

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MILLFIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Nantwich

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111079

Headteacher: Mr G Evans

Reporting inspector: E Jackson  
3108

Dates of inspection: 26 - 29 June 2000

Inspection number: 191160

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior, with nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Marsh Lane Nantwich Cheshire
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs D Howard OBE
Date of previous inspection:	January 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Eric Jackson	Registered inspector	Science Geography History Physical education Equality of opportunity	Results and achievements Teaching Leadership and management
Maureen Roscoe	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Care and welfare Partnership with parents
Gavin Jones	Team inspector	Mathematics Information technology Design and technology Religious education	Curricular and other opportunities
Lynn Thomas	Team inspector	Under-fives English Art Music English as an additional language Special educational needs	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Millfields Primary is an average-sized primary school, catering for children from three to 11 years old. It is pleasantly situated in its own extensive grounds. There are 97 boys and 93 girls on the main school register, and 53 children aged three to four attend the nursery part-time. Almost all the pupils are ethnically white, and those from minority ethnic backgrounds are competent English speakers. There are 29 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, lower than average, two of whom have full Statements of Special Educational Need. Children's attainment at entry to the reception class is broadly average, but covers a wide range.

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

The school provides a sound education for its pupils, who behave very well and have very good attitudes to their work. Standards of attainment by 11 have improved to be close to the national average, representing satisfactory progress in pupils' learning from entry to the school. The teaching observed during the inspection was good, helping the pupils to develop basic skills successfully, particularly in reading and numeracy. The improvement of pupils' written English is an appropriate current priority. The school is effectively led by the headteacher, other key staff and the governing body, although closer monitoring and evaluation of the school's work is needed. Overall, the school provides sound value for money.

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

- Teaching was good across the school during the inspection, leading to good progress in pupils' learning, including for those pupils with special educational needs.
- The pupils' attitudes to their work, and their behaviour, are very good, founded in high quality working relationships across the school.
- The staff have implemented the two National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy well, and have maintained a broad curriculum, where investigative science, art and physical education still figure strongly.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, and the personal and social development of children in the nursery and reception classes are good.

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

- The monitoring and evaluation of the school's overall performance.
- Assessment information should be more closely linked to lesson planning, particularly for higher attaining pupils.
- The progress of individuals and groups of pupils should be more closely tracked as they move through the school in order to set and monitor closely targets for their learning, beginning with the improvement of writing as part of English, and across the curriculum, and continuing with mathematics.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. All these areas are mentioned in the current School Development Plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in January 1997, and has made satisfactory improvements overall since then, and is satisfactorily placed to continue to improve. The quality of teaching is better, partly from the successful use by staff of the National Literacy and

Numeracy Strategies, which is helping to raise the pupils' standards of attainment. The high standards recognised at the last inspection in spiritual, moral, social and cultural development have been sustained. In response to key issues raised, the school now provides a sound curriculum, which has good breadth and satisfactory balance. This improvement has been brought about by the completion of schemes of work, which give better balance to the curriculum and provide a framework within which the step-by-step building up of skills, knowledge and understanding for pupils can be accomplished. An effective assessment procedure has been adopted, but it has not yet begun to inform teachers' lesson planning sufficiently, particularly in helping staff to monitor and extend the progress of higher attaining pupils. The teaching and learning of information technology have improved because there has been further staff training, and there are better resources being used effectively for word processing and data handling. However, other aspects of the subject have not yet been sufficiently developed. The governing body is now more involved in the school, particularly through nominated linked governors, and a greater representation of parents. There has been much recent improvement, which has not yet had time to impact fully on teaching, learning and pupils' standards of attainment.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	C	C	C	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	C	C	D	D	
Science	C	C	D	D	

There were only 19 pupils in the Year 6 group in 1999, so caution is required in comparing the school's results with national and similar school averages. Overall, the results were below the national average for 11 year olds, and below average in comparison to similar schools. The school exceeded its agreed targets for this cohort's attainment in the tests, however, and its targets for 2000 and beyond are appropriately based on the pupils' prior attainment. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils attained results in 1999 in national tests in reading that were close to the national average, but below those in similar schools. In writing and mathematics, pupils' attainment was below the national average, and below the average in similar schools in writing, but well below it in mathematics. In both these subjects the proportion of pupils attaining at higher levels was too low. The improving trend in the school's results at the end of Key Stage 2 over four years has kept pace with the rising national trend, from a low base in 1996. At Key Stage 1, results have fluctuated, falling significantly in 1998 in reading and mathematics. Results in reading have kept pace with the national trend over four years, but in mathematics and writing they have fallen slightly since 1996, although rising faster than the national trend in writing since 1997. Currently, pupils' attainment at both key stages is close to the 1999 national averages, although too few pupils attain higher than expected levels.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good.
Personal development and relationships	Good.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

Good standards in pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development have not only been maintained but improved upon since the previous inspection. The good relationships between the pupils, and with the staff, are an important influence here. Attendance is close to the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

The quality of teaching is good overall, including the quality of work by the support staff, and teaching is often very good at Key Stage 2. It was never less than satisfactory during the inspection, and in one in four lessons it was very good. Almost all the teaching seen at Key Stage 2 was good or better; it was good or better in three out of four lessons at Key Stage 1 including the reception class; and it was good in three out of five lessons in the nursery. The school's approach to teaching literacy is effective. Technical points, subject vocabulary and phonics are given good attention, resulting in good progress in pupils' learning of basic skills. Working with the National Numeracy Strategy has given teachers support with their lesson planning in mathematics, which is now good. Several teachers have good subject knowledge and put this to good effect as they teach basic skills with success. As a result, pupils are being given better quality instruction allowing them to be more successful in their work, especially in their work in number. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent, however, and teachers do not always use the information they have about pupils' achievements effectively in planning further work for them. Good provision is made for those pupils with special educational needs, and they generally make good progress towards the targets set in their individual plans. Pupils do well in art, and aspects of physical education. This year, the headteacher has taught the literacy and numeracy sessions every morning with the Year 5 class to enable separate year group teaching at Key Stage 2. This has contributed to the rising standards.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good range of learning opportunities for pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good, particularly for moral and social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has high standards of care for its pupils; the use of assessment information could be improved. Satisfactory overall.

The school's links with parents are satisfactory, and the parents' involvement in its work and their contribution to children's learning at home are good.

The good teaching linked to a satisfactory curriculum leads to good learning opportunities for the pupils. The adoption of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is having a positive effect on pupils' standards of attainment, although not yet sufficiently in writing. Art and aspects of physical education are well taught, and the provision of extra-curricular activities is good. Good relationships are maintained with partner educational institutions, including high schools and training institutions. Moral and social development are very good, and personal and social development for the younger children are also good. Assessment procedures are in place, but the information gained is not yet used sufficiently in lesson planning, or to follow pupils' progress across the school. Pupils are safe and secure in the school, and they are exceptionally well managed by the staff.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Generally effective.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Becoming more effective recently, but still needs improvement.
The strategic use of	Satisfactory.

resources	
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The headteacher and staff ensure that the school's caring aims are well reflected in its work. They work well together as a team, with clear commitment to meeting the pupils' needs. However, there is insufficient delegation of responsibilities through the management structure, particularly for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching, and different cohorts' and individual pupils' standards and progress. The governors fulfil their statutory duties effectively, except that staff appraisal has lapsed. Financial resources are appropriately targeted to nominated priorities, and the governors are beginning to apply the principles of best value. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good, and make a good contribution to the quality of education provided.

**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>• That their children like school, and make good progress.</li> <li>• That behaviour in the school is good.</li> <li>• That children are expected to work hard and achieve their best, and are helped to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• That the school is well led and managed, and that they are comfortable about approaching it with questions or problems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The consistency of the setting of homework.</li> <li>• The quality of information they receive from the school about their children's progress.</li> <li>• Closer working relationships with them.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

The 13 parents at the meeting held before the inspection were very supportive of the school. The inspection supports the parents' positive comments from the meeting and the questionnaire analysis in the main. It finds that homework arrangements are good, and that there is also a good range of extra-curricular activities. There have been some positive improvements in the links between the school and its carers and parents since the last inspection. There is a group of parents, however, who are unhappy about some aspects of the school's links with them.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils attained results in 1999 in national tests in English that were close to the national average, but below those in similar schools. In mathematics and science, pupils' attainment was below average nationally, and was also below average in comparison to similar schools. There were only 19 pupils in the year group in 1999, so caution is required in comparing the school's results with national and similar school averages. The school exceeded its agreed targets for this cohort's attainment in the tests.
2. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils attained results in 1999 in national tests in reading that were close to the national average, but below those in similar schools. In writing and mathematics, pupils' attainment was below the national average, and below the average in similar schools in writing, but well below it in mathematics. In both these subjects the proportion of pupils attaining at higher levels was low. Teacher assessment in science suggests that pupils attain higher than the national average. From inspection evidence pupils' attainment in science is close to the national average.
3. Pupils' attainment at entry to the reception class is broadly average, although it covers a wide range. In the early years, children make satisfactory progress in all the areas of experience and attain as expected in relation to the nationally recommended early learning goals. They make good progress and attain well in speaking and listening, creative work such as drawing, painting and model-making in the reception class, and in physical development in the nursery, where the exciting outdoor environment stimulates active play. They do less well in writing, where there were insufficient opportunities during the inspection for free and spontaneous response through mark-making or writing about their planned or incidental experiences.
4. The improving trend in the school's results at the end of Key Stage 2 over four years overall has kept pace with the rising national trend, from a low base in 1996. At Key Stage 1, results have fluctuated, falling significantly in 1998 in reading and mathematics. Results in reading have kept pace with the national trend over four years, but in mathematics and writing they have fallen slightly since 1996, although rising faster than the national trend in writing since 1997.
5. Currently, standards in speaking and listening overall are generally better than found nationally, representing good progress since entry to the school. Reading standards have improved and are above average at the end of both key stages. Writing is generally in line with the previous year's average at both key stages. There are weaknesses in the pupils' skills in writing which have been identified and targeted by the school since the previous inspection. This has resulted in a moderate increase in the number of pupils at the end of key stages attaining at the higher Levels 3 and 5. Although this is an improvement, it is still not high enough. However, future targets reflect the school's confidence that improved teaching strategies from teachers' greater familiarity with the National Literacy Strategy will raise pupils' attainment and progress, particularly in writing.

