

INSPECTION REPORT

DISLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Disley, Stockport

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111015

Headteacher: Mr. J. Power

Reporting inspector: Mr. Jean-Pierre Kirkland
4483

Dates of inspection: 27th – 31st March 2000

Inspection number: 191611

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. J. Bailey
Date of previous inspection:	February 1997

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Jean-Pierre Kirkland	Registered inspector	Geography	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school
		Music	The school's results and pupils' achievements
		Special educational needs	Teaching and learning
		Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Key Issues for action
Shirley Elomari	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			Pupils' welfare, health and safety
			Partnership with parents and carers
Bernice Magson	Team inspector	English	Leadership and management
		Information technology	
		Design and technology	
Maureen Sillifant	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children under five	
		Science	
		Art	
		Religious education	
Mike Wainwright	Team inspector	Equality of opportunity	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
		Mathematics	
		History	
		Physical education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Disley Primary School is a community school with 273 pupils on roll with slightly more boys than girls. The school is larger than most primary schools. There are 43 full time children under compulsory school age in the reception classes. Overall, there are 10 classes and 11.3 full time equivalent teachers. A minority of pupils come from rural settings, with the majority coming from the immediate village neighbourhood. The area has favourable socio-economic circumstances, with a majority of the housing being owner occupied. About five per cent of the pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds, although only one pupil has English as an additional language. Six per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, a figure well below the national average. The school has thirteen per cent of pupils on its register of special educational needs, which is below the national average. One and a half per cent of pupils have statements of special educational need, which is broadly average. Attainment on entry to the school is generally average, with a wide range of ability each year.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school showing signs of improvement. Despite a stable core of teachers, the school has suffered from a very large turnover in its staffing in the past three years, which has caused considerable disruption in the continuity of teaching and learning and this has impacted adversely on standards in some subjects. This year, there has been far more stability, which is resulting in consistency in teaching, continuity of planning and good progression in learning and improving standards, backed up by good quality leadership and management. Pupils are now making good progress in lessons. Given the good progress and greater continuity in learning, average attainment on entry and above average attainment on leaving, coupled with the slightly above average spending on each pupil, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' achievements in mathematics are above the national average at the end of Key Stage 2 due to good teaching which motivates pupils well;
- Pupils' achievements are well above national expectations in music and above expectations at the end of Key Stage 2 in information and communication technology and history; pupils' achievements are above national expectations at the end of both key stages in physical education;
- Teaching is good overall and this is helping to improve pupils' learning in most lessons;
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning, behave well and form very positive relationships with each other and with adults, leading to high levels of personal development and maturity;
- Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good making a significant contribution to learning;
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good leading to a calm, purposeful and reflective learning environment in a majority of classrooms;
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress due to effective teaching that focuses on the very good individual education plans;
- The very good level of parental involvement in all aspects of the work of the school helps pupils to feel well supported in their education;

What could be improved

- Standards are too low in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 due to insufficiently high challenges in some lessons;
- There is insufficient rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning by the senior management team and subject co-ordinators, which results in inconsistency of learning between classes and between subjects;
- Current procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress are inconsistently applied so that individual targets are not always realistic in helping pupils to improve their standards of work;

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in February 1997. Overall, there has been a satisfactory rate of improvement with most issues appropriately addressed. There are now schemes of work in each curriculum area. Satisfactory assessment procedures have been introduced in English, mathematics and science. There has been some improvement in monitoring of teaching and learning, but this is currently insufficiently rigorous, so that inconsistencies remain. Standards have risen significantly in information and communication technology. Swimming is now an integral part of the physical education curriculum. Standards have risen in mathematics at Key Stage 2, although this is offset by a decline in standards at Key Stage 1. Standards in science at the end of Key Stage 2 are not as high as when the school was previously inspected. The quality of teaching has improved significantly, and provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved, since the school was last inspected. There has been a considerable improvement in the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and in the involvement of parents in their children's education. Leadership continues to be effective.

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	A	A	B	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	B	C	B	C	
science	B	D	C	E	

National Curriculum test results show that standards are above average when pupils leave the school. Standards are average when compared to similar schools in English and mathematics, but well below average in science at age 11. Standards have been rising and falling between subjects over the last three years, but overall, there has been an upward trend which is comparable to the rise in standards nationally. This variation in standards has been caused by: Significant changes in staffing, relatively high levels of pupils entering or leaving the school during Key Stage 2, amounting to over twenty per cent for the current Year 6 and changes in the methods of teaching which have not yet been reflected in the results in end of key stage tests, but which were noted as significant improvements by

inspectors. Inspectors found standards above average in mathematics. Standards were found to be average in English and science for the current group of pupils in Year 6. Almost one third of them are on the register of special educational needs. Over time, attainment on entry to the school has been broadly average, but the current under five groups in reception classes are above average. Stability in teaching and improved quality of learning this year has not yet been realised in the test results at either key stage. At Key Stage 1, although there are many instances of improvement, inspection findings show that standards in mathematics towards the end of the key stage are still not high enough. The 1999 National Curriculum test results were above average in writing, average in reading but well below average in mathematics, due to no pupils achieving level 3. Inspectors found that standards in handwriting were not as good as the results showed last year. Teacher assessments in science showed well above average standards overall. Standards are well above expectations in music, and above expectations at both key stages in physical education. Standards are above expected levels at the end of Key Stage 2 in history and in information technology. In other subjects, standards are close to national expectations, and meet the expectations of the syllabus adopted in religious education. Targets set by the school for the coming year are realistic but below last year's levels, due to the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs in Year 6.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; pupils love coming to school and are eager to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good throughout the school at work and in play. There were no exclusions last year.
Personal development and relationships	Very good; pupils work very well together, have a very well developed sense of team spirit and they use their initiative very skilfully in most areas of learning
Attendance	Very good and well above average

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching in the school is good overall and is having a positive impact on the rising standards noted by inspectors. As a result, the needs of all pupils are met. Twenty-five per cent of lessons observed were very good or better, fifty per cent were good, nineteen per cent were satisfactory and six per cent were unsatisfactory. Teaching has improved significantly since the school was last inspected. Teaching of children under five is consistently good. At Key Stage 1, teaching is satisfactory overall, but there are a minority of lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory. The pace is too slow, control of behaviour is unsatisfactory, and this results in inconsistent levels of learning. However, there are a significant number of lessons where teaching is good and occasionally very good leading to good levels of achievement. At Key Stage 2, teaching is good and a strength. Pupils are expected to work hard, they are challenged effectively by staff who have very good levels

of specific subject knowledge and classroom control and management is very effective in providing a good atmosphere for learning. The overall teaching of English is good with a successful start made to the literacy strategy. In mathematics, teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2 and the introduction of the numeracy strategy has been satisfactory.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	There is a good curriculum overall which is broad, balanced and relevant, and beginning to have a positive impact on learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision with very effective individual education plans enabling pupils to make good progress towards their targets.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Teachers are aware of what needs to be done to ensure good progress is made.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good and a significant strength. This provides an effective back-cloth against which good levels of learning and progress take place.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall, ensuring a calm and stable learning environment. The procedures for tracking pupils' progress are currently unsatisfactory and in need of review.

