages and well supported by a good number of parents.

96. There are examples of pupils of all ages and abilities investigating the use of materials and producing artwork using a range of techniques, including working in the style of famous artists. For example, young children using blocks of strong colours in the style of Matisse, older infant pupils using colour, line and texture in a variety of ways and comparing the work to that of Lowry. Lower junior pupils have developed their line drawings in representations of Egyptian death masks, whilst older pupils have exhibited their acquired skills in the use of chalks and crayons through their designs based on ethnic art from Africa.

97. Resources are adequate for the delivery of the subject, the school has a kiln which currently is not in use due to the alterations being carried out to the building. There is a serious storage problem throughout the school which makes it difficult for teachers to put the right onus on pupils to resource their own learning and to teach them the correct techniques of "clearing away" at the end of an activity.

98. Overall, there has been satisfactory progress made in the delivery of the subject since the previous report.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

99. It was not possible to observe any lessons of design and technology during the course of the inspection. However, through discussion with pupils, the subject coordinator and the scrutiny of completed work it is possible to make judgements about some areas of the work and say that making skills are as usually found by the ages of seven and 11. Other elements, including design and evaluation are improving but limited.

100. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have access to a good range of construction apparatus, allowing them to experiment with different ways of linking pieces together and of designing while making objects such as toy vehicles and houses. There is some evidence of pupils in this key stage using drawings to convey designs for such things as snowmen cards, calendars and pot pourris. The pupils select from a range of materials, which usually include a good deal of recycled materials. They use scissors to shape their work and join items with glue and tape. There is, however, little evidence of pupils making evaluations of their work, either as it progresses or after its completion. No evidence was seen of prepared evaluation sheets, in which pupils might only have needed to grade their work for suitability, finish, strength and match to the original design with number scores or smiley faces.

101. Pupils at Key Stage 2 now spend more time on the planning and design aspect of their work. They are now faced with designing items for specific purposes such as farm tools for an Indian farmer or an Anderson shelter linked with their work on World War Two. Pupils, in discussion, point to a lack of choice of materials for some of the work they complete. They also speak quite strongly about the lack of regular opportunities to complete work in food technology. Whilst organisation of this is difficult, the lack of regular opportunities to complete work in this area of technology does mean that skills are difficult to build on and improve.

102. There appear to be few links made with information technology. Little use is made of the possibility of using information technology to design or to control aspects of their models, or of using word processing for writing out evaluations of their work. Opportunities are missed for allowing pupils to disassemble commercially produced products in order that they might see how they are constructed, then use the knowledge in their own designs. When making Christmas bags, instead of taking apart bags to see how they are constructed through the use of nets, bags were purchased for them to act as their starting point. As a result of the above information, the standard of work in this key stage is not likely to match the quality expected of pupils of this age.

103. Whilst the work is below the level expected and shows a slight decline since the previous report, it is rather more the fault of the curriculum in place than of the quality of the teaching. The recent introduction of the national guidelines for the subject is beginning to have a positive effect on the work. The Headteacher is aware of the need to support the introduction of the new scheme with a clear plan of the development of skills throughout the school, so that these are developed systematically.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

104. No geography was observed during the inspection. Scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with them show that the low standards found at the time of the last inspection have improved and now pupils are attaining as generally expected by the age of 11 with a few gaps in their knowledge and understanding. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of people, places and themes have increased but there is still room for further improvement in their skills in mapping, understanding of themes which affect our lives and environment, such as pollution

and its causes, and in organising and communicating their work for themselves. This links to the weakness in writing mentioned earlier. The recently appointed coordinator has a clear view of the subject's development. A suitable policy statement has been written and the school plans to introduce the recommended national scheme of work. Teachers' planning suggests coverage and pupils' work confirms this.

105. Examples of work seen show pupils in Years R and 1 have developed their knowledge, skills and understanding of the world near and far when they have studied their own village of Daresbury. They can name buildings around them including the school, the farm and the church. They know about animals, which live in hot and cold places, such as rainforests and Antarctica. Simple mapping skills have been introduced using literacy big books to find the way to a character's home. In Class 2, pupils by the age of seven are being introduced to simple maps and plans including, those of their school and classroom; they are encouraged to extract information from the plan and answer questions about it. The amount of recorded work in this class is limited and there is too much use of worksheets, which fails to challenge all groups of pupils to use their literacy skills effectively.