6. In mathematics, the inspection results confirm the improvement at Key Stage 2 to a point where a greater number of pupils are now working at the expected level, with a small group working at a higher level. At the end of Key Stage 1, current standards are in line with national expectations, an improvement over previous results and in line with the school's targets. This may well be attributable to the school's implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, which gives teachers more support with planning and teaching.
7. In science, pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 were observed working at high levels in designing experiments to test change in materials, and their overall attainment is in line with that expected, although fewer pupils than average attain high levels. Teacher's assessment at the end of Key Stage 1 suggests that pupils attain above average levels, but inspection findings indicate that attainment is close to the national average.
8. Pupils with special educational needs generally attain at lower levels than their peers, but during the inspection made good progress towards the targets in their individual plans, and educational provision for them is good. The few pupils who speak another language besides English are fluent English speakers, and progress at the same rate as their peers, and attain similar levels.
9. Pupils' attainment in art is above average at the end of both key stages, and their progress is good. They select relevant materials, experiment with ideas with increasing control and good awareness of how to evaluate and improve their work. In design and technology, standards are as expected for pupils of primary age. In information technology the school shows in its plans that it is addressing all elements of the National Curriculum for information and communication technology (ICT), but in practice it is addressing only three elements well but the remaining two, control and modelling, with less success. In history, geography and music, pupils attain as expected, and in religious education they attain in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. By 11, many pupils attain high levels in physical education, particularly in games and swimming.

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

10. Good standards in pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development have been maintained and further improved since the previous inspection.
11. Pupils' attitudes to the school and to their learning are very good. They show considerable enthusiasm for the activities and opportunities provided in and outside the classroom. Pupils co-operate well with staff because they have a zest for learning. This was seen in many lessons. For example in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, pupils enthusiastically sought to retrieve information from a bar graph about bedtimes. They respond well to the lively approach adopted by many teachers. In one lesson Year 1 pupils echoed their teacher's dramatic and effective reading of a story. They offered very good ideas because they listened carefully to how other pupils expressed their feelings.
12. Younger pupils in the nursery have very good attitudes to their work. They behave very well and co-operate with the teacher and other adults or with other pupils. This was evident as some of them joined the reception class and took a full part in lessons as part of their induction to the main school. Here the teacher skilfully engaged the new children in a variety of routines and activities, and also expected

her five year old children to show a high level of care and responsibility for the new entrants. They responded very well to her high expectations.

13. Older pupils are involved in day-to-day organisation of school tasks. Some distribute healthy drinks for example, tidy away dining room furniture or help pupils in the first aid bay. This work shows the level of personal initiative evident in the school and the manner in which pupils cheerfully undertake these roles of responsibility.
14. In work or play, pupils co-operate with each other and negotiate well for space on benches in the playground or take turns with play equipment. This demonstrated the harmonious relationships so apparent across all activities and reflects an environment where friendships flourish. It was not unusual to see, for example, pupils holding hands and there were many instances of the spontaneous and generous sharing of toys.
15. Behaviour is very good across the school, recognised and valued by most parents. There was no evidence of oppressive behaviour during the inspection, although a small number of parents feel that bullying is not always dealt with to their satisfaction. The exclusion of pupils for misbehaviour is very rarely necessary. Pupils are tolerant of each other and are considerate of others' feelings. A good start to the day is achieved in morning registrations, for example, where pupils respond well to the courteous examples set for them by teachers. In assembly, Junior Road Safety Officers plan, organise and confidently present a safety quiz. Pupils become more confident as they progress through the school, and listen well to what others have to say. Older pupils are expected to help younger ones in the playground, which they do willingly.
16. Attendance levels are satisfactory, and about average for a primary school. Parents play their part in supporting the regular attendance and punctuality of their children. Registration procedures are effective, and efficiently carried out. Registers conform to the required standard and all absences are followed up on the morning they occur.

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

17. The quality of teaching is good overall, and it is often very good at Key Stage 2. It was never less than satisfactory during the inspection, and in one in four lessons it was very good. This level of good teaching led to good progress in pupils' learning in many of the lessons seen. Almost all the teaching seen at Key Stage 2 was good or better; it was good or better in three out of four lessons at Key Stage 1 including the reception class; and it was good in three out of five lessons in the nursery. Evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' work saved over the past year, however, shows that pupils' activities are not always as closely matched to their prior attainment as they were during the inspection, particularly when using prepared worksheets.
18. The teachers' subject knowledge is very secure in most subjects. They set clear objectives for lessons in English, mathematics and science, and make these known to the pupils, which helps them to understand what they are doing. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson pupils changed time from analogue to digital versions, and one girl completed a computer program to reset a video recorder. The pupils' understanding was strongly reinforced by the teacher's sharing with them of the

expected learning outcomes, reviewed skilfully in the final summary session. Although pupils at Key Stage 2 are in large mixed age classes, the headteacher teaches literacy and numeracy effectively to the Year 5 pupils every morning, allowing all the pupils at the key stage to be taught in the smaller year groups. This allows a much greater focus on the needs of groups and individuals in these lessons, helping them to make satisfactory progress in their learning.

19. The planning for English follows closely the structure of the literacy hour, but teachers 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 effective. Technical points, subject vocabulary and phonics are given good attention. For example, Year 1 pupils were encouraged by the teacher to use their phonic skills to sound out colour names such as orange, yellow and purple, which they did successfully. Implementing the National Numeracy Strategy has also given teachers good support with their planning. Several teachers have good subject knowledge and put this to good effect as they teach basic numeracy skills with success. Pupils are being taught better, leading to more success in their work, especially in number. As a result, standards in mathematics are rising. In science, teachers use the adopted scheme well, including the effective use of video material. With good support from the knowledgeable co-ordinator, they help the pupils to develop investigative and experimental skills and processes well.
20. The teachers expect pupils to pay attention and behave well, encouraging them to concentrate on their work consistently throughout the school. Accordingly, the pupils respond very well, and their attitudes to learning and behaviour in lessons are almost always good or better. For instance, Year 5 and 6 pupils are set high goals by the teacher for their co-operation in developing mixed gender group approaches to experiments in science, and in developing events in athletics to stage a mini-Olympics tournament. They respond very well, working together in teams to produce agreed outcomes.
21. Pupils with special educational needs generally make satisfactory and sometimes good progress, and are well supported by the class teacher's and support staff's intervention and questioning. Tasks are well matched to their needs and reflect the targets set in their individual educational plans. For example, during a Year 3 mathematics lesson, the support worker helped the lower attaining pupils to understand and use the word 'symmetrical' and develop their understanding by matching half shapes to form symmetrical whole ones. Occasionally, teachers' expectations of the higher attaining pupils are insufficiently high, and they do not give them work which is open-ended and taxing for them. This results in too few pupils attaining higher levels in national tests at the end of key stages.
22. In most lessons the teachers' management and organisational skills were good and sometimes very good. Because of the good relationships and well-focused tasks, pupils are more than happy to work away at their activities without misbehaving. This has a very positive effect on the time spent on task and ultimately on the progress made. Teachers move around the groups well during lessons. They engage pupils in discussion and make themselves aware of the progress individuals and groups are making through skilled questioning and observation. Their management of pupils' behaviour was outstanding during the inspection. For example, the reception class teacher included groups of nursery children in her lessons as part of their induction to the main school. She ambitiously led a dance session in which the reception and nursery pupils used mechanical movements to

perform a toy factory scene. Because she had such a good relationship with them, held them spell-bound with a stimulating story, and had high expectations of their behaviour and involvement, they made outstanding progress in their learning.

23. Good use is made of support staff to support pupils' learning, and they make good contributions to the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Resources such as books, videos, practical equipment for science, mathematics and games are used effectively in the main. Very good use has been made of a residential visit for Year 2 pupils to develop their skills in history and geography. Their large and lively illustrations of Beeston Castle represent its defensive strength very well. Effective use is also made of the school accommodation, with groups working in all the different areas of the school. Year 5 pupils use the spare classroom for their morning lessons in literacy and numeracy, and the headteacher makes good use of visual aids such as flip charts and chalkboards to extend pupils' thinking. The timetable, however, restricts teachers' opportunities in general to take full advantage of resources and accommodation during the morning as it is divided solely between literacy and numeracy. During the inspection, some of these sessions lasted for an hour and ten minutes, which is too long, and cramps the time available for the rest of the curriculum.
24. There are sometimes weaknesses in the use teachers make of the information they have of pupils' progress and achievements in order to guide the next stage of planning, however. A scrutiny of planning since September in mathematics, for instance, shows too little evidence of progress made in lessons being noted on plans in order that work for the following days may be adjusted to take account of progress seen. In order to drive forward the progress of all groups, planning needs to take account far more frequently of teachers' day-to-day assessments of what pupils have learned. A good example of this is in art, where the activities produce appropriate challenges for the pupils to respond positively. Here, teachers assess during the lessons through observation and questioning, often using this to make direct teaching points that have a positive effect on the quality of pupils' work.
25. The marking of pupils' work is also inconsistent, and does not always follow the guidance in the school's own policy document. Whilst marking does take place, it is not enough to aid improvement in learning, and there is insufficient critical comment. Marking overall is failing to get to the heart of what needs to be improved and this is having an adverse effect on pupils' attainment and progress, particularly in writing.

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

26. The school provides a sound curriculum, which has good breadth and satisfactory balance. This improvement since the last inspection has been brought about by the completion of schemes of work, which give better balance to the curriculum and provide a framework within which the step by step building up of skills, knowledge and understanding can be accomplished. The school meets the general requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and makes appropriate provision for sex education. Currently, it does not have a complete programme of personal, social and health education, but has recently received material which it could use to complete its work in this area. It is important that this work be put into place without delay, following its trials in the school.

27. Policies missing at the last inspection have now been written for the subjects of design and technology, music and religious education and are beginning to have a positive effect alongside the appropriate schemes of work. All policies and schemes are now gathered under a curriculum framework, which is in effect the school overall long-term planning.
28. The curriculum for the under-fives in the nursery and reception classes is currently based on the recommended areas of experience, to be adapted to the new nationally agreed Foundation Stage in September. The school's policy for this stage takes recent guidance fully into account, and the early years' co-ordinator acknowledges the headteacher's role in preparing this. The nursery curriculum is currently planned round the six recommended areas of experience, with personal and social development at its heart. The reception teacher has adapted her work to the early stages of the National Curriculum as the year has progressed, so that during the inspection the class was taught a full literacy and numeracy hour. It is intended to adopt the Foundation Stage curriculum fully from September 2000.
29. The school has adopted both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and has put them into effect well. As a result, standards of work in both subjects are improving. The National Numeracy Strategy was adopted this current academic year, and is already giving good support to teachers and is helping to improve planning, teaching and to raise achievement in both key stages.
30. There is equality of opportunity for both genders and for all ability groups. However, recent results in the National Curriculum assessments leave some area for improvement in both key stages, as there are marked differences in the progress made by boys and girls, especially in mathematics. At the same time, evidence from pupils' books over the last nine months suggests that teachers are not always planning work effectively for the different ability groups in their classes, thus reducing the equality of opportunity for all to make appropriate progress in their work. Whilst there have been improvements in the work in information and communication technology, the task has not been completed and there is still a need to address all the elements of the National Curriculum in practice as well as in planning.
31. Overall subject planning is now satisfactory at all levels. Medium-term plans are written on a half-termly basis and provide a clear picture of the activities and of the basic learning objectives to be covered. Short-term weekly plans are well written, develop the learning objectives more fully into activities and show good development since the previous inspection.
32. Whilst the school has made progress in a number of curriculum areas, it has not yet come to grips with its timetabling of activities. Planning and allocation of time do not always support the development of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. The school spends a little more time on literacy and numeracy during the morning sessions than it needs to, making lessons rather long for some pupils. Some re-thinking of the timing of morning sessions might allow a little more time for the other subjects to be taught. At the same time the use of information and communication technology should be more clearly integrated into all subjects, so as to alleviate the problems of pupils waiting several weeks to put their newly learned skills into action.