The school has good links with its parents. There are regular opportunities for parents to become involved in the work of the school, and a significant number do so on a regular basis. There is a very active Disley School Association, which raises substantial sums of money for use in the school annually, benefiting the pupils by providing them with many additional resources.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership is good overall. Strengths include a shared vision and purpose, effective delegation and effective prioritising in development planning which are helping to raise standards. Monitoring the teaching and learning by senior staff and by co-ordinators is a weakness, which is leading to inconsistencies in improvements in subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good; the governing body fulfils its statutory duties effectively, supports the school well and has a good overview of the strategic planning so that the work of the school progresses smoothly.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall. There is still a need to be more consistent and analytical in target setting in order to ensure more consistent progress is made by all pupils.
The strategic use of resources	Good throughout the school. The school has targeted weaker areas and raised standards effectively, such as in information and communication technology. Best value is sought in all spending decisions

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their children like coming to school • music provision was generally very good • the values and attitudes promoted by the school, especially the moral code • instances of poor behaviour are dealt with very well • information and communication technology has improved since the previous inspection • the new initiatives on numeracy and literacy were raising standards • many parents stated that school reports were good and had improved recently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the amount and quality of homework • a closer working relationship between the school and parents • the quality of leadership and management • a reduction in class size, especially in Year 3 • some parents felt that they were insufficiently well informed about their children's progress • the school had a defensive response to suggestions and complaints

Inspectors fully endorse the positive views of parents. Inspectors agree with those parents who state that reports have improved and that they paint a good picture of their children, including the progress they make in school. As a result, inspectors disagree with those parents who do not think that they receive sufficient information on progress. Inspectors also deemed homework to be good overall, both in quality and quantity, as well as adequate preparation for transfer to the high school. Leadership and management in the school are also judged to be good. The very large class size in Year 3 is not adversely affecting the progress of any pupils in that year. Inspectors found no evidence to support parents' views that there was a defensive response to suggestions or complaints, nor was there any evidence that the school did not work as closely as possible with parents, who are always welcome in school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Overall, pupils' achieve well in the school, standards are above average or above expectation in many subjects and pupils make good progress in all their subjects. Most children enter the school with average levels, and many leave the school with levels above the national average. Although attainment on entry to the school is generally average, there is a wide range of ability in each year. Children are regularly tested when they enter the school, and this initial testing confirms average levels of ability. Inspection findings also confirm this pattern of average attainment on entry to the school.

2. The current group of pupils in the two reception classes is achieving above average overall, especially in language, literacy and numeracy. They are making good progress and many have already reached expected levels before their fifth birthdays.

Results in National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 2 and inspection findings

3. At the end of Key Stage 2, results in the 1999 tests showed pupils to be above average in English and mathematics, and close to the national average in science. For all three subjects, standards were above average. Inspection findings show current performances to be average in English and science, and above average in mathematics. Since the previous inspection, this is an improvement in mathematics, but a decline in English and science. Inspectors noted that almost a third of the Year 6 class were on the register of special educational needs, and that over one fifth of the pupils in that year had entered the school during Key Stage 2. Both these factors have had an adverse effect on overall progress and levels of achievement.

4. In English, the proportion of pupils reaching level 4 or above was well above the national average in 1999 in the tests, but average at level 5. In mathematics, the proportion of pupils achieving level 4 and level 5 was above the national average. In science, the proportion of pupils achieving level 4 and above was well above the national average, but the tests also showed the proportion achieving the higher level 5 was below the national average, giving average results overall.

5. In comparison to similar schools, results are average in English and mathematics, but well below in science. This results in a below average judgement overall.

6. Over time, there have been fluctuations in the results in some subjects and for some years. However, the school has remained above the national average, with results improving overall at a rate consistent with the national trend. Over time, girls have performed slightly better than boys, but the difference is not significant and is similar to the national pattern.

Results in the National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 1 and inspection findings

7. At the end of Key Stage 1 in the 1999 test results, pupils' performance in reading was close to the national average, above national averages in writing, but well below the national average in mathematics. In the teacher assessments in science, results were very high at level 2 and above, with average performance at level 3. Results were well below average in mathematics, due to no pupils reaching the higher level 3. In writing, results at level 3 were average but were below the national average at level 3 in reading.

8. When compared to pupils' performances in similar schools, results were below average in reading, close to average in writing, but very low in mathematics, reinforcing the need for improvement in this subject.

9. Over time, standards in the Key Stage 1 tests have been erratic, with some decline in reading and mathematics, and an overall steadier performance in writing. Inspection findings show pupils' performances to be average in reading and in writing. Standards are currently below average in mathematics, which is an improvement since 1999, when they were well below.

Achievements over time

10. At both key stages, the variations in pupils' performances between different years and between the subjects has been affected by a number of significant factors:

- There have been very large changes in the staffing. This has had adverse effects on the continuity of learning. Inspectors noted that the greater stability in staffing this year was having a beneficial effect in raising the rate of progress and learning throughout the school.
- There have been changes in the curriculum, which have affected some subjects more than others, especially mathematics at Key Stage 1, where the new National Numeracy Strategy is only just beginning to become effective.
- Significant variations annually in the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties who are on the school's register of special educational needs. Overall levels of attainment are being particularly adversely affected in the current Year 6 class.
- Substantial pupil mobility, affecting progress and continuity of learning at Key Stage 2, where over a fifth of the pupils currently in Year 6 were not in the school at the beginning of the key stage.

11. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, largely due to the precise and realistic targets set for them in their individual education plans. Teachers review these on a regular basis and refer to them when planning lessons, so that needs are met and support is appropriate. Higher-attaining pupils are generally well challenged, and in many lessons at both key stages teachers are beginning to provide extension work which is appropriate to meet needs. The learning of lower- and higher-attaining pupils is enhanced significantly by the way in which teachers question pupils at the start and end of lessons. By asking questions which appropriately challenging thinking skills at all levels, teachers ensure all pupils are made to think and explain their answers. This results in consolidation of learning, better progress and higher standards over time.

Standards in other subjects

12. Standards in other subjects are at least in line with national expectations. Pupils' achievements in art, design and technology, geography and religious education all meet national expectations. Pupils achieve above expected levels at both key stages in history and in physical education. Both are relative strengths of the school. Pupils' achievements meet expectations in information and communication technology at the end of Key Stage 1, but due to significant improvements in resources and good teaching, standards are above expected levels when pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2. In music, a great strength of the school, standards are above expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and well above expected levels at the end of Key Stage 2.

13. Throughout the school, standards in basic skills are rising. Pupils learn to apply their mathematical skills well in lessons, for example in science when producing graphs, in music when counting and in geography when learning about scale and co-ordinates. Teachers emphasise the use of literacy well in all other subjects, so that pupils learn good levels of

technical vocabulary and are provided with opportunities to develop speaking skill, for example, by answering questions in full in front of the class. Information and communication technology skills are also well developed in a concerted effort to raise standards. Good examples occur when pupils research information from the CD-ROM in art, when they learn to correct their spellings in English, or when they explore number patterns in mathematics.

Targets for improving standards

14. Targets for the year 2000, set initially in 1999 have been revised downwards, and appropriately, in view of what is now known of the current group in Year 6. The school is now being more realistic about the large number of pupils on the register of special education need, and expects to achieve close to the national average in English and above the national average in mathematics. While the school has some procedures for analysing results and tracking pupils' performances, these are not rigorous or consistent enough to ensure reasonable accuracy. This is a weakness, which the school needs to address.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Attitudes

15. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and they respond very positively to all school activities. The very good attitudes to work and play, good behaviour and very good relationships make a significant positive contribution to pupils' learning and achievements.