106. In Key Stage 2, pupils have begun to extend their sense of place and they can locate countries on a map such as India, which has been the focus of their study. They can compare village life in India with that in a city and then compare it with their own. Pupils know about the weather, lifestyle and food of the country. This work has been well linked with that in religious education in the study of Hindu gods. There is evidence in this Year 3 and 4 class that pupils have used their mathematical skills to support their learning in geography when drawing line graphs to measure temperature in a study of climate in Bombay. Pupils develop further their knowledge of life in other countries when studying Kenya in Years 5 and 6. They match land features and learn the correct geographical vocabulary to describe them. They begin their studies with brainstorming activities, 'What do I know about Africa and what do I want to find out?' This is helpful to assessment at the end of the task. Pupils can name the constituent countries of the continents and describe Kenya's resources and physical features. Again the work is linked well with mathematics when pupils work out the cost of a holiday to Kenya.

107. Teachers' planning is sound and shows evidence of the breadth of the curriculum. However, discussion with pupils reveals that their knowledge of extended mapping skills is not as broad as expected and there is plenty of scope for them to deepen their understanding of themes beyond the weather. There has been steady progress since the last inspection but as the coordinator, who is very effective in her role, is aware there is scope for further improvement to raise standards even higher.

## **HISTORY**

108. Only one lesson was observed at Key Stage 1 but other evidence enables the judgement to be made that overall pupils have a suitable knowledge and understanding about life in the past both in this country and in ancient civilisations by the time they leave the school. The last report suggested that standards in history were satisfactory overall with shortcomings. It stated that the pupils' study lacked depth, there was no scheme of work, teachers lacked confidence in the subject and there was an over reliance on the use of worksheets. The situation has improved but could still get better.

109. In the lesson seen in Years R and 1 pupils show that they know that family life has changed over time. In their studies about life now and in their great grandmother's time they have learned the name of artefacts used, for example, 'carpet beater,' 'flask,' 'stone hot water bottle' and 'flat iron'. They use words such as 'olden days', 'new' and 'long ago' with understanding. The teaching in the lesson motivates the pupils so well that they are stimulated

to listen and learn although the very youngest find the length of time sitting too much. The teacher sets the scene of travelling back in time very well and dresses up as a 'Grandmother' in bonnet and shawl with her basket of kitchen equipment. Effective questioning, 'What are we learning about?' prompts the responses 'long ago' and 'history'. The classroom displays have been very well constructed to support the learning with a broad range of artefacts and large visual aids. Pupils make very good progress in identifying objects from the past and making justifiable suggestions for their use. The activity acts as a useful assessment task to find out who has recalled what. The teaching is very good.

110. Scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with them show that they have a sound knowledge of life in the past. In Years 3 and 4 they are studying life in Ancient Egypt. Pupils are encouraged by the teacher to use their literacy skills well to find specific information using index, contents and glossary pages. They ask the questions 'What is an archaeologist? What is an artefact?' and 'What do objects which have survived over time tell us about life in Ancient Egypt?' They use their reading and writing skills to find the answers. They know about the landscape of Egypt and have used their geography skills to locate it on a map. They know about the class structure at the time of the Pharaohs, which gives them an insight, into how important the Pharaoh was. Although not all of the time there is still some overuse of worksheets when pupils have the literacy skills to record and organise their own ideas. By Year 6, pupils know about William Shakespeare, when he lived, who was monarch then and they know something about the plots of his plays. This work is a very good example of how links can be made with literacy and skills used effectively. Pupils are currently studying World War II. They can locate the main countries involved on a map of Europe and know about the detail and tribulations of life then. When asked, pupils are not entirely secure in their knowledge of chronology and which period of history comes before and after another.

111. The coordinator effectively manages the subject and as with geography plans to introduce the nationally recommended schemes of work for the subject. Resources have improved and the school makes good use of visits, for example to the Catalyst Museum.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

112. The information technology curriculum fails to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 2 and is weak at Key Stage 1.

113. Although this was a key issue in the last report, the deterioration in standards since the last inspection is rather more the culmination of the school not being able to keep pace with developments, having problems with the installation of new hardware and a lack of teacher knowledge and expertise.

114. The school has made progress in its work in the communication strand of the National Curriculum, but has made little progress in the use of information technology in data handling, control, modelling and monitoring.