33. Some parents who responded to the questionnaire had strong views about extra-curricular activities. A small but significant percentage disagreed that the school “provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons”. The view of the inspection is that when the extra-curricular activities are set alongside the many and varied visits organised by the school outside lesson time, the provision of extra-curricular activities is good. Whilst there are very few activities expressly for pupils in Key Stage 1, pupils do have many well-organised visits and pupils in Year 2 take part in a residential visit, a most forward looking arrangement rarely seen in schools. Clubs such as gardening, French, cricket, art, recorders and rounders were being offered to pupils during the inspection and about 60 pupils were taking part. Some of these activities lead naturally to competition both inside and outside the school. A striking feature is the residential opportunity for Year 2 pupils to a local authority activity centre. The pupils have completed good work in history and geography from this, and their excited description of the overnight stay points to good personal development for them also.
34. During the course of the year each year group makes at least one visit. The nursery visit Reaseheath to see the newly born lambs; reception and Year 1 pupils visited the Lowry Centre in Salford; Year 3 and 4 visit the local church; while Years 5 and 6 spend a valuable residential visit to the Red Ridge outdoor centre in Welshpool. All of these visits support work within the classrooms and have a positive effect on progress.
35. The school has sound links with the local community, contributing to Nantwich in Bloom, visiting the elderly at Christmas time and raising money for local charities. It has good links with other institutions, especially with the two high schools it serves. It draws students from several colleges who come to Millfields as part of their training programme.
36. Since the previous inspection the school has continued to be successful in implementing its aims for the pupils, in creating a supportive environment in which differences are respected and where all care for each other.
37. The provision for spiritual and cultural development is good, moral and social development are very good and the overall provision is a strength of the school.
38. Spiritual development is fostered through collective worship, religious education, English, science, art and music. Pupils are given opportunities to reflect on their experiences and to express their ideas and feelings, which encourages the development of spiritual awareness. The pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong which is apparent in their very good behaviour.
39. They have collaborated in the formulation of classroom rules. The school’s success in developing pupils’ moral values is evident among the older pupils as they accept responsibility and carry out tasks on their own initiative. The school takes pupils on a good number of visits to outside venues, which requires them to demonstrate good behaviour based on the school's moral code, and to integrate socially within the community. These visits occur within the local community and wider afield, such as on residential visits.
40. The provision for pupils’ social development is very good. Within school the pupils are co-operative and supportive of one another and courteous yet confident with

adults. Older pupils take particular responsibility for younger pupils and this form of mentoring is valued by the parents.

41. Cultural development is still well promoted through all areas of the curriculum. Very good displays give opportunities for pupils to learn about their own cultural traditions and cultures other than their own. Cross-curricular topic work continues to provide the pupils with greater knowledge and insight into the diversity and richness of other cultures, enabling the pupils to have a broader view and appreciation of them. For instance, comparisons between life in towns and villages in Kenya and the pupils' own experience of life in England help them to appreciate similarities and differences sensibly.
42. All pupils are highly valued and are treated with equal respect. Pupils are caring and supportive, looking after each other well.

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

43. The school has high standards of care. It is a caring community that provides satisfactory support for its pupils and has the confidence of most parents. This is a similar finding to that of the last inspection. Overall, there are some strengths in provision, but also some important weaknesses which need to be addressed.
44. Relationships in the school are very good. Class teachers have equally very good relationships with their pupils and this contributes effectively to pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Good care is taken of pupils during playtimes. Midday assistants talk to children kindly and show good consideration to their needs. Pupils who have special educational needs are identified early in their school life and parents are kept fully informed of the progress their children make.
45. There are effective measures to promote regular attendance and all staff manage pupils' behaviour very well in and outside the classroom. Monitoring of attendance is particularly strong and efficiently done. The majority of parents have confidence in the school's attempts to deal with bullying incidents and the school has an anti-bullying policy that clearly states the school's intolerance of such behaviour. There were no examples of oppressive behaviour during the inspection. The staff have very high expectations of appropriate behaviour and the reward systems work well in supporting an atmosphere of kindness towards others and security for all.
46. A formal risk assessment covering all key stage areas and activities has not yet been completed in sufficient breadth or depth. This concern was expressed in the last inspection report. The school insists on high standards in first aid treatments and sets aside an appropriate quiet area where pupils are cared for very well. Procedures for informing parents of treatments are satisfactory. Some first aid administered to pupils is recorded. These records, however, are sparse and the infrequent entries are insufficient to allow active monitoring of where and when accidents occur or which pupils are regularly affected.
47. Assessment procedures were noted as not being effective or used enough to "inform medium and short-term planning and to promote progression and continuity", at the last inspection. The school has addressed these issues, but has only very recently completed its work in this area. As a result, the changes and developments have not had time to have full impact on standards in the school, and this area of the school's work is currently still unsatisfactory.

48. The school makes satisfactory use of a range of tests as a guide to standards achieved by pupils, mainly in aspects of English, mathematics and to a lesser degree in science. However this move towards a consistency in checking and monitoring progress made by individual pupils and larger groups of pupils is quite recent and as yet has not been used sufficiently by teachers to guide their planning. There is little evidence of the school analysing its National Curriculum assessment results in order to point to the strengths and weaknesses in both teaching and learning. Subject co-ordinators have not used this form of analysis yet and have not been given time to do so.
49. The school records the results of scores in the National Curriculum assessments and in the Cheshire tests, which it administers. It has very recently adopted optional tests for the year groups between the statutory tests. In time this will give the school a much clearer picture of progress and allow them to track individual progress, something which it is unable to do at present.
50. Assessment work has not yet been focused on subjects other than English, mathematics and science. The rapid development of assessments for these other subjects is important if the school is to challenge pupils in all areas of work and be able to check its successes. The recently adopted marking policy in itself is a sound document, but it has not yet led to a significant improvement in marking. The over-emphasis on worksheets is not a help in this matter as pupils cannot always find their previous work quickly when it is not dated or filed sequentially. Improvements in marking and discussions with pupils about their progress would aid target setting for individuals, which the school currently does not carry out. There are useful personal folders of work collected as the pupils progress through the school. These are not used as effectively as they might be to involve pupils more in their learning and in the progress they make.

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

51. The majority of parents and carers hold very positive views of most aspects of the school's work. They trust the headteacher and staff to care for and provide well for their children's education. The inspection finds that this trust is well placed. There have been some positive improvements in the links between school, its carers and parents since the last inspection.
52. Links are satisfactory with parents and carers who are in the main pleased with the progress their children make. Many parents take advantage of the school's open-door policy, and the vast majority of parents and carers feel comfortable about approaching the school. A minority of parents, however, has some concerns about homework provision and the manner in which some complaints are received and dealt with. The inspection finds that homework arrangements are sound, but that there is a group of parents who are still unhappy about some aspects of the school's links with them.
53. The school encourages parents and carers to be involved in its life and activities. The results of this work can be seen in increased parental representation on the governing body and a refocus of its parents' association. However, the school did not consult with parents over the home-school agreement, and parental reaction to the school's document is luke warm.

54. The quality of information provided is satisfactory overall. Some concern was expressed in the previous report about the amount of information provided to parents. This has improved. Reports on progress show good detail of the work covered and parents are provided with information on topics their children will study. Parents of those children with a special educational need are involved in reviews of their progress. In the governors' annual report, however, parents are not informed about the progress the school has made on its action plans following the last inspection. The prospectus is a good document and provides parents with information about homework provision and the procedures the school follows when complaints are received. It does not inform parents of the school's child protection policy, however.
55. Parental interest improves standards, and is most evident in good support for reading done at home and in attendance at many school functions and events. Pupils' learning is also enhanced by voluntary help in classrooms, and the good sums raised and spent on new technology and other important purchases.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

56. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The general organisation and management of the school are efficient and effective, and it runs well on a day-to-day basis.
57. The headteacher and staff ensure that the school's caring aims are well reflected in its work, and that it is focused on the pupils' needs. The positive ethos created ensures that the pupils and staff enjoy working together, and that behaviour and general attitudes to teaching and learning are good. The school development plan accurately reflects most of the important areas requiring improvement, including standards of writing, improvements in information technology, further development of target-setting, and overall school evaluation. There is insufficient rigour, however, in providing appropriate challenge for high attaining pupils, and in using the assessment data the school already has to focus more sharply on groups' and individual's needs.
58. The staff work well together as a team, with clear commitment to meeting the pupils' needs. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work very closely together in overseeing the school, and are currently engaged in an important training course to help them improve their skills in evaluating the school. The deputy headteacher is responsible for three major curriculum subjects: mathematics, science and information technology. However, there is insufficient delegation of responsibilities through the management structure for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching, and different pupils' standards and progress. The co-ordinators for English and mathematics have been influential in helping staff to implement the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, which are beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' standards of attainment. Other subject co-ordinators ensure that there is an overall plan for the teaching of their subject, and check their colleagues' planning. They also offer help and advice when asked. They do not yet, however, monitor teaching directly, nor sample pupils' work across the school to check whether or not standards are high enough. For instance, there has been no thorough analysis in the school to explain the variability in the attainment of boys and girls in the national tests at the end of key stages. Nor is there yet a system to monitor individual pupils' progress from entry to the school to leaving, using the wealth of assessment data available. The co-ordinator for the early years manages

the nursery effectively, and discusses the work of the older under-fives with her colleague in the reception class.