16. Pupils show very high levels of respect for teachers and other adults. Almost all parents report that their children enjoy coming to school. The majority of pupils take a keen interest in their work, they show a real enthusiasm for learning and make good progress as a result. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, the tasks of interpreting a bar chart and recording the information on the computer stimulated pupils' interest effectively. Almost all pupils sustain their concentration well and try hard to complete the work set. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils showed intense concentration and pride in their computer skills. Pupils respond very well when the work is challenging, for example in a Year 6, geography lesson, which placed great demands on them as they were asked to read and interpret a geology map of Cheshire.

Group work

17. Pupils work very well in pairs and small groups; this was evident in a significant number of the lessons observed during the inspection in subjects such as mathematics and science, where good progress was made through purposeful discussion and debate in problem-solving. Pupils with special educational needs share the positive attitudes that pervade the school and make good progress because they enjoy their work and mix in well with other pupils. Extra-curricular activities are enthusiastically supported and this successfully extends the learning process for many pupils.

Behaviour

18. In lessons, behaviour is usually good, often very good and in a few instances exemplary and this provides a stable background for effective learning. Unsatisfactory behaviour was observed in a small number of lessons and this was clearly related to a lack of appropriate challenge in the lesson and to the teacher's inability to control the class effectively. Behaviour at breaks and lunchtimes is also good, maintaining the high standards set in most lessons. Pupils are almost always polite to one another and to adults. They take good care of their own property and that of the school. For example, the displays of work and artefacts around the school, including some fragile china objects, are very well cared for. A large majority of parents express satisfaction with the good standards of

behaviour of pupils. Pupils understand the expectations the school has of their behaviour and almost all respond positively. The rare incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly and firmly so that this does not interfere with the learning process. There were no exclusions last year.

Relationships

19. The quality of relationships is very good and is a strength of the school in promoting good quality learning. Pupils form positive relationships with one another, with teachers and with other adults. In lessons, pupils respond very well when asked to work together in small groups or to collaborate on different aspects of a task. Pupils share resources in a friendly way. They listen well to other pupils and to their teachers. They usually respect the views of others and consider their feelings. They offer help spontaneously when needed and applaud the good efforts of others. A programme of personal, health and social education (PHSE) has been introduced since the previous inspection and pupils respond positively to the opportunities provided to explore their feelings. In Key Stage 2, they are often able to write with insight as, for example when writing about their best friend's character in PHSE.

Responsibilities and personal development

20. Pupils are willing to take responsibility and are offered a wide range of opportunities to do so. From their earliest days in school, they are expected to take turns in helping the teacher by, for example, returning the register to the office and tidying up. By the time they are in Year 6, they are expected to set a good example to the younger ones and help in a number of ways. These include reading to younger pupils and playing with them during wet playtimes, helping to give out merit badges in the weekly achievement assemblies and acting as "Bother Busters", befriending the youngest pupils and helping them to understand bullying. Pupils work very well independently and are given many opportunities to do so, for example in English lessons, where in one Year 1 and 2 lesson, they showed independence and initiative in using the dictionaries effectively. Pupils are also given opportunities to undertake independent research work in several subject areas. Staff support pupils' initiatives effectively, for example in supporting their ideas for raising money for charity.

Attendance

21. Attendance was well above the national average at the time of the previous inspection and has consistently remained at a very good level. Levels of unauthorised absence are below the national average. The regular attendance plays a significant role in enabling pupils to make good progress because there are few interruptions to learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. Teaching is good overall, a significant strength of the school and a significant improvement since the previous inspection. This is a major factor in helping to raise standards and improve the quality of learning. Ninety-four per cent of teaching was judged to be at least satisfactory. Fifty per cent was judged to be good and twenty-three per cent was judged to be very good. There were two occasions when teaching was outstanding. Six per cent of teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory.

23. Teaching for the children in the reception classes who are under five years of age is consistently good. Activities are broad and varied and are appropriately planned to ensure all children receive a balanced education, fully meeting the requirements of the desirable learning outcomes. Lessons are well prepared and appropriately structured, so that children have frequent opportunities to be creative. Direct teaching of language, literacy and numeracy is good. Teachers build well on children's existing skills and use what is known of their capabilities effectively when planning work in order to extend their learning well. As a

result, lessons have a good pace to them, assistants are used effectively to help with specific groups and specific tasks, and good progress takes place in all children's learning. Almost all children reach or are likely to reach the expected levels by age five, and many achieve beyond this.

24. Teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall. However, there is a variation from very good to unsatisfactory, resulting in uneven rates of progress for some pupils. The good teaching is characterised by effective planning, good subject knowledge and purposeful questioning. Such lessons occur most of the time in English and history and in many lessons in science, information technology and music. The unsatisfactory teaching occurs when the pace of the lesson is too slow, and the pupils' behaviour is insufficiently well managed, resulting in too many pupils not learning effectively enough. This occurred in some lessons in mathematics, art and geography, where learning was unsatisfactory.

25. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is good. Although there are occasional examples of unsatisfactory teaching, overall, lessons are thoroughly prepared, have clear learning objectives and challenge pupils well. Especially effective lessons occur when the teachers use their very good levels of subject knowledge to challenge pupils' thinking and ensure that all pupils, whatever their prior attainment may be, are fully involved in through answering purposeful questions in the opening and closing sessions. Lessons are unsatisfactory when objectives are not fully explained to pupils, when the pace of learning is too slow or when the teacher is over ambitious and pupils find it hard to keep up and do not consolidate their learning effectively.

26. Teaching of English, mathematics and science is good overall, with several examples of very good practice occurring. Most teachers use the structure of the literacy hour very effectively; planning is thorough, group work is carefully structured and ending sessions are purposeful and review new learning well. In order to ensure good progress, in a lesson in the reception class, the teacher carefully graded the work so that each group was effectively challenged. In a Year 6 lesson focusing on developing reading skills, very thorough planning and high challenges led to pupils building words phonically and extending their vocabulary well. However, handwriting at Key Stage 1 is a minor weakness, and with insufficient emphasis being placed on this aspect in some lessons. In mathematics, teachers are becoming more confident in using the structure of the numeracy hour, although in some lessons the pace is slower than it needs to be, especially in some lessons at Key Stage 1. Where teaching is very good as in a Year 4 lesson, there is thorough preparation with very good use of mathematical language and the teacher summing up well and demanding that pupils explain their strategies clearly when answering questions. This leads to effective learning while providing the teacher with accurate assessment information. Science lessons are thoroughly prepared, and investigative work is very well thought out, especially in a Year 1 lesson where pupils learnt effectively about materials and their properties as they experimented with chocolate at different temperatures.

27. The teaching of music throughout the school is also good and a strength in raising standards. There are many examples of very good teaching when teachers draw upon their very good levels of expertise and subject knowledge. Resources are very well used, with generous amounts of time given to experimentation with sound and rhythm. Teachers give frequent opportunities for musically talented pupils to perform in groups when composing, with effective use being made of such talents in Key Stage 2 hymn practice with a recorder group, and in a Year 6 lesson when a violinist used her instrument effectively.

28. The amount of unsatisfactory teaching has fallen significantly since the school was

previously inspected. However, pockets of unsatisfactory practice still occur. All these lessons have a number of common features. Pupils are not always effectively managed, with too much noise or unproductive chatter; the pace then becomes slow as the teacher has to repeat instructions; tasks are either too easy or too hard, resulting in less than satisfactory learning. During the inspection, teachers who gave unsatisfactory performances earlier on in the week tried hard to put matters right and there was significant improvement in classroom management and matching work appropriately to meet the needs of all pupils.