115. Pupils in Key Stage 1 were noted on several occasions using the class computer for numeracy and literacy work. Those individuals at work showed sound understanding of the various elements of the keyboard and were confident and competent with the use of the mouse. In Class 2, pupils were seen learning how to move text through use of a "drag and drop" technique, while others were seen using the mouse to guide themselves over a route from home to school to support their work in geography. Pupils in Class 1 were using the computer to help with their tables and number bonds. To do this they had to use the mouse and keyboard to click and move around the screen, selecting the numbers or icons they required. Planning evidence shows that previously they had access to a programmable toy, in order to begin to experiment

with sending instructions for movement through the use of information technology.

116. At Key Stage 2, whilst the pupils maintain their keyboard skills for use with writing programs, their knowledge and understanding of other aspects of information technology are unsatisfactory. An interview with three pupils from Year 6, scrutiny of class displays and a discussion with the subject co-ordinator confirm this. There is only little evidence of the use of information technology for drawing or creating graphs, although some pupils did make use of this facility in their work on Victorians. Whilst pupils could remember using the programmable toy, they have not had the opportunity to give instructions to an on-screen icon in order to draw shapes and create movement. Plans for Year 6 show that they will be using a data handling program in the near future but have currently little knowledge of how this works. The pupils have made some use of CD-ROM in their work. Older pupils have searched for information on Kenya, the Victorian era, wildlife and the human body, while younger pupils have found some information about India. The older pupils have begun to experiment with the use of graphics, which some are able to add to their text work. The pupils know very little about the use of modelling programs, which allow them to pretend they are in Pharaoh's Tomb or walking through a rainforest. Equally, they have no knowledge of how computers might be used to sense temperature, light or sound, giving them not only measurements of heat and light but also the ability to use the information directly to draw graphs. Not enough use is made of art or music programs, which could enliven and assist the work in these two subjects.

117. No class or group teaching was observed during the inspection, therefore an overall judgement on the quality of teaching cannot be made. Where individual teachers, class support adults or in one instance a grandmother was observed, the quality of the interaction with the pupils was good. Adults did not try to do everything for the pupils, but did give them good opportunities to experiment and learn by their mistakes. This was equally so for pupils with special educational needs. However, the general level of confidence noted amongst the teaching staff was not high and teachers did not find it easy to incorporate information technology into their regular work, especially for the more difficult areas of control, modelling and monitoring.

118. Where individual pupils were seen at work, they showed good and sometimes very good attitudes to the work. They listened carefully to advice, as noted in Class 2 as a grandmother explained the process of "dragging and dropping" text. Pupils then try hard to follow instructions carefully, concentrating on the task and behaving well at their computers. Many have computers at home and have already amassed some good individual pieces of knowledge and understanding, which they are not always able to put into practice at school.

119. Each class in the school has its own computer and the school has only recently been connected to the Internet and has more recently had its computers 'networked' to a printer. These will support learning well, once all members of the teaching team have mastered them. The recently distributed national scheme of work for information technology has given the school a better idea of how to put into effect work in the weak areas of its information technology curriculum. The scheme itself is not intended to provide the school with a clear structure of building up skills, knowledge and understanding, which is also currently missing in its own planning. The school is aware that the speedy implementation of the scheme of work, alongside a clearly defined picture of how pupils will gather skills, knowledge and understanding, are vital to the future success of the subject and its compliance with the requirements of the National Curriculum.

## **MUSIC**

120. During the inspection it was not possible to observe any lessons in music, as these are all taught on Wednesday afternoon, by a specialist teacher who visits the school for this sole purpose. It is, therefore not possible, to make judgements on either the quality of the teaching of music or the standards achieved by the pupils, although there is no reason to doubt that the high standards noted at the last inspection still pertain. Following an interview with some pupils from Year 6 and a close examination of the planning for music, it is possible to make some comments about the subject.

121. The fact that all the music is taken by a specialist teacher gives not only consistency to the teaching, but also consistency in the planning of the experiences encountered by the pupils. The planning for music is of a high quality. It is planned with close reference to the seven musical elements of pitch, duration, dynamics, tempo, timbre, texture and structure. These are developed in a systematic way through the time the pupils are at the school. Where possible this work is linked to other curricular themes such as "Materials" or "Growth", and is planned over a two-year "rolling" programme to take account of the mixed age classes.