59. The governors fulfil their statutory duties effectively, except that staff appraisal has lapsed. Performance management for the staff, however, is part of the development agenda, and the headteacher and deputy have already had targets set for their performance by the governors, based on the delivery of priorities in the development plan. There are nominated governors to oversee key aspects of the school's work, such as for special educational needs, literacy and numeracy. These governors discuss issues with the relevant members of staff, visit the school, and keep the governing body informed of key developments. There is a good representation of parent governors, who are fully involved in the school in a number of ways. This partially offsets difficulties the school experiences in trying to involve other governors closely in its work. The chair of governors is very knowledgeable about the school, and works closely with the headteacher, and trusts his leadership. An important issue this year has been to monitor the effect on management of the headteacher teaching every morning, in order to reduce the taught group size in Key Stage 2. Whilst this has had positive effects on the quality of teaching and learning for the junior pupils, it has lessened his opportunities to monitor work in other classes, or to release teachers to evaluate aspects of the areas of the school's work for which they have delegated responsibility. In the light of this experience, it is intended to make a further part-time teaching appointment to cover some of the headteacher's current teaching commitment from September.
60. Financial resources are appropriately targeted to nominated priorities, and the governors are beginning to apply the principles of best value. Specific grants, such as those to meet special educational needs or for staff training, are effectively deployed. The governors decided to set a budget this year that is only just in surplus in order to promote key developments, but they have checked regularly through the finance committee that this is working out satisfactorily. The development plan has success criteria which are more focused this year than last on improvements in the quality of education and standards. These criteria are still fairly vague, however, as they cite 'improvement in children's writing' without specific targets, or 'provision of wider range of materials for poorer readers' without stating the purpose of this, or the anticipated outcomes. Therefore, the governors have not set out in advance clearly enough for the school how they will monitor and evaluate the improvements planned, with specific and measurable targets indicated.
61. Strategic planning is constrained by uncertainty about likely numbers in the future. There have long been plans to build extensive housing estates close to the school, but these have been slow to be realised. The headteacher feels that in these circumstances planning further ahead than one year is very imprecise. The governing body has, however, projected forward outline plans for the next two years. These include increased staffing and accommodation to deal with the possible rise in numbers, and an interesting plan to adapt part of the school to create a library and an extended infant play area. There are no specific plans beyond the general end of Key Stage 2 target-setting to raise standards of attainment, however. Further, there is a statement about how unlikely some of these developments are owing to severe budgetary restrictions. Whilst the governing body may have views it wishes to express about the funding of schools, its development plan should indicate how it envisages improving the quality of education offered from the likely resources available to it. If there are ambitious

developments planned, some indication as to how the governors will seek the appropriate finance should be shown.

62. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good, and make a good contribution to the quality of education provided. The internal accommodation is adequate for the numbers currently in the school, although the very large classes at Key Stage 2 are cramped in their classrooms. When the junior pupils are taught as year groups, using the spare classroom, they have sufficient room to work effectively. The external accommodation is very good, as is the accommodation for the nursery. The teaching staffing is generous at Key Stage 1, but requires the headteacher to teach a year group to make the taught group sizes manageable for literacy and numeracy. In the afternoon, when the juniors are taught as mixed age classes, the ratio of pupils to staff is too high. Support staffing is good, and these staff are efficiently deployed. Students are successfully trained in the nursery, and make a good contribution to the children's learning. There are good learning resources, particularly to support English, mathematics and science. The school makes good use of video resources in the teaching of science, geography and history. Computer facilities in the nursery are outdated, however, and should be upgraded as soon as funds allow.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

63. In order to continue to improve the quality of education, and the pupils' standards of attainment, the headteacher, governors and staff should:
- (1) implement a more structured and systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating the work of the school in order to ensure:
    - a. a clearer direction for school development;
    - b. the promotion of high standards in all the school's work, particularly pupils' standards of attainment, including appropriate challenge for high-attaining pupils, particularly in English and mathematics; (paragraphs 2,4, 21, 57, 58, 59, 61, 96)
  - (2) make more effective use of the school's assessment procedures in order to:
    - a. meet all pupils' needs through more closely focused lesson planning, and in particular to improve standards in writing across the school;
    - b. initiate target-setting for individuals and groups of pupils to better track their progress and to help them reach their potential;
    - c. ensure that teachers' marking of pupils' work follows school policy, and involves the pupils more closely in the evaluation of their own attainment and progress. (Paragraphs 5, 17, 24, 25, 30, 47, 48, 50, 85, 101)

### Minor issue

- Fulfil statutory requirements for staff appraisal and in the information provided for parents. (Paragraphs 54, 59)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	45
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	22	53	22	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)	27	190
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	NA	14

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	27

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	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.4

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	14	10	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	11
	Girls	10	9	9
	Total	20	19	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (84)	79 (77)	83 (78)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	12	13
	Girls	9	9	10
	Total	19	21	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (84)	88 (77)	96 (78)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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	11	8	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	9	8
	Girls	6	4	6
	Total	14	13	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (63)	68 (58)	74 (68)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	9	9
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	14	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (69)	79 (63)	79 (73)
	National	70 (65)	69 (65)	78 (72)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	1
White	167
Any other minority ethnic group	

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

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

None.	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)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.1
Average class size	31.7

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

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	98

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13.5
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	383,286
Total expenditure	373,956
Expenditure per pupil	1,834
Balance brought forward from previous year	7,642
Balance carried forward to next year	16,972

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	243
Number of questionnaires returned	127

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	39	6	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	44	46	6	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	50	2	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	42	21	3	13
The teaching is good.	44	43	6	2	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	25	44	21	5	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	36	6	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	41	49	4	2	4
The school works closely with parents.	24	53	16	3	4
The school is well led and managed.	44	45	6	2	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	34	55	7	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	37	15	12	15

### **Summary of parents' and carers' responses**

The 13 parents at the meeting held before the inspection were very supportive of the school. The inspection supports the parents' positive comments in the main. It finds that homework arrangements are good, and that there is also a good range of extra-curricular activities. There have been some positive improvements in the links between the school and its carers and parents since the last inspection. There is a group of parents, however, who are unhappy about some aspects of the school's links with them.

## **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

64. Children enter the nursery the term after their third birthday, and attend either morning or afternoon sessions for two and a half hours. This generally accommodates 52 children in two groups of 26. The nursery serves a wide catchment area, and many of the children leave to attend other primary schools. Most of the children who enter the reception class, however, have also attended the school nursery. Their attainment at entry to the school covers a wide range, but is broadly average.
65. The nursery is housed in specially-designed accommodation, which has good indoor and very good outdoor facilities. The reception class is in a standard classroom in the main school with access to an outside play area. The areas are substantially different, but there are developing plans to adapt the reception room to link it directly with the nursery in order to create a more useful Foundation Stage unit. This would be very helpful in giving the reception children continued access to the very good outdoor facilities of the nursery, and in allowing staff to share their time and expertise more effectively.
66. The curriculum for the under-fives in the nursery and reception is currently based on the recommended areas of experience, to be adapted to the new nationally agreed Foundation Stage in September. The school's recently adopted policy for this stage, prepared by the co-ordinator and the headteacher, takes recent guidance fully into account. The nursery curriculum is currently planned round the six recommended areas of experience, with personal and social development at its heart. The reception teacher has adapted her work to the early stages of the National Curriculum as the year has progressed, so that during the inspection the class was taught full literacy and numeracy hours. The Foundation Stage curriculum will be adopted fully from September 2000.
67. The strengths noted in the previous report in the pupils' personal and social, physical and creative development have been maintained, and the children continue to make good progress in these areas of learning in both the nursery and the reception classes. In all the other areas of learning they make satisfactory progress in their learning. By five, most of them attain the levels expected for their age in all the recommended areas of experience, with higher attainment for a significant minority of them in personal and social and physical development.
68. Whilst the staff in the nursery have satisfactory knowledge of the children's progress, the use of assessment records to plan further learning activities is not sufficiently rigorous. This is in part because a previous system has been rightly abandoned as too time-consuming, but that no replacement system has yet been adopted is a weakness. In order to follow children's progress from entry to the nursery at three, through to five in the reception class, it is important that staff record simply what they have achieved. This is both to plan new experiences based on evidence of prior learning, but also to accurately inform parents and other staff of these achievements.
69. During the inspection, displays in the nursery had largely been created by adults, and included little text at a level where the children could see it clearly, and touch it. It is important that displays at this level include the work the children do themselves,

- both to celebrate their achievements, and to enable them to learn from one another, and also creates a print-rich environment.
70. At the time of the inspection, most of the pupils in the reception class were of statutory school age, and working within the early stages of the National Curriculum. Accordingly, the evidence gathered from observations and discussions, has mainly informed judgements in Key Stage 1.

### **Personal and social development**

71. The teaching of personal and social education is good. There are good induction systems that ensure a smooth introduction to both the nursery and reception classes. Parents are also encouraged to stay to help their children settle. During the inspection, for instance, groups of nursery children spent time in the reception class to familiarise them with the routines and procedures, ready for the September transfer. The reception teacher and classroom assistant, with good support from the reception pupils, ensured that this made them feel secure, settling them quickly to the activities alongside the older children. In the nursery, well-established routines, good relationships between children and staff, and close attention to individual children's needs successfully promote their growing confidence and eagerness to learn. As the school offers good training opportunities for students from local colleges on early years' courses, the ratio of adults to children is generous. The adults are all well deployed to work with individuals and groups, contributing well to the development of children's awareness of the feelings and needs of others. Children are also encouraged successfully to develop their growing independence as they choose from a variety of prepared learning areas, organise their play in the sand-pit, or tidy away speedily at the end of activities.

### **Language and literacy**

72. Children make satisfactory progress overall in their development of language and literacy, based on sound teaching. Many opportunities are provided for children to talk to adults and other children, and this develops their speaking and listening skills effectively. For example, four children building towers and tunnels in the nursery sandpit were well prompted by the student with them to describe what they were doing, and to learn and use the specific vocabulary for the implements, such as rake and trowel. Children confidently discuss their work with adults, and in their free play outdoors improvise role-play situations of some complexity, requiring careful listening to one another in order to develop the ideas. They learn to listen actively to stories, responding well in a large group setting to the teacher's prompts to re-tell or explain elements of the story. Through this they also learn the structure of various language forms, how character is expressed in texts, and the sequential description of events. Their knowledge of and interest in books is well promoted by the staff, as when a student sat with three children on the settee and shared a favourite storybook with them. Most of the children know how books work, holding them correctly and following the pictures appropriately. Most know that text conveys meaning, and make reasonable attempts to retell well-known stories from the book. They have opportunities to write, and develop their understanding of the conventions of print. Many of them write their own name accurately by five, and are beginning to appreciate the phonic relationship of letters and sounds. This is built on well in the reception class, and the use of a wordbook to record all the words known with the same initial letter is very useful in encouraging children to use their developing knowledge and understanding. Teachers and support staff write out the children's own oral descriptions of their drawings, for instance, which helps them to

see how spoken and written language relate. Sometimes children copy this text underneath, but also, often write over the teacher's written text. This practice inhibits the children's own development of mark-making leading to writing. Indeed, there were too few examples during the inspection of children being encouraged to attempt to write and read their own writing for themselves, where the teacher could transcribe the child's own attempt, after the child had read it out.