29. Teachers work very hard and are committed to providing pupils with a broad range of curriculum experiences. Especially effective are the frequent opportunities for pupils to work independently, develop their own creativity, and to develop good levels of collaborative work. Such opportunities, coupled with very good relationships, encourage good quality learning and progress. Teachers plan to incorporate pupils with special educational needs into all activities. In many lessons, it was impossible to distinguish these pupils from the rest of the class, such was the quality of their learning. In other instances, teachers pay good attention to the individual education plans, so that work set helps pupils move towards achieving their targets effectively.

30. A further strength in teaching is the way in which teachers make very good cross-curricular connections in lessons, especially through linked topic work. Especially effective are the links between numeracy, literacy, art, geography and music in the topic on India in the lower juniors, and between history, geography, science and numeracy in the topic on the local area in the upper juniors. At Key Stage 1, teachers make good use of opportunities to extend literacy and numeracy across the curriculum, for example when teaching geography and reinforcing language development through spellings, or when teaching music, and reinforcing counting in rhythm when performing.

31. The levels of homework set are good, and the quality of such homework tasks is also good. Reading, spellings and mathematical tables form a bulk of the homework at Key Stage 1. This extends classroom learning effectively and involves many parents appropriately from an early age. At Key Stage 2, homework tasks become more varied, with research work a more prominent feature. This is good preparation for transfer to the high school, while encouraging pupils to develop independence in their work.

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

32. All statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education are met. The range and quality of learning opportunities is good. Key Stage 2 pupils, particularly, enjoy a broad education, with a good variety of experiences such as residential visits and links with schools in Malawi and Leicester. There are some very effective cross-curricular links. When pupils in Year 3 learn about Victorian England, they construct dolls' houses of that period in design and technology. Year 6 pupils' study of salt embraces aspects of science, geography and history. The National Literacy Strategy has been fully implemented and is having a good impact on pupils' progress. The more recent National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented satisfactorily and teachers' confidence in its use is increasing. There are schemes of work for each area of the curriculum although some of them will be reviewed in the light of new national recommendations. These provide the basis for teachers' planning, which is good.

33. All pupils have full and equal access to the curriculum and the provision for all pupils with special educational needs is good. The number and range of extra-curricular activities is very good. This is a strength of the school in extending the learning process for many pupils. In addition to many after-school activities, there is a variety of visits and visitors to the school, which enhance pupils' learning experiences very well. The school plans to strengthen the existing policy and practices for sex and drugs education. Overall there is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and their personal development is very good. Some of the visitors to school are from the local community, with which the school has good and effective links. Relationships with other schools, including the high school and pre-school group, are strong and most constructive.

34. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual development and very good provision for moral, social and cultural development: this is a strength of the school. All staff are very good role models. They demonstrate to pupils through their everyday actions and relationships how best to treat others. They treat pupils with respect and are given respect in return.

35. Provision for spiritual development is good. Assemblies, including class assemblies, are of good quality and provide all pupils with regular opportunities to reflect on their lives and on how they can help others. In one Year 4 personal, health and social education lesson the teacher very skilfully enabled the pupils to distinguish between those things they wanted and those they needed and encouraged them to see that, by giving up some wants, they could help other less fortunate children. Within the curriculum the school provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to learn about and reflect on the world in which they live. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils expressed amazement when steam turned to water as it cooled.

36. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral and social development. The code of conduct, which is prominently displayed in the foyer and is signed by all pupils, provides a very good framework for moral and social development and teachers routinely reinforce it. Pupils are in no doubt of the difference between right and wrong and almost all consistently choose to behave well and to show consideration for others. In lessons, there are frequent opportunities for pupils to work together in pairs or small groups. Through this they learn to listen well to others and to share resources equably. Assemblies and personal, health and social education lessons make good reference to social and moral themes. The school helps to support a school in Malawi and raises funds for a number of charities, which helps pupils to understand that others are less fortunate.

37. The provision for cultural development is very good. In religious education, pupils learn about major world faiths. Their awareness and understanding of religious and cultural differences is also developed through topic work, such as that on India currently being done by Year 3 and Year 4. Work on Cheshire in Years 5 and 6 enables pupils to develop a clear understanding of the heritage of the county in which they live. Pupils have a wide range of experiences in art, music, English, drama and history, which enhance their cultural awareness well. The school provides a wide variety of visits to places of interest, such as the science museum and High Ash Farm for residential work in geography. The school also encourages visitors, such as the Cheshire Dance Workshop, folk musicians, local clergy and sports' coaches to share their expertise and as a result this broadens pupils' horizons successfully.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school is a friendly and caring community in which pupils feel safe. Teachers and other staff set high standards of discipline and good behaviour for pupils and act as very good role models. They have a clear understanding of pupils' personal progress. However, the procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress are unsatisfactory because they are insufficiently detailed to form an accurate picture for setting future targets. This leads to some pupils not always making the progress of which they are capable.

39. The school ensures that the welfare of pupils is very good. Arrangements for first aid and for medicines in school are good. There are very thorough arrangements in place to ensure pupils' health and safety. The governing body carries out regular health and safety checks and the site manager addresses any minor issues as soon as possible. Teachers pay good attention to safe practice in lessons and pupils are taught to be aware of their own safety and that of others. Procedures for child protection are very good; the school has an appropriate policy and procedures comply with requirements. The responsible person for child protection has received appropriate training. Appropriate liaison with outside agencies takes place.

40. There is a satisfactory range of procedures for assessing pupils' academic attainment and progress. Some of them, however, have been implemented fairly recently, with insufficient time yet to identify their ultimate effectiveness. So far, the procedures are used satisfactorily. Teachers generally assess pupils' understanding of new concepts during lessons and curricular planning takes their findings into account.

41. Pupils' progress is tracked annually and forecasts are made regarding future attainment levels. However, these are based on insufficient comparable guidance. There is also very little monitoring of teaching and of pupils' recorded work to question or support individual assessments. Standards across year groups and throughout school are not being checked consistently or rigorously enough. This results in lack of clarity of understanding of the levels at which pupils should aim in order to make better progress and this is a weakness.

42. Procedures for monitoring behaviour and for promoting good behaviour are very good although there is some inconsistency in the effectiveness of behaviour management between teachers. However, almost all staff have high expectations of behaviour and pupils respond well. Little bullying occurs and pupils are confident that there is always an adult to turn to in time of need. Parents state that any incidents of bullying are dealt with both quickly and effectively. The well organised group of Year 6 "Bother Busters" works very effectively with pupils in the reception classes to help them understand what bullying is and help them deal with it if it occurs. The very good relationships that the school fosters between older and younger pupils help to ensure that bullying is not a frequent occurrence. The Year 6 class has a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the teacher has therefore introduced a special system of behaviour management. This works well and successfully motivates those pupils who sometimes find it difficult to sustain good behaviour.

43. The school monitors and promotes the importance of good attendance and punctuality well. The expectations for the reporting of absence are made very clear to parents and virtually all comply with them. Parents are actively discouraged from taking holiday in term time and the rate of holiday absence is low. Procedures for following up the rare instances of unreported absence are good and the school involves the educational

welfare service appropriately in cases of concern.