122. Examples of daily lesson plans show that the pupils have good experiences of exploring instruments and accompanying songs with instruments. The pupils in Year 1 accompany their own singing on untuned percussion for "Five little ducks", while pupils in Year 6 sing "Coconut woman" to their own tuned and untuned accompaniment. All pupils have opportunities to compose, with younger pupils composing using dynamics, with older pupils composing a round. All classes listen to music from a variety of sources and genres. Year 2 pupils listen to "The carnival of the animals" and try to identify the animals through the music. In Year 3 and 4, they listen to "The sailors' hornpipe", identifying its rhythmic features. Pupils perform regularly in front of their own classes, but also have opportunities at Christmas and in the summer of taking part in whole-school performances such as "Oliver", "Joseph" and "Alice".

123. Opportunities are given for pupils to learn musical instruments. Recorder tuition is available freely to pupils, while others study piano and flute by paying for lessons from visiting professionals.

124. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their music and show an understanding of all elements of the National Curriculum programme. They look forward to their music afternoon and enjoy their music making.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

125. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection and these along with the teachers' planning, discussion with the coordinator, teachers and pupils it is evident that the situation is much the same as at the time of the previous inspection in that all aspects of the subject are taught. No judgement can be made about overall standards; however, planning shows coverage of all sections of the syllabus. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in swimming and their experiences are further enhanced during residential educational visits. Extracurricular activities continue to offer pupils football, netball and team games against other schools. Pupils are eager to share their experiences and have a positive attitude to the subject.

126. In the lessons, observed in both key stages, teaching was good. Both lessons were using pre-recorded tapes to support the teaching of dance and music and movement. The lessons were well planned and the teachers' used the taped material effectively and maintained a good level of pace. Teaching points were made in both lessons to help pupils improve their performance and pupils were encouraged to add their own ideas. This good teaching supported

their learning in using the limited space correctly, extending their ideas and increasing their bodily control. The pupils listened and responded well. Their behaviour was very good even though the accommodation restricted their space.

127. Since the last inspection a detailed policy statement and scheme of work have been successfully introduced to ensure that the main emphasis is on the teaching of subject skills. The size of the hall continues to limit severely the range of dance and gymnastic activities offered to pupils and storage of furniture in the hall remains a problem. The subject is adequately resourced. The outside facilities compensate for the lack of space indoors.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

128. The standards attained in religious education by the end of Key Stage 2 are in line with the locally agreed syllabus, and pupils are beginning to make suitable progress in their knowledge. However, their understanding is still in need of development.

129. There is little evidence available of completed work in religious education in Key Stage 1. The recently developed planning, which covers a two-year cycle, introduces young pupils to religion through topics such as friendship, special events and moral issues. In the only lesson seen, the teacher led them through a 'Big Book' story from Aesop's fables. They heard the story of the boy who cried, 'Wolf', and this was later related to Jesus and the need to always tell the truth. All pupils, including the youngest, showed a clear understanding of the moral issue discussed.

130. In Key Stage 2, the pupils are beginning to make progress but there is not a great deal of completed work. No lessons were seen during the inspection, evidence was gained from scrutiny of their work, displays and discussions with pupils. The pupils have examined stories from the Bible. In lower Key Stage 2 they have begun to make limited interpretations of these stories and to draw comparisons from these events with modern day icons such as Mother Theresa and Martin Luther King. In upper Key Stage 2 the pupils have made comparisons with other religions notably, Judaism. Their work on this is displayed and shows a comprehensive study of the customs, beliefs and ceremonies that are a feature of this religion. Overall, although they are clearly beginning to extend their knowledge, their understanding is not at the same level.

131. The quality of the pupils' response to religious education is good. From discussion with older pupils, they clearly enjoy the learning and are sensitive to the values and beliefs of others. In the lesson observed for the youngest pupils, their response was very good. They listened well, were eager to contribute and showed a good understanding of the simple moral issue raised.

132. In the lesson observed the teaching was good and the teacher showed good subject knowledge. She told the story of the boy who cried, 'Wolf,' in a way that engaged the pupils' interest and delivered the moral message from the story. It was the end of the day and for the youngest pupils there was some distracted behaviour. However, the teacher kept them on task through good behaviour management and her high expectations were met.

133. The coordinator is effective in her role and the planning for religious education is having an impact on progress. The learning is supported by acts of worship to which the local vicar contributes. Pupils' knowledge of their own religion is further extended by attending seasonal celebrations at the village church to which parents and community are invited. At this time the delivery of religious education is satisfactory with a need for the further development of pupils' understanding.