## **Mathematics**

73. Children are provided with a good range of experiences that form a firm foundation for mathematical development. They learn to count with the help of adults, and many of the older nursery children recognise written numbers up to five. One girl confidently read the numbers in a counting book up to seven from the printed figures. Through such activities as baking they learn to measure out specific quantities, and in sand and water play they fill different containers, being encouraged by the staff to use appropriate vocabulary such as full, empty, more or less than. In cutting out shapes they learn to recognise circles and squares, and develop their knowledge and understanding of pattern through drawing and painting. The teacher worked with individual children to match pairs of objects from drawings in a set text. She explored their understanding of how to match them well, with good questions prompting and encouraging them. Here they practised and learned to use specific words such as find, match, same and different. Construction activities also extend their understanding of shape and pattern, and good progress was made in counting using 'Tizzy's Toy Box' with a student's help on the computer. Good individual records were kept of the pupils' access to the computer, and of their developing skills.

## **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

74. The staff ensure that children in the nursery have a range of opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. They recognise a number of different animals, and care for their own guinea pig in the nursery. The staff also take the children to a farm centre to learn about the spring lambs to support this area of learning. The children discuss confidently where they live and how they come to school. A group of girls were observed at play in the home corner, where they explored their own understanding of their growing relationship with the adult world. One loaded the dishwasher whilst others discussed their roles in the activity. They negotiated successfully, including a newcomer with, "You're the little girl, aren't you? I'm the mummy." Using construction kits they make a variety of models, including walls, houses, and trackways, and use tools and other equipment successfully in cutting, baking or playing in the sand and water. They also experiment and investigate using magnets, and in exploring their outdoor environment have a good variety of levels, surfaces and play equipment, including also a good variety of plants and mini-beast environments. The children are also taken by the staff to the school's wildlife area in the main grounds for further exploration. Although the computer equipment is outdated in the nursery, the children have good opportunities to use it, with skilled adult help. They are encouraged to use the mouse, and move the cursor and arrows to click on, drag and drop images on screen.

## **Creative development**

75. Nursery children make sound progress in their creative development, and this is built on very well in the reception class, so that it is good overall. They make good progress in reception in drawing and painting, and in controlling their body movements in dance, reflecting the quality of the teaching. All the children develop a repertoire of songs, and learn to keep the beat with actions such as clapping and nodding, progressing to the use of tuned and untuned musical instruments. Their play becomes more imaginative as they grow in the nursery, so that their games indoors and out assume a rich variety of plots and characters, supported well by the staff. Whilst the reception area has good displays of pupils' work, including some excellent charcoal and crayon drawings following a visit to the Lowry Centre, the nursery was unusually lacking in this area. Children have opportunities to draw, paint and print using a variety of media and materials, but the lack of visual stimulus associated with carefully presented examples of their own work was a weakness during the inspection.

### **Physical development**

76. Teachers provide an appropriate range of activities to promote children's physical development, and the teaching here is good. Children in the nursery make good use of the excellent outdoor environment to learn to run, climb, play with balls, and ride wheeled toys with growing confidence. They also develop good gymnastic skills in the school hall, where older boys climb a fixed rope energetically, and girls balance along benches and beams confidently. The staff help the pupils well, but should ensure that groups of pupils experience all the activities, and that this is not determined by gender. Children in the reception class use the hall and the school playgrounds, but currently have no direct access to the nursery outdoor area. This should be developed as funds allow to facilitate the adoption of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Children have good opportunities in both classes to become more adept in cutting, painting, drawing, building and fitting together jigsaw puzzles, although there was less time for these activities in the reception class due to the literacy and numeracy timetable.

### **ENGLISH**

77. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 or above in the 1999 national assessments for pupils in Year 6 was broadly in line with the national average when compared with all schools and below the average for similar schools. There were no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls and the trend over time has been consistently in line with the national average. Results for seven year olds were in line with national averages in reading, but below in writing. In comparison with similar schools they were below average both in reading and writing, because too few pupils attained the higher Level 3.
78. The inspection finds that standards in speaking and listening overall are generally better than found nationally. Reading standards have improved and are above average at the end of both key stages. Writing is close to national expectations at both key stages. There are weaknesses, however, in the pupils' skills in writing which have been identified and targeted by the school since the previous inspection. This has resulted in a moderate increase in the number of pupils at the end of key stages attaining at the higher Levels 3 and 5, and which, although an improvement, are still not high enough. However, future targets reflect the school's confidence that teaching strategies will have an ongoing effect on raising pupils' attainment and progress, particularly in writing.

79. Pupils speak clearly by the ages of seven and 11. Most seven year olds are extremely articulate and can give lucid views on, for example, the types of books they prefer to read and why. The oldest pupils enjoy debate and exercised their speaking and listening skills well in comparing the styles of two authors and the resulting effect on them as readers. They use subject-linked vocabulary with ease as in explaining their science work, "We have been looking at the similarities and differences between materials and their properties".
80. Their listening skills are good and well supported by very good behaviour and an enthusiasm for learning. By the age of seven, pupils listen carefully for concentrated periods to answer challenging questions about alliteration. They are able to appreciate the pattern of the poems and to use a good range of words to make up a series of appropriate sentences to illustrate their knowledge and understanding, for example, "Naughty Nick nipped nasty Ned". By the age of 11 pupils have begun to listen critically, drawing information from discussions to fulfil their tasks. They listen well to the teacher and to each other and many have developed the higher skill of waiting their turn, reflecting on what is being said before making a point.
81. Standards in reading are good by the time the pupils leave the school. By the age of seven, 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 to their spelling, however. They read together to share a class story and use a range of cues to help them with unknown or difficult words. For example, they look at the picture and initial letters and a few scan ahead to help them. In discussion, they 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 about the Dewey system to find reference books in a library, describe how a CD-ROM works to locate information, and all know how index, contents and glossary support their search. Dictionaries are a permanent feature on pupils' desks and are used regularly. Pupils have regular opportunities to read together in literacy sessions, and to themselves in quiet reading time. They take books home to read regularly and most parents support their children by reading with them. More attention could be given in some classrooms to creating more attractive book areas to show new and favourite books to entice the pupils more to sit and read voluntarily.
82. 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 until quite recently. Whilst many pupils have attained adequately in the past, too few have attained at the higher levels in writing. By the age of seven, pupils write competent personal accounts of events and are beginning to use capital letters and full stops correctly, but most still rely heavily on conjunctions.
83. The higher attaining seven year old pupils attempt to use speech marks. They write lists and label diagrams accurately, such as the parts of the human body or plants in science. Handwriting is adequate by the age of seven but few pupils readily transfer the skills being taught in literacy sessions to their everyday work. Often handwriting, spelling and presentation were found to be unsatisfactory during scrutiny of completed work. Some pupils within the key stage have not progressed beyond the printing stage taught to them earlier. The impact of this is on spelling



and fluency and speed of recording ideas, which restricts pupils from attaining at the higher Level 3. By the age of 11, pupils write for a range of purposes, and standards for most are at the expected levels. Pupils can write a synopsis which gives the main points of the plot but the standard of spelling and punctuation are not always of a high standard. They can re-tell stories such as Treasure Island and write their own film version of stories such as Matilda. Most are able to write initial drafts before presenting a final copy, for example, in writing a story of 'Danger In The Jungle'. The process of re-drafting clearly had a positive effect on the quality of the final piece of work.

84. 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 the foundation subjects, too many worksheets are used and this restricts pupils' use of their own imagination in deciding how to set work out for themselves. The teachers are working hard to improve pupils' abilities to raise their own performance, particularly in extended and imaginative writing. Too often, however, the pupils' early attempts fail to grip the reader and they 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 moderate progress in pupils' writing abilities since the implementation of the literacy strategy.
85. The quality of teaching observed was good overall, with very good teaching in both key stages. The teachers' subject knowledge is secure. 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 throughout the school. The marking of work is not however. Whilst marking does take place, it is often not enough to aid improvement, and there is insufficient critical comment. There is little evidence of marking which requires pupils to interact with the teachers' comments and take action to remedy weaknesses. The teachers' comments do not place demands on pupils to challenge their own ideas, improve vocabulary, structure and presentation of work to suit the purpose and audience.
86. Marking overall is failing to get to the heart of what needs to be improved and this is having an adverse effect on pupils' attainment and progress, particularly in writing. 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. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and are well supported by the class teacher's intervention and questioning. Tasks are well matched to their needs and reflect the targets set in their individual educational plans.
87. The co-ordinator manages the subject well and has a grasp of what needs to be done. Through identification of weaknesses in writing, the percentage of pupils attaining at the higher levels has increased at the end of both key stages. Resources have been improved, and support the literacy hour well. The co-ordinator has not monitored the delivery of English but non-contact time has been earmarked as a priority in the school development plan for this purpose. The

subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and is well supported by extra-curricular activities, including visits. The school is well placed to make further improvements.

## **MATHEMATICS**

88. The standards achieved in the National Curriculum assessments in 1999 for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 were below the national average when compared with the results of all schools nationally, and below the results in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Since 1996 the overall trend has seen a gradual improvement in achievement. The inspection results confirm this improvement to a point where a greater number of pupils are now working at the expected level, with a small group working at a higher level. It has to be remembered that in a small cohort of pupils such as those here, one or two pupils' scores can make a great deal of difference in comparing results with national and similar school averages.
89. Results of the National Curriculum tests in 1999 showed pupils' standards at the end of Key Stage 1 to be below the national average when compared with all schools nationally, and well below those of similar schools. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was also below the national average. The trend in results from 1996 shows little improvement over time, with a significant drop in standards in 1998. This figure may well have been affected by a larger than average number of pupils with special educational needs.
90. Current standards are in line with national expectations, an improvement over previous results. This may well be attributable to the advent of the National Numeracy Strategy, which gives teachers more support with planning and teaching. The results of this year's assessments are not yet in a format by which comparisons can be made with national figures, but their scores give an early indication of improvements being made.
91. Within the current statistics, the achievements of girls at Key Stage 1 is better than boys, whilst the picture is reversed at Key Stage 2. The school has not yet considered the reasons for these differences in any depth. At the same time, the teacher assessments at Key Stage 1 are over generous in suggesting the percentage of pupils who might achieve the higher Level 3 scores. The teacher-assessed figure was double the actual results and gives rise to some concern about the accuracy of the judgements made.
92. Following a sound start in the reception class, pupils in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress with their usage and application of mathematical knowledge, although this is still a weaker area in mathematics through the school. Pupils gain a better command of mathematical terms and are able to use signs and symbols appropriately in Year 1. They solve simple problems, see patterns in numbers and make sensible suggestions for the next number in a series. In Year 2, they use terms such as lowest or highest with accuracy and see patterns of odd and even numbers in a hundred square. In Year 3, pupils fill in numbers missing from a series, while in Year 5 they make sound progress in beginning to solve more complex problems. Many now see calculations and computations when they are hidden in wordy problems. Year 6 pupils try to solve the 'Internet problem of the week' and begin to look at investigations. This work, however, is too teacher-directed and does not show pupils following their own lines of enquiry or working towards more difficult aspects of algebra.