44. Teachers use their good knowledge of pupils and their families very effectively to guide pastoral care. Pupils are confident to approach staff with any problems and feel well supported. Pupils with special educational needs receive well-targeted help and support through very good quality individual education plans and regular reviews. This enables them to make consistently good progress. Personal development is well promoted by the range of responsibilities offered to pupils and by the very good opportunities for them to develop independence in their learning. The weekly achievement assemblies are used effectively to praise academic and personal achievement, and are valued by pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. For the most part parents express very positive views of the school but there are some aspects where a significant number hold negative views. Almost all parents agree that their child likes school and most value the high standards of work and behaviour, the good progress their children make and the values and attitudes promoted by the school. They believe that their children are expected to work hard and that they are helped to become responsible. However, not all agree that the school works closely with parents. The areas of dissatisfaction include the information parents receive about the progress their child is making, the response to suggestions and concerns, and the management of the school. Many state that their child does not get the right amount of homework but opinion is divided about whether there is too much or too little. Inspection evidence supports the positive views of parents but fails to support the negative ones. For instance, when the school arranged information sessions in numeracy and literacy recently, they were poorly attended. Other school events are well supported, such as seasonal performances.

46. The school provides good information for parents through the prospectus, annual report of governors to parents and the regular monthly newsletters. An overview of the curriculum their child will be studying is also provided each term. The school provides two formal opportunities each year for parents to discuss their child's work and progress with the teacher, but parents are welcome to come into school at other times to discuss progress and look at their child's books. Attendance at parents' evenings is excellent and teachers follow up those parents who do not attend. The quality of annual reports is good and parents state that they have improved since the previous inspection. They provide clear information about progress and, particularly in the core subjects, tell parents about the strengths and weaknesses in their child's work. Reports show that teachers have good knowledge of individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Although reports now contain targets for improvement not all of these are sufficiently clearly focused and precise to guide progress effectively. All pupils have the opportunity in their report to evaluate their work and most do so with good levels of awareness of where they need to improve.

47. A small number of parents help in the school on a regular basis and others help with extra curricular activities and on trips. The quality of help they provide is good. The Disley School Association raises a large amount of money each year to support the work of the school, for example significant financial support for the improvements in information and communication technology. Parents also provide practical help: the bright mural on the staircase to the dining hall was designed by pupils and created by staff and parents using donated materials.

48. The school seeks to involve parents actively with their children's work at home by providing regular homework and through information on the curriculum each term. Home-school contact books have been introduced in reception and Key Stage 1, and the school has recently extended their use up to Year 4. These are already very well developed into an effective channel of communication between home and school. The homework diaries in

use in Years 5 and 6 are well kept by the majority of pupils and regularly checked by the teachers.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The overall leadership and management in the school are good. The headteacher provides clear educational direction for the work of the school and staff share in this vision. After a careful analysis of the needs of the school he has identified priorities for improvement, including the senior management team in the decision making process. The important issues of raising standards and improving teaching, first identified in the previous inspection report, have taken precedence. There is a close relationship between the headteacher and the staff of the school, enabling good progress to be made towards the objectives of the school. Together they work co-operatively. This is having a positive influence in moving the school forward in its priorities. The headteacher works closely with the chair of the governing body, ensuring that the school's aims and values are reflected in their management. The teaching staff share responsibilities well and this enables good progress to be made when changes are introduced, such as in the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Teachers are supported in their work by caring classroom assistants and special needs support staff, and together they engender a positive ethos for learning, which benefits the pupils.

50. The role of the governing body in assisting to shape the direction of the school is good. Many governors are loyal to the pupils and many give their time willingly to help the work of the school. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Statutory requirements are all in place. However, there are sharp divisions within the governing body currently over a series of issues, which relate to the effectiveness of leadership and management within the school. The majority of governors are firmly in support of the headteacher and the decisions made are all arrived at democratically. This has not prevented a group of governors from exercising their rights to disagree, but there is an undercurrent of dissent, which has caused some undermining of the leadership of the school within the community. Inspectors found no evidence to support these concerns.

51. The school development plan is of good quality. Targets are set for action, dates for completion and resources needed for completion have all been charted and supported by careful financial planning. Curriculum co-ordinators write good quality reports as a review of the effectiveness of these decisions and to plot possible new initiatives.

52. The school is beginning to develop a system to monitor the teaching and learning in the curriculum, but this is not yet having sufficient impact on improving performance consistently in every classroom. As a result, there are still some unsatisfactory lessons where pupils make insufficient progress. Although statutory appraisal has not taken place for some time, a recently instituted series of professional interviews has supported professional and school development.

53. Members of the senior management team and curriculum co-ordinators monitor teachers' planning to ensure that all the programmes of study of the National Curriculum are adequately covered. Policies and schemes of work are in place in all subject areas. Some of these have recently been reviewed and updated and have not yet been fully approved by the governing body. However, there is insufficient time allowed for co-ordinators to monitor teaching and learning in their own subject disciplines. This is unsatisfactory, particularly in view of the differences in pupils' performances in English, mathematics and science in the end of key stage tests in recent years, and with inspection findings showing some unsatisfactory teaching.

54. The school has experienced a large number of changes in teachers over the past two years and this has led to a lack of continuity in teaching, adversely affecting the progress of some pupils as their work shows. Staffing is now stable and inspectors found that learning and progress were improving as a result. The qualified nursery nurses and classroom assistants in the school support the teachers and pupils in the classes in which they work effectively. Where it is appropriate, they support the work of pupils with special educational needs well. All staff including dinnertime assistants, the school office staff, the caretaker and cleaners are committed to the school and care for the pupils well.

55. The original 1911 school building has been extended and remodelled to provide an effective learning environment for all classes. The good accommodation includes two large halls, one of which is used for dining, and two playgrounds, which are effectively used for play and recreation. The grounds are spacious; they include a sports field and grassed areas suitable for summer playtimes and extending the range of sporting activities well. The building is well looked after and secure.

56. Resources are at least satisfactory for all subjects although for religious education many have to be borrowed from outside the school. Resources for drama are very good in range and quality. Resources for music are also very good and their range and quality make a significant impact on learning in lessons as they are brought into use frequently and well cared for. There is plenty of storage area and all resources are easily accessible to teachers, so that time is not wasted and lessons begin on time.

57. The strategic use of resources is good. All teachers make good plans to involve resources effectively in lessons. Especially good examples include the regular use of dictionaries from an early age, the use of maps and globes in geography and the very good use of instruments in music. Other resources are also used well. Classroom assistants are effectively deployed and given specific tasks to support particular groups of pupils at both key stages. The special educational needs co-ordinator uses her support time very effectively to target specific groups of pupils with literacy difficulties. The hall is carefully time-tabled so that there is a good balance maintained between the competing use for it. As a result, pupils benefit from very good lessons in drama, dance, physical education and music, using the large space effectively in order to extend their creativity well.

58. Financially, the school is just in balance, with a very minor deficit. The budget is carefully planned to ensure it can support the priorities on the school development plan, while ensuring that there are no severe shortages in any area. The finance committee of the governing body is prudent in its search for best value, carefully balancing costs against quality. The school bursar ensures that there is very effective financial management and very good quality day-to-day administration, leaving staff to do other jobs more effectively. Very good systems are in place to ensure that orders and deliveries match, and that budget limits are not exceeded.

59. Children arrive in the school with broadly average levels of attainment. They make good progress overall and many leave with achievements that are above average. The unit cost per pupil is slightly above average, but balances well with the good educational provision throughout. Overall, the school gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. In order to raise standards and improve the quality of educational provision, the school, with support from its governing body and other sources, should:

- (1) raise standards in mathematics at Key Stage 1 by:
 - closely monitoring teaching and the quality of work produced in different classes across the key stage; (Paragraph: 87)
 - ensure that all teachers have similarly high expectations of what pupils might achieve so that they are effectively challenged in all lessons; (Paragraphs: 24, 86)
 - improve the pace of learning in those lessons where it is too slow; (Paragraph: 86)
 - ensure that all pupils explain the strategies they have used when they answer questions in mental arithmetic sessions in order to consolidate their learning more effectively. (Paragraph: 86)

- (2) in order to bring all teaching and learning up to the high standards in most classes, monitor teaching and work more rigorously by:
 - ensuring that the senior management team undertake regular, structured and systematic classroom observations; (Paragraphs: 52, 53)
 - ensuring that all subject leaders are given appropriate time and opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in their subject areas, as well as moderating all work produced; (Paragraphs: 53, 80, 94, 99, 109, 117)

- (3) adopt a whole school approach to the monitoring of academic progress in a consistent manner through improved procedures which consist of:
 - using the information obtained for children under five, and other assessment information which has been thoroughly analysed, to set pupils effective targets; (Paragraph: 14)
 - monitoring progress towards these targets on a regular basis throughout the school; (Paragraphs: 40, 41)

In addition to the key issues identified above, the school with support from the governors should also consider the following minor issue:

- ensure that teachers at Key Stage 1 focus more closely on improving handwriting, especially for the brighter pupils. (Paragraph: 77)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

92*

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

45

* two not graded – taken by visitors

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	23	50	19	6	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

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	273
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	16

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	36

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1
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Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	16	15	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	13	15
	Girls	15	15	14
	Total	27	28	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (90)	90 (92)	94 (94)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	14	16
	Girls	15	14	15
	Total	28	28	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (92)	90 (94)	100 (98)
	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	19	24	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	16	17
	Girls	23	19	23
	Total	38	35	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (86)	81 (54)	93 (67)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	16	17
	Girls	23	20	24
	Total	38	36	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (77)	84 (70)	95 (79)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	0
Any other minority ethnic group	5

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.2
Average class size	27.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	84

Financial information

Financial year	1998/1999
	£
Total income	456 679
Total expenditure	454 822
Expenditure per pupil	1 710
Balance brought forward from previous year	(3 330)
Balance carried forward to next year	(1 473)

Figures in parenthesis indicate negative values

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	273
Number of questionnaires returned	106

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	45	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	45	9	3	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	46	7	5	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	38	19	9	6
The teaching is good.	41	41	11	5	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	49	14	7	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	31	8	6	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	43	48	2	3	4
The school works closely with parents.	35	35	18	7	5
The school is well led and managed.	36	39	8	10	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	54	4	4	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	40	8	6	10

Other issues raised by parents

- the large class size in Year 3 was unacceptable
- information and communication technology, English and mathematics had improved since the previous inspection
- some parents claimed that they still had concerns over bullying

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

Pre-school experience and induction

61. Most of the children go to a local pre-school group before they enter the school and the school has strong contacts with this group. The school has devised a good programme for induction into school life. Before they enter school, children are brought to visit the school three or four times and all children also visit with their parents. A special evening is set aside to meet parents who are given a very detailed 'Guide to Starting School' leaflet which familiarises them with ways in which they can help their children make a smooth transition into the reception class. Care is taken to listen to any concerns of the parents.

Overall attainment

62. Children's attainment is average when they enter the school. All children are then four years of age with some approaching their fifth birthday. Initial assessment is undertaken annually within the first half term. Inspection findings show that this year good progress is being made. This is a similar finding to the previous inspection. Nearly all children will reach the desirable learning outcomes at five years of age, and many will exceed them. Children are carefully assessed day by day and their achievements noted. All children, including any with identified special needs, are taught from a carefully thought out curriculum which is broad and balanced.

Provision

63. Currently there are forty-three children in the two reception classes, approximately one third of whom are under five years of age. All children will have reached five years by the end of the academic year. Although the children have no enclosed outside play area the accommodation overall is good. There is plenty of indoor space with a third large room for art and craft activities and a small library or quiet room where the children can look at books. The children play happily on the general playground both at playtime and dinner time and two days a week they have access to another hard surface area. There are large grassed areas for summer play, which are used effectively. Although the learning resources in the reception classes are adequate overall, and a large amount of money has been spent during the past year, there is no listening centre, an inadequate supply of large construction material and no large outdoor climbing apparatus.

64. Staffing comprises two full time teachers and one experienced nursery nurse. A second assistant is designated to work with a boy with special educational needs. One child who has English as an additional language receives appropriate support and makes good progress in his learning. Occasionally parents come in to help.

Teaching and learning

65. In lessons the quality of teaching is at least good in all areas of the curriculum and at story time it is very good. The contribution to teaching given by the nursery nurse and special needs assistant is very good. The day is spent on directed and undirected activities. At the present time children are taught rather too long as a whole group which does not leave sufficient time for them to explore and develop their own capabilities.

Personal and social development

66. The children make good progress as a result of good teaching and have highly developed social and personal skills. They look after themselves well and achieve above expected levels. The occasional untied shoelace is sometimes a problem but generally the children look after all their personal needs and in the playground they integrate well and are difficult to distinguish from other Key Stage 1 pupils. They are very well behaved. The children move quietly around the school and listen attentively during assemblies. They show confidence in all situations, in the playground, at dinnertime and when in the large school hall. They readily approach adults and are eager to impart information about their lives at home and their personal likes and dislikes.

Language and literacy

67. Most children already speak clearly and well when they enter the reception class. Through good teaching, they make good progress, and by the time they leave they are fluent speakers who are interesting to listen and talk to. By the age of five years they can answer and ask questions during a discussion and have a good vocabulary. Levels of achievement are above those expected from children aged five. They listen intently to stories and their answers show they have complete understanding. Just one child could recognise several words when they all entered the school. However, by the age of five years, they have acquired most initial sounds, and many are beginning to recognise words. Children are beginning to make good progress through the reading scheme. All children handle books properly, point out features in a picture and appreciate the humour in the story. Most borrow books from the local lending library. A few children are working within level 1 of the National Curriculum in writing. They write up to two sentences without needing help. Their words are spaced appropriately and writing is correctly formed. The pupils can access a word bank and they also use the teacher as a resource effectively. Good quality home-school contact books are started at this age and contain appropriate comments on the child's progress in reading.

Mathematics

68. Children have a sound knowledge of the basis of mathematics and a good mathematical vocabulary. Teaching and progress are usually very good. Children show an instant recognition of numbers to ten. They understand when the teacher says 'the one before' or 'the two between' and have no difficulty in sequencing numbers to ten. They count well and show understanding of what they are counting. Higher-attaining children easily add numbers up to ten mentally and many pupils can do this with the help of pictures. The acquisition of mathematical concepts is helped by the good quality displays and games available to the children, as well as when they make models. In this latter activity they show good spatial awareness and quickly find a piece which will 'fit'. Written tasks are well matched to the children's abilities and they had the opportunity to work on four different levels of sheets in one follow up lesson on frogs and leaves on a lily pond. Although the sheets indicated a wide range of attainment, levels are generally above expectations from children of this age.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

69. Children have a good knowledge of the world they live in and they can talk freely about it and their lives. By age five, levels of achievement are above expectations. Many have working parents and they are quite clear about who cares for them and when. Teaching and learning are good. Children begin to acquire the names of animals, know which ones live on farms or in a zoo and imitate the sounds they make. Their knowledge and understanding was extended in this when the children were taken on groups to visit the school pond to observe and collect frog-spawn. They immediately made the tadpole/frog connection and through filling in a sheet sequencing the life cycle, were beginning to

understand how frogs evolve. Teachers ensure in their planning that the children are kept safe on their walk out. Each child knows all about his family and his place in it. Most know about the countryside and have also visited a large town and somewhere overseas with their families. The school has extended the children's knowledge through a visit to an Aquarium earlier in the year, through attending the local church for a school carol service and taking part in the school Christmas production. Every day there are opportunities to increase their knowledge through playing with a variety of materials in the sand or an area of the room which is used effectively for role-play. The children have access to computer programmes that they can access and use competently. They know how to print from the screen.