93. The school has used the National Numeracy Strategy well to support the continued steady improvement in its number work. Pupils in Year 2 order numbers to 100 and carry out simple addition and subtraction sums involving tens and units. They recognise coins and calculate amounts of money whilst also being able to work out the change they might get from one pound. In the initial parts of mathematics lessons, where pupils are working on mental mathematics, it is clear that they are getting quicker at remembering simple number facts, which most recall accurately. They count on in tens and hundreds and most count backwards accurately using the same numbers. Progress through Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. Pupils order fractions and decimals to one thousandth, they understand multiples, square numbers and factors and have begun to look at negative numbers. They carry out long division and long multiplication sums and calculate simple percentages competently. In order to achieve at a higher level, the work needs to focus more on extending the pupils' use of percentages and negative numbers, however, and on increasing the pupils' ability to devise formulae from an examination of facts leading to generalisations.
94. Seven year olds have a sound understanding of shape, space and measurement. They describe two and three-dimensional shapes using correct terms such as angle, solid and face. They measure objects such as books, pencils and hands accurately in centimetres. Many are able to explain why a shape is symmetrical and complete the other half of a symmetrical pattern. By Year 3, pupils understand measuring with grams and litres in appropriate situations, whilst in Year 5 they measure and calculate perimeters and areas of regular rectangles with reasonable understanding. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils understand how to measure angles, some to an accuracy of one degree. They know the names of different angles and many know the correct names for different types of triangles.
95. Work in data handling, seen as weak at the last inspection, has improved. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 have produced a block graph in which they display their data based on a study of liquorice allsorts! They have counted, with use of a tally chart, the different types of sweets and have illustrated their findings in graphical form. By Year 5, pupils draw an accurate temperature chart, for example, from information they are given. By the end of Year 6, the oldest pupils interpret data from such things as the lists of scores in mathematics tests. They have sound understanding of probability. They understand the terms mean, mode and median and give good definitions for these. They have begun work on ratio, but here their understanding is yet incomplete.
96. Within classes the different ability groups were all making satisfactory progress, including pupils with special educational needs. These pupils were well catered for by the class teachers, who often worked with them from time to time during mathematics lessons. When extra support was available, this often allowed these pupils to make good progress in their work. The progress of the higher attaining pupils was at least satisfactory during lessons, with good progress in some cases. The work in books, seen over the last few months however, shows a different picture. Too often pupils are being given the same work although teachers know that some are more capable than others. The school needs to continue working in the same way as during the week of the inspection, setting challenging work for the different ability groups within the classes so that pupils can continue to build on the good progress made.

97. Of the seven lessons seen in mathematics during the inspection, one was very good, four were good and two were satisfactory. This shows an improvement in teaching since the last inspection when teaching was said to be “satisfactory at both key stages”. Working with the National Numeracy Strategy has given teachers complete support with their planning which is now good. Several teachers have good subject knowledge and put this to good effect as they teach basic skills with success. As a result, pupils are being given better quality instruction allowing them to be more successful in their work, especially in their work in number. As a result standards are rising. Several, but not all teachers share the learning objectives with the pupils, in order to give them a clear understanding of what they are going to learn in the lesson. The impact of this is that pupils have a better understanding not only of the planning behind the lessons but also of the way that their activities will support their understanding. As a result of being more involved in their learning, pupils are showing good and sometimes very good attitudes to mathematics. The better planned activities seen during the week clearly appeal to the different ability groups encouraging pupils to concentrate hard on their work, sometimes for over an hour. In all lessons the teachers’ management of the class and its work was good and sometimes very good. Through good relationships and well-focused tasks, pupils are more than happy to work away at their activities with little thought of misbehaving. This in turn has a very positive effect on the time spent on task and ultimately on the progress they make in lessons. Teachers move around the groups well during lessons. They engage pupils in discussion and make themselves aware of the progress individuals and groups are making. What is not so clear to see, is the use teachers make of this information in order to guide the next stage of planning. A scrutiny of planning since September shows too little evidence of progress made in lessons being noted on plans, with the result that work for the following days is not adjusted to take account of progress seen. In order to drive forward the progress of all groups, planning needs to take account, far more frequently, of day-to-day assessments.
98. In the best lesson seen, where pupils were working on symmetry, the teacher had planned the work in very good detail. She had a good structure to the lesson and taught the basic skills very well. The variety of tasks she set challenged all ability groups. As a result, the pupils were fully committed to their work and progress in the lesson was good for all pupils.
99. Numeracy skills are applied satisfactorily across a number of curricular areas. The time lines seen in several classes supported the work in history, clearly showing the period under discussion. Pupils from this can gauge an idea of chronology, seeing where their topic fits in to the wider timescale of world history. Work in science is often supported by numeracy skills. Pupils create graphs and charts to support their work and sometimes make use of information technology in this area. In design and technology pupils measure, draw and cut accurately, sometimes measuring to millimetres. Year 6 pupils also use their mathematical skills well in measuring and recording their results in athletics. Rather more disappointing is that some classes do not have interesting numeracy displays. Where good displays are in evidence, they attract pupils to look and often interact with them, answering some of the questions posed for them. Teachers would do well to share their displays with each other to see where strengths and weaknesses lie.
100. The subject co-ordinator, who had just taken responsibility for the subject at the last inspection, has not been able to make the progress required in monitoring and co-ordinating the subject. He has had too little time to take on tasks such as work

sampling, analysing the results of National Curriculum tests and most importantly of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. In order that standards are improved further it is important that these issues are addressed quickly.

101. The area of assessment is one which the school has come to comparatively recently, the policy only having been written this term, and therefore its systems and procedures have had little or no time to impact on standards in the subject. The school now has a very reasonable range of test materials and produces useful information, which it now needs to use in order to set targets for individuals and groups. The same information could be used to track the progress of individuals and groups as they move through the school. An analysis of test results has not yet been carried out in order to see strengths and weaknesses in the teaching of mathematics. It would be even more beneficial if pupils were also more involved in their own targets and assessments. The school marking policy is quite new and has not yet been completely established in each class. As pupils do most of their work on sheets of paper, rather than in books, it is often quite difficult to track their progress. It is therefore even more important that they be involved in discussing their progress through marking. This would be an important factor in overcoming some of the problems surrounding the way in which the school has chosen for pupils to record their work.

## SCIENCE

102. In the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment was below the national average, and below average compared to similar schools. However, it was a small cohort, and one pupils' test result one grade lower than expected was the difference between being in line with or below average. This suggests caution in making such comparisons. Teacher assessment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 shows pupils' attainment to be above average. The evidence from the work of the Year 3 pupils suggests that these assessments were over-optimistic, as few were recognised currently as having attained the next National Curriculum level, Level 3, yet.
103. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 were observed working at high levels in designing experiments to test changes in materials, and their overall attainment is in line with that expected, although fewer pupils than average attain high levels. During a lesson to test how iron rusts, the pupils orally set out the conditions required to devise and implement a fair test. A small number of boys showed good recall of specific facts, such as that it is oxygen as part of air that is part of the rusting 'triangle' of causation. Most pupils understand the importance of stating a hypothesis before the test, in order to follow recommended scientific practice. They then set the experiment up with guidance from the teacher and a support worker very well, with clear understanding of the need to monitor changes regularly, and to record their findings in a manner that would allow them to evaluate what they had found. They have reviewed the full range of the subject during the year, showing good knowledge and understanding of human development for example, and of how food chains operate in the natural world.
104. Teacher's assessment at the end of Key Stage 1 suggests that pupils attain above average levels, but inspection findings indicate that attainment is close to the national average. During the inspection, pupils in Year 2 tested the effect of dropping different objects to see what happened. The learning intention was to understand that air is all around them, and that it exerts a force. They were intrigued by the way air slowed the fall of a polythene bag, and correctly predicted that a coin and a tennis ball would fall more swiftly. They discussed and recorded their findings appropriately. The teacher's skilled questioning helped them to make good progress in their understanding of testing procedures, and of the forces acting on falling objects. This work was at a higher level than often seen at this age.
105. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are very good across the school. In response to the teachers' well-planned activities, often involving video material, the pupils concentrate well, work together in pairs and groups successfully, and make sound progress in their learning. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The teachers' very good management skills combined with the pupils' good attitudes to allow good learning to take place during the inspection. For example, during a Year 3 and 4 lesson on the suitability of different materials for different purposes, the pupils were very attentive and eager to answer questions. They were so well involved that a good number of them immediately spotted the teacher's deliberate mis-spelling of the word 'transparent' on the board.
106. The quality of teaching observed was good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. The co-ordinator, who has outstanding subject knowledge, is influential in helping colleagues to plan their work. He has not, however, had the opportunity yet to work alongside them in lessons to help develop their teaching, and the pupils'

learning. This is a pity, as his teaching is of high quality, and helps the pupils to make good progress in their learning. Teachers plan carefully, using a commercially produced scheme of work to cover the whole subject curriculum. There is a good concentration throughout the school on scientific experimentation, and helping the pupils to set up and run good tests. Consequently, this aspect of the subject is well taught, resulting in sound knowledge and understanding for the pupils across the school. Teachers also stress safe procedures, so that when handling different materials or setting up experiments the pupils are carefully instructed in how to do so without danger to themselves or others. In a Year 1 class on keeping healthy, for example, the teacher drew out from the pupils skilfully the need for hygiene when handling food, one boy vividly illustrating the need to wash your hands before handling food because, "You'll be covered in flies if you don't!".

## **ART**

107. The standards of work seen are generally above what is expected of seven and 11 year old pupils, with very high quality work being produced within both key stages.
108. In the lessons observed the pupils in the reception class listened attentively during a detailed and lively introduction on how to produce two and three-dimensional forms based on 'Lowry' people, which they had studied during a visit to the Lowry Museum in Salford. They concentrated well and persevered with the difficult task of manipulating wire into the desired shapes and in gluing and fixing tissue paper to form the body. Older infant pupils used their imagination and technical skills well in representing a 'snail' in the style of Matisse, their use of coloured geometrical shapes being in complete contrast to the fine lines and tone used in their observational drawings of live snails.
109. Progress is good throughout the school. Pupils of all ages show eagerness and skill in working with a good range of materials including clay in a variety of dimensions and scales. The pupils select relevant materials, experiment with ideas with increasing control and greater awareness, and evaluate and improve their own work. These skills are well illustrated in young pupils' paintings in the style of Lowry, older infants' pastel pictures in the style of Marc Chagall and Year 1 pupils' mother and child pictures, inspired by Mary Cassatt, together with a range of paintings and illustrations in history and other subjects.
110. The variety and high quality of the displays reported in the last inspection continue to enrich the environment. The entrance hall is a prime example, with fabric printing and colourful paintings in the style of Gustav Klimt and William Morris being testimony to the pupils' acquired skills and artistic talents.
111. The overall quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and the ones seen were prepared and resourced very effectively. The activities produce appropriate challenges for the pupils to respond positively. Teachers constantly assess pupils' development during the lessons, through observation and questioning, using this to make direct teaching points which have a positive effect on the pupils' quality of work. Through useful discussions, exemplifying the teachers' high expectations, the pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own work and consider how it can be improved.
112. Resources, including reference material on famous artists and art in other cultures, are good and well managed and used. The co-ordinator is highly skilled and gives

enthusiastic support to her colleagues. The subject makes a significant contribution to the pupils' personal, social, spiritual and cultural development.



## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

113. Pupils at the end of both key stages are currently working at a level comparable to that expected for their age, with some pupils working at higher levels. This shows that standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
114. The school has recently adopted the nationally recommended scheme for the subject, which is very similar to the scheme it has used for some time. This overall plan for the work of the school not only gives individual teachers confidence to teach the subject, but helps ensure that skills, knowledge and understanding are developed in a systematic way, building each time on previous work.
115. Reception pupils help create a beanstalk for Jack, gaining valuable skills in cutting and joining techniques. They then put these skills to good use later when they make cards with Humpty Dumpty as a moving figure. In Year 1, pupils learn to add further movement to their models as they produce puppets with at least one moving part. The design element of the work in the subject was seen in a lesson about making a coat of many colours for Joseph. Here, groups of pupils were working at a variety of well-planned activities that were supported with good resources, so that the pupils made good progress in their work. The teacher reminded them of the skills they would use and the activities of designing, cutting out a template, pinning the template to material and cutting out a pattern, linked well to the good instruction they had been given. As a result, pupils were enthralled with the activities, concentrated well on their tasks and made good progress.
116. In Year 3 and 4, pupils worked in groups to create a large model mini-beast, linking well with science. Their previous work showed labelled designs giving details of materials which might be used and possible colours for the finish of their models. Groups had to discuss the sharing of tasks, decide on materials and then turn their designs into reality. Once again the activities were challenging. Pupils had received good instruction on techniques and the teacher was brave enough to encourage discussion within the groups so that there was a clear feel of pupils taking initiative and responsibility for their model making. Progress in the lesson was good as a consequence of good teaching and the good attitudes of the pupils.
117. A similar picture was seen in Year 6. Here the task was much more challenging, but once again showed pupils using previously learned skills whilst attempting new ones within a design and make format. Having previously had experience of making a bridge, pupils were now tackling the designing and making of a fairground ride. Ideas had been generated through discussion and some use had been made of labelled sketches. Many pupils had written lists of materials and tools they might need, with a small number having considered the order in which they should make the structure. Good teaching of skills enabled the pupils to measure, mark and cut material accurately, whilst at the same time sanding finished cut pieces in order to produce a good finish. Previous work on bridges showed that pupils had made evaluations of their finished bridges and had used these evaluations to make the bridges stronger and better for their purpose.
118. There is very little food technology being carried out in Key Stage 2, which reduces the overall strength of the subject somewhat. At the same time, more could be done to support literacy within the subject. The provision of different evaluation writing frames would give pupils of different abilities more and better opportunities to develop their writing skills when evaluating or writing about their work. Equally the

co-ordinator's lack of opportunities to observe her colleagues at work reduces her effectiveness in pointing to the strengths and areas for development in the subject. The subject has good resources, which are carefully stored, and give good support to the subject for all pupils.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

119. Pupils' attainment in the work seen is generally as expected for their age, and they make satisfactory progress in their learning. There are examples of good progress, and of higher than expected attainment. For example, Year 2 pupils benefited greatly from a residential experience combining history and geography. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
120. In their class work, Year 2 pupils have drawn good bird's-eye view plans of the classroom, and begin to locate objects on plans accurately using two figure grid references. They develop their understanding further in plotting their route to school, and use symbols to represent features in the environment. They have good opportunities to learn about the British Isles, and extend their study to consideration of a world map with the continents and oceans depicted. They work neatly and accurately in their books, and produce good displays related to their residential field trip.
121. Pupils in Year 6 develop their skills of geographical enquiry successfully in studying life in a village and town in Kenya, and contrasting and comparing that with their own experience of life in the United Kingdom. This study is carried out across the key stage, and whilst there is some overlap of activities, teachers carefully increase the level of challenge and expectation for successive year groups. For example, the teacher of the Year 4 and 5 class built well on the pupils' previous work to help them consider a Kenyan child's day on the farm, contrasted with a Kenyan city child's day, and with their own day in England. Pupils in Year 6 had also experienced this work, but extended it to use the knowledge and information gained to create good quality and well-researched tourist guides and brochures.
122. Pupils have good attitudes and behave well in these lessons as in most others. Their interest and concentration contribute very well to the progress of the lessons, and they respond very well to the teachers' high expectations.
123. The quality of teaching observed towards the end of Key Stage 2 was very good. Teachers of the mixed age classes in Years 4 and 5, and Years 5 and 6, plan their work carefully, and link work across a number of learning areas well. For example, pupils research using the Internet, text sources, and video, and present their information in written, hand-illustrated, and graphical form. The teacher in Year 5 and 6 combined history, geography and physical education effectively in a study of the original Olympic Games in Greece, as a prelude to this year's Australian Olympics in Sidney. Occasionally, teachers' marking is not subject specific, nor does it indicate mis-spellings sufficiently to help the pupils improve their work. They have very good organisational skills, and manage the pupils very well. The teacher of the Year 4 and 5 class began the lesson well with her dramatic "Jambo", enthusiastically chorused in response by the class. She held their attention well through well-directed questioning. She also gave a very good model of equality, treating the information about city and village life in both Kenya and England as equivalent, so that the pupils took this as their starting point, with no cultural deficit in comparison.



## HISTORY

124. Pupils' attainment in the work seen is as expected for their age, representing sound progress since entry to the school. Those pupils with special needs take a full part in all activities, and make sound progress, and sometimes good progress when closely supported by an adult.
125. Pupils in Year 2 make good use of a well-organised residential visit to a local field study centre to study the history of the locality. They learn a great deal about using direct historical evidence to learn about the past when they visit Beeston Castle. They also learn about famous local events, such as the Fire of Nantwich, linked skilfully by the teacher to important national events, like the Gunpowder Plot, and the story of Guy Fawkes.
126. By Year 6, pupils have a well-developed sense of chronology, and are beginning to consider the reasons why people in the past acted as they did. Through research to write well-presented potted biographies, they learn about famous and important people and events in the recent to the distant past, such as Princess Diana, Martin Luther King, Oliver Cromwell, and William Shakespeare. They also develop their skills of historical enquiry, using a variety of sources, becoming increasingly independent in their studies. For instance, in studying Ancient Greece for their work on the Olympics, they use information from texts, illustrations, video and the Internet.
127. Pupils in reception and Year 1 learn to answer questions about the past from texts, pictures and artefacts, and how everyday objects differ or are the same as those in the past. For example, they showed surprising knowledge of the purpose of a mangle from looking at a photograph, until it was pointed out that the school has its own mangle that they have previously handled and discussed. This illustrates that the pupils build well on their previous learning, and use their direct, practical knowledge to inform their research.
128. The link between the good quality teaching, the pupils' learning and their attitudes and behaviour in lessons is very clear. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Because the teachers are clear about what they are teaching, and have high expectations, the pupils have very good attitudes to their learning, and behave very well. In a good lesson with reception and Year 1 pupils, which also included a group of nursery children, the teacher used her rich and varied collection of historical artefacts very well to stimulate their curiosity, and extend their understanding of change through time. She linked a well-chosen story to this activity, and when she let the pupils look at the artefacts, they were excited but controlled, and even the very young nursery children were wide-eyed in looking at such objects as a chiming Westminster clock.
129. The Year 5 and 6 teacher used video material skilfully, pausing the video to check the pupils' understanding or to expand a point, but without breaking the flow or killing their interest. He dealt with images of nudity sensibly and factually, modelling for the pupils a proper regard for how people in the past acted, so that there was no silliness. He had organised group work that challenged the pupils well, and a group of pupils with special needs took delight in their use of good source material to create models of illustrated plates that depicted the energy and athleticism of the games with skill and care. A group of high attaining pupils was set a difficult task in

researching information from Internet sources, in which they exceeded the teacher's high expectations by the end of the lesson.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

130. Standards of attainment in information technology were below the national expectation, becoming a key issue from the last inspection. Although the school has had some time to address this issue, there are still weaknesses in the subject. The school shows in its plans that it is addressing all elements of the National Curriculum for information and communication technology (ICT), but in practice, it is for a number of reasons, addressing three elements well but the remaining two with less success. In word processing, data handling and control technology the work is satisfactory, but it is not yet good enough in developing modelling skills, or in sensing and measuring, such as of weather information.
131. The current scheme of work, written after the last inspection, is based on previous hardware and software, which now needs updating in order to support planning and teaching more effectively.
132. Pupils in the nursery use ICT, but have poorer resources than the rest of the school. At Key Stage 1 pupils have satisfactory access to using information technology for communication. Pupils in Year 1 are developing keyboard skills and mouse control in their work with simple literacy programs. They can match letters on the screen to those on the keyboard and recognise some of the different key functions such as space bar and return. Two Year 1 pupils were seen working on a spelling program, recognising a word and placing it, via mouse control, into a space ship in order to receive a positive response. Most pupils can use a tape recorder to play story tapes and a good many have had experience of using an on-screen story book.
133. Good examples of pupils' work are seen in Year 2 where they have written, using a Word program, about their visit to Burwardsley Centre. This work shows good links with their literacy skills. In Year 4 pupils have written about 'Metalmiss' and show evidence of changing fonts and letter size as they write about the story from their literacy hour work. In Year 6, pupils are seen being shown how to capture information from a CD-ROM then transfer it to a word processing program, in order to readjust the information and display it in another format. Here, the clear teaching of the basic skills enables pupils to understand the techniques involved.
134. There are some examples, but not as many as one would like, of pupils using their ICT skills to record or handle data. Limited examples exist of pupils producing graphs in Key Stage 1 via the computer, whilst in Key Stage 2 some example exist of pupils producing graphs from their work on probability. There is little use made of data such as census material being used in history or of graphs being created through the computer to support work in science. Pupils in Year 1 begin to develop the skills of taking information from a CD-ROM so that when they are given further support in Year 2, they can use a dictionary program and begin to feel confident in using the icons and tool bars shown.
135. Work in control technology is satisfactory. In reception, pupils are able to give instructions to a floor robot, in order that it might move in chosen directions. They know how to send it forwards and backwards and many can make the device turn from side to side. In Years 3 and 4 pupils begin to use an on-screen turtle and in the same way learn to give it instructions. This results in them being able to direct it around the screen and draw shapes as it moves. Work in Year 6 builds upon this sound base and pupils here are able to take more control of the on-screen turtle and create more involved patterns. It has yet to be extended fully to include more