Creative development

70. The standard of art produced is good overall, and above expected levels for children aged five. Some art work is very good. Teaching is good and progress made is also good. Displays of children's work enhance all areas of the reception class effectively. They include paintings of the children's own choice such as a spider, a rainbow or a garden and large collage pictures illustrating a story such as 'Rosie's Walk' or 'The Tiny Seed'. The nursery nurse works with groups of children developing their skills. During the week of the inspection, children were producing pictures of lily pads after their visit to the pond and looking at a Monet print. The finished pictures were very pleasing but the children were rather over-directed during the activity. It was not possible to observe a music lesson but there is a good range of musical instruments and evidence that the children have a satisfactory repertoire of songs and sung rhymes. The very good storytelling helps the children to develop their imagination well.

Physical development

71. Children make good progress in developing their skills through good quality teaching, and they are given many opportunities to improve these, including the playing of percussion instruments and gymnastics. They are very competent in physical education lessons. The children are careful and use the large space in the hall well. They are well aware of their own bodies limitations and try hard to improve their performance. In the classroom, they all hold pencils, crayons and paintbrushes well, applying just the right pressure, and they show good control when they build with small construction materials and when they sew pieces of material together to make a large background for a pond picture.

ENGLISH

72. The overall attainment of pupils is close to the national average both at seven and eleven years of age due to good teaching and the effective use of resources. These findings are consistent with the 1999 test results at Key Stage 1, although inspectors found current standards in Year 6 below the 1999 Key Stage 2 results. Much of this is due to the significant proportion, almost one third, of pupils on the register of special educational needs. Since the last inspection standards in English overall have not been maintained, although they still reflect the steady improvement nationally at both key stages. In further comparison of the 1999 test results with those of pupils in similar schools, their performance is in line at eleven years of age, but below at seven years of age.

73. The quality of teaching in English throughout the school is good and pupils make good progress over time. In Key Stage 1, all teaching is at least satisfactory with the majority of lessons good, whilst in Key Stage 2 all teaching is at least good with over forty per cent of teaching very good. In the very good teaching, teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use effectively when questioning pupils, effectively challenging them to think, consolidate knowledge and make progress in learning. In their very good

planning, teachers relate new learning effectively to previous knowledge, which enables pupils to build effectively on what has already been learnt. Teachers have high expectations and set challenging tasks designed to meet the range of learning needs, but not accepting compromise or lowering of standards as pupils strive to achieve expected targets. Skilled teachers use a good range of teaching methods to give good variety in their teaching and make good use of books and other materials to support pupils' learning. Where there are support staff available, they make a valuable contribution to the teaching of pupils. In lessons where some weaknesses occur, the pace of lessons is slow and the expectations of teachers are insufficient. As a result, in these lessons, pupils remain unchallenged and make insufficient progress, especially in handwriting among higher-attaining pupils.

74. Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening throughout school. At the end of both key stages standards are above those expected for pupils of that age. Pupils listen attentively to teachers and ask questions to ensure they thoroughly understand teachers' instructions. By the end of the Key Stage 1, most pupils are beginning to recognise the need to use more accurate vocabulary and include some technical words in their discussions. The majority of teachers encourage pupils to hold meaningful discussions. For example, in Year 4, one class had an interesting lesson on the advantages or disadvantages of becoming a vegetarian and entered into intense discussions on diet, cruelty to animals, and the dangers of disease. Such discussion leads to a broadening of understanding and prepares pupils well for more mature debate at a later date. Older pupils are beginning to learn the subtleties of intonation and the benefits of clear diction in speech. In Year 5 pupils were set the task of preparing to read aloud in choral verse the poem "The Lady of Shalott" written by Lord Tennyson. Independently of the teacher, they prepared the text well and gave a spirited rendering of this narrative verse showing a good understanding of rhythm and acknowledgement of the time values of punctuation as they read aloud.

75. Pupils gain in confidence and understanding of dramatic art when they produce plays for school events, festivals of performing arts, and national drama examinations. Valuable opportunities have been provided for pupils to work with local drama specialists in real drama in action. At a forthcoming event in July 2000, pupils in Year 6 will perform in street theatre in the village of Adlington, as part of the local Cheshire "Millennium Pilgrimage" taking drama around the county on foot. Exciting preparations are already being made with good attention given to techniques to adopt in live performances.

76. In reading, standards are in line with national averages for pupils at the age of seven, but at eleven standards for most pupils are above national averages. The development of fluency and accuracy are successfully extended throughout the school. All pupils enjoy listening to stories. Younger pupils often have a list of favourite tales whilst older pupils explain preferences for popular choices of authors, of types of fiction. The school has sufficient good quality fiction material and has given good attention to the genre of books to ensure both boys and girls are interested and encouraged to read literature. Many pupils use a dictionary and a thesaurus successfully. Most know how a library system operates and research for information independently. Since the introduction of CD-ROM and the internet facility, pupils are eager to access information on disk or web-site, and are improving their reading skills whilst downloading information. It is proving a popular alternative to the library and offering good realistic curriculum links as pupils undertake research for information on school-based topics. In Year 6, for example, pupils accessed information from the internet on the artist Clarice Cliff and then used the pottery designs for

inspiration in preparing their own pottery work. Such methods are motivating experiences for pupils who learn at a faster rate as a result.

77. The progress pupils make in writing is just satisfactory at Key Stage 1, and inspectors found signs of improvement in the formation of letters and in spelling in pupils' written work over time. By the age of seven, some pupils write interesting sentences, some correctly punctuated, and with an accurate story sequence. By the end of the key stage, standards are below national averages, due largely to few pupils gaining the higher level 3 in the national tests. By the end of Key Stage 2, writing skills have shown good rates of improvement and standards have risen to be in line with national averages. Most pupils at this stage have a wide vocabulary and give good consideration to the needs of the reader. The writing of the most able pupils includes better pace in their story-telling, but often still lacks the intensity and depth of a well-constructed piece of writing. Teachers in Key Stage 2 give good consideration to introducing pupils to different types of writing with pupils undertaking prose, newspaper reports, letters, limericks and poems. They enjoy making books for younger pupils in Key Stage 1 to read. Good work in poetry has been recognised recently in a national poetry writing competition. The work of twenty pupils is to be included in an anthology of poetry entitled "Up, Up and Away" produced from contributions by young writers in primary schools, a further sign of the improvements taking place within the school.

78. The pupils have positive attitudes to their work. They listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. They enjoy participating in the wide range of activities, which are provided for them. Pupils' behaviour is always very good, leading to good levels of learning. Good relationships allow pupils to work co-operatively in lessons and achieve better results. They plan and share out tasks equably and give good support to each other.

79. The National Literacy Strategy and Additional Literacy Support Strategy have been successfully introduced into school with a regular review of the initiatives to ensure everyone involved in the delivery of the programmes is knowledgeable and informed. Pupils with special educational needs have good support and are making good progress towards the targets that are set in their individual educational plans. Specialist resources are provided if necessary to ensure these pupils have equal access to the National Curriculum. Inspection findings show that recent initiatives to target resources to improve standards in reading and writing are proving beneficial.

80. The subject co-ordinator has a good understanding of the improvements which are necessary to raise standards in this subject. Her specialist expertise in drama, and enthusiasm for English is proving valuable in creating a good literate environment in all classes of the school. The school fully meets all the requirements of the National Curriculum. Satisfactory assessment procedures are in place. However, there has been only a limited opportunity for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching and work so that all inconsistencies have not yet been sorted out.

MATHEMATICS

81. By the age of 11, standards in mathematics are above the national average due to good teaching overall and the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. In the 1999 tests, pupils' attainment at Key Stage 2 was above the national average. This shows very good progress since the end of Key Stage 1, and inspection findings confirm these results. Results are broadly in line with the average for similar schools.

82. Inspection findings are that the attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 is below the national average. The 1999 test results showed attainment to be well below the national average due largely to no pupils attaining the higher level 3. Attainment was very low in comparison with similar schools. There have been extreme variations in the trend at Key Stage 1 over the last four years, largely due to changes in staffing and in the curriculum. The trend at Key Stage 2, where staffing has been more stable, has been very steady and just above the national average.

83. By the end of Key Stage 1 the majority of pupils count sets of objects and order numbers to 100. They are aware of the place value of tens and units and divide regular shapes and simple numbers into halves and quarters. Pupils measure objects in centimetres but have problems when asked to add three pairs of numbers. Higher-attaining pupils compute with larger numbers and show satisfactory ability in problem solving. When challenges are presented they respond well. For example they count in 4s to 100. Some lower-attaining pupils are still unsure of correct notation of number symbols. They add and subtract pairs of 2-digit numbers but cannot measure accurately.

84. By the end of Key Stage 2, almost all pupils understand the concept of square numbers and roots. Most pupils have confident knowledge of multiplication tables and apply it. Lower-attaining pupils are unsure of some of their tables but can still calculate problems using material aids when necessary. Pupils are experienced in the use of graphs and the concept of probability. Higher-attaining pupils carry out investigative tasks confidently, check their results and explain their methods and reasoning. Lower attainers struggle with computation of large numbers and elements of work with fractions.

85. Teaching is good overall so that most pupils learn well, making good progress by the time they leave the school. This applies also to pupils with special educational needs. However the teaching of the majority of pupils in Year 2 is insufficiently challenging so that pupils make unsatisfactory progress. In one lesson the pace was very slow so that many pupils lacked attention and did not participate in oral work. Practical tests set were not challenging enough and there was insufficient expectation of what the pupils could achieve, so that learning was unsatisfactory.

86. In the large majority of lessons teaching is thorough and challenging. Tasks set for groups or individuals are matched to their ability and contribute to their good learning. Pupils know that they are expected to record work neatly and invariably do so. On occasions teachers remind them of this when marking work. All teachers understand and are, from Year 1 onwards, implementing the National Numeracy Strategy at a satisfactory level. In reception classes, a lot of whole class work takes place and pupils are asked to explain their reasoning. As a result, these pupils are making a good start in mathematics. Some teachers use the mental activities session very effectively so that pace and challenge stimulate pupils' thinking. However, teachers' expectations are not as high at Key Stage 1 as in the rest of the school. Although satisfactory overall, higher challenges to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils are currently uneven across the key stage, leading to differences in the rate of progress for some pupils. The active involvement of all pupils and good relationships with teachers means that management of behaviour is invariably good and time is not wasted. This was seen in a Year 4 lesson when pupils were predicting numbers in order. They felt challenged and clearly enjoyed the activity, adding pace to their learning. When their books were handed out, many of them were very eager to read any comments written by the teacher and reacted to them positively. On occasions, teachers leave too little time for an effective plenary session to review learning. However the Year 6 teacher used this well, with pupils having opportunity to explain their methods and understanding effectively. The success of lessons is usually based on good planning with

teachers considering previous learning and building on it. When a previous lesson is evaluated as being not fully successful in pupils attaining the learning goals, teachers amend work to recover and reinforce understanding.

87. The subject co-ordinator has planned well and is keen to see the National Numeracy Strategy implemented fully in all classes to gain maximum benefit. However lack of opportunity to monitor individual lessons and a range of pupils' work means that she is unable to carry out her role with full effectiveness. This contributes to target setting being currently insufficiently rigorous. These are areas for development. Overall, good progress has been made since the previous inspection. Pupils use and reinforce mathematics skills effectively in other curriculum areas. They measure wood when constructing a framework in design and technology, and draw various types of graphs in information technology.

SCIENCE

88. Good teaching ensures that pupil's attainment in science is close to the national average when they leave the school at eleven years of age. This is below what is achieved by pupils in similar schools. There is a decline in standards overall since the last inspection when pupils attained standards that were above national expectations. Much of this has been due to changes in staffing and in curriculum, as well as the school focusing on other areas of the curriculum for development. Although the 1999 results show a large percentage of pupils reaching the nationally expected level, too few are attaining the higher level 5. Inspection findings confirm this. Over the past three years there has been considerable fluctuation in attainment with a large improvement shown from 1998 to 1999. Teachers' assessments in 1999 of pupils at seven years of age show attainment to be above average, but inspection findings do not confirm this. Attainment is close to the national average.

89. Attainment overall in lessons at Key Stage 1 is average. By the end of the key stage, pupils have a good understanding of the effect of heat and cold on substances such as chocolate and water. They use the correct scientific vocabulary to explain this. They have a very good recall of what has happened previously and can recognise various liquids in their frozen state. They make a good attempt at predicting what will happen when the cubes are thawed, but their predictions are often inaccurate. Valuable links are made with literacy when a selection of seeds are planted as in 'Sarah's Seed.' The pupils are making cardboard stand up books to record their observations.

90. The pupils in Year 6 are confident in their scientific ability and their overall attainment is average. They know that when materials burn an irreversible change takes place and that the longer a material burns the more oxygen it uses. They undertake experiments to prove this using candles and upturned basins of varying sizes and write up their experiments carefully and accurately. A small number of pupils understand simple chemical formulae and have a very good knowledge of physical and chemical changes. They ask searching questions and their scientific vocabulary is good. The conducting of scientific experiments is a strength of the school in helping pupils' progress in their knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts. Throughout Key Stage 2, several lessons on scientific enquiry were seen including how to ensure a fair test when investigating whether or not a substance will dissolve. Pupils became very involved in these and they showed good investigational skills. Some younger pupils in Key Stage 2 make very accurate predictions. In Year 5, pupils hypothesise accurately on the properties of water and the effects of cold and heat on it.

91. Progress in lessons varies from unsatisfactory to very good, but over time, it is at least satisfactory. This year's science workbooks show good progress overall in the areas of the curriculum they have covered. Many pupils consolidate and extend their knowledge well in class. A rather narrow range of scientific activities was observed, but lower Key Stage 2 pupils talk very knowledgeably about previous work in electricity and temperature. Inspection evidence shows good curriculum coverage, including the making of electrical circuits and observing the effect of forces when pupils push, pull and blow at objects