- examples of using this type of facility to control sets of traffic lights, the lights in a model house or simple burglar alarms.
136. The development of modelling skills is somewhat limited. Year 1 pupils explore a program called 'Teacher's cupboard' in which they are able to move around within the program, making simple decisions as they go. This work is supported by access, in Key Stage 2, to programs such as 'The Crystal Rain Forest' and 'Badger Trails'. The school might well explore the wide range of titles available in order to see where new programs, which link more closely with curriculum areas such as history and geography, through which best use can be made of the cross-curricular nature of ICT.
  137. The use of ICT for sensing and measuring is weak. Not enough emphasis has been placed on using ICT to sense physical data such as temperature, light or movement. Although the school has some of the software and hardware for this, it is not regularly in use.
  138. A major problem holding back the development of ICT has been, and to some extent still is, the lack of hardware. For example, following a class lesson in which pupils were given instructions on how to change the layout of their work on screen, it took from September 6<sup>th</sup> to November 22<sup>nd</sup> before all pupils in the class had received the opportunity to put their skills into practice. Such a time lag between instruction and activity inevitably slows down the rate of progress for most pupils. The nursery children also suffer from out-dated equipment.
  139. The cross-curricular use made of ICT is still not well developed. Individual instances of good use can be seen in such activities as pupils finding out about Nairobi for their geography work by logging on to the Internet in Years 3 and 4. Pupils in Year 6 follow the same path when researching their topic on the Ancient Greeks, while other pupils access CD-ROM titles to find information about science topics. These activities are not yet part of a concerted effort on the school's part to make better and wider use of the facilities it already possesses in its application of ICT.
  140. One of the problems for the school currently is that the subject's co-ordinator has not had time to fulfil his role completely. No time has been allocated for observing colleagues teach in order to assess their ability and training needs. No real collection of work exists, which exemplifies the work across the school in ICT. Whilst the school has quite rightly been concerned to use its grant money well in giving pupils access to the Internet, it has to some extent been deflected from its more important task of fulfilling the requirements of the National Curriculum. The co-ordinator is aware of the shortcomings and the subject appears in the school development plan for the coming year. Nonetheless, the school did complete an action plan following the last inspection, but has yet not managed to meet all of its shortcomings. In reviewing its way forward, there is a need not only to answer some of the issues raised above, but also to rethink its time-tabling and allocation of time to ICT in order that it can support and be supported by the rest of the curriculum. Assessment procedures for ICT are not yet in place, although recently purchased material would fill this gap in the school's programme for assessment when it is used.

## **MUSIC**

141. Attainment in music is in line with what is generally expected for primary age pupils.

142. The school teaches all the elements of the National Curriculum for music and pupils generally make satisfactory progress in all aspects of the subject. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to that of their classmates. Individual pupils make good progress in instrumental work, benefiting from the input of specialist tutors. This broadly reflects the picture painted at the previous inspection.
143. In both key stages pupils sing well in assemblies and enjoy their singing opportunities. The youngest pupils sing rhymes and action songs, and Year 3 and Year 4 pupils create a 'seaside' picture using their voices and sounds, with both groups achieving and holding their time well. Pupils are given good opportunities to add percussion to accompany their singing. For example, when Year 2 pupils sang 'Ha Sukkah' the percussion accompaniment enhanced the performance.
144. The three lessons seen during the inspection showed teaching to be good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. Teachers planned well and were confident in their abilities. They organised the pupils well and asked pertinent questions to extend their thinking. Pupils responded well to the teaching and were motivated to be very active in the lessons, concentrating on their tasks and behaving well. Particularly in the Year 3 /4 class when performing a range of seaside calls such as 'Punch & Judy', which paid justice to their positive attitude, self-discipline and the high quality teaching.
145. Pupils are taught very often from good quality taped programmes, which in themselves provide the non-specialist with a meaningful programme of activities and which safeguards continuity and progression. There are also opportunities for the pupils to listen to a wide variety of music from other times and cultures, which enrich their musical experiences. The co-ordinator has worked well in providing and establishing a comprehensive programme of music, the lack of which was highlighted as an issue in the previous report.
146. Resources are good and used well. The subject makes a positive contribution to the pupils' personal development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

147. Pupils' attainment is above average in games and swimming. It was as expected in dance at the end of Key Stage 1. The whole of the subject curriculum is covered, including the development of athletics skills in the summer, and outdoor pursuits during an activity residential trip for Year 6 pupils. No work in gymnastics was observed, although from teachers' planning it is fully covered during the year, with year-on-year development built into the programme. The subject has a high profile in the school, and accordingly pupils and their parents view it as an important part of their education. Standards have been maintained at above average levels since the previous inspection.
148. Good teaching of dance leads to the development of good skills for pupils in reception and Year 1. They listen carefully to the teacher's clear instructions, and are imaginative in their creation of movements to depict a toy factory at work. The teacher's skilled development of the pupils' responses leads to good levels of work for the age of the pupils, and given that nursery children were also being inducted to the class, the quality of the teaching overall was outstanding. By Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory repertoire of dance movements, understanding how to use



space well, and using direction and different levels at varying speeds to create meaning in their movements. However, the use of a recorded lesson from a BBC scheme was disjointed, as the teacher needed to stop it to explain and extend the ideas. In this case, the teacher has skills which she was reluctant to use unsupported, but the lesson improved when she directed the pupils' work, without following the tape.

149. Both the lessons seen at Key Stage 2 were well led by the teachers, who have good and very good knowledge and understanding of the subject. A teacher who was very close to the start of maternity leave bravely led a games lesson outdoors in stifling heat, in itself deserving of a teaching medal! The quality of teaching here was good, and the pupils made good progress in their development of a variety of games skills in pairs and groups. Their behaviour and attitudes to the lesson were very good in response to the teacher's high expectations and good organisation. Year 5 and 6 pupils responded superbly to the teacher's high expectations of their responsible attitudes and co-operative skills. He insisted on safe and sensible procedures, but gave the pupils very good opportunities to implement what they had learned in physical education and games for themselves. Here, good links were made with mathematics in measuring time and distance, and with history and geography in developing a mini-Olympics tournament.
150. The school takes part in local competitive sport, achieving high levels this year, and there are extra-curricular games opportunities for older pupils which are very well supported.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

151. The standards pupils achieve in religious education are in line with what might be expected, given the demands of the locally agreed syllabus. This is very similar to the situation at the previous inspection. The school now has the benefit of a complete scheme of work, which takes into account the fact that classes have mixed year groups. This was not in place at the time of the last inspection.
152. Pupils make satisfactory progress over their time in Key Stage 1, sometimes making good gains in knowledge in individual lessons. They build up a reasonable knowledge of important Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter and have good opportunities to learn about the similarities and differences between the Jewish and Christian faiths. In a lesson seen in Year 2, pupils discuss the importance of the feast of the Passover to the Jewish faith. They learn new words such as Seder and Pesach, while quite a number of pupils remember the words Torah, synagogue and rabbi. The teacher makes good links as she explains the reasons for the escape from Egypt led by Moses and the symbolism shown in the Seder plate. The teacher has sound subject knowledge and creates good links between individual items of information, enabling pupils to obtain a good overall picture of the reasons for these celebrations.
153. In Key Stage 2, in line with the agreed syllabus, pupils begin to discuss Islam and compare family life, beliefs and the way Muslims worship to Christianity. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 look at the five pillars of Islam, they compare the holy books of the Qur'an and the Bible, they look at some of the traditions of family life and understand the nature of prayer in the two religions. This not only gives them a good understanding of the facts, but also serves to aid their spiritual and cultural development. Whilst the quality of discussion, use of artefacts and planning are

good, the quality of the tasks given to pupils is often not very challenging. Following the discussion on Islamic prayer traditions, the pupils were asked to colour in a drawing of a prayer mat, with an extension activity of drawing a mosque. With more thought these activities could have included much more links with literacy and could have been very supportive of enhancing pupils' literacy skills. The pupils certainly gained knowledge about rituals of the Muslim faith, and had a good understanding of why Muslims pray facing in a particular direction. The sound teaching was accompanied by pupils showing great keenness and interest in the activity, thus raising the quality of learning.

154. In the class of the subject co-ordinator, good work was seen as pupils follow up a visit to the local church by discussing symbolism noted in the vestments and decorations in the church. They see evidence of doves, fire and wind. Through the clear questioning techniques of the teacher, they are brought to a clear understanding of the meaning of these symbols. They look in the New Testament and find references to Pentecost and the Ascension and are enabled, through challenging tasks, to arrive at their own designs using symbols in order to express the meaning of these festivals. Again in Year 6, lesson plans show that not only are pupils discussing issues of religion, but are also discussing matters of personal choice and responsibility, based on Christian principles. Having been visited by the Life Education vehicle, the teacher follows this experience by leading pupils to discuss such things as substance abuse, their own attitudes towards drugs and begins to prepare them for their change of schools and the possible pitfalls ahead. The lesson is well structured and pupils are enabled to express their views openly in a supportive forum.
155. A great deal of the work in religious education is carried out through discussion. This was the situation at the last inspection. With the current drive to improve literacy, it is a pity that more opportunities are not taken to promote writing skills through religious education. Opportunities for a variety of writing opportunities do already exist, but teachers are not using them to best advantage.
156. The co-ordinator has provided a most useful scheme of work through which the subject more clearly builds sequentially over the pupils' time at the school. She now only needs the opportunity to assess how successful this is, by being given opportunities to observe her colleagues at work and to sample the work produced in the different classes. She is currently investigating the idea of introducing assessments into the subject, which would give all teachers a sharp picture of the success of their teaching and of pupils' learning. This should be introduced without delay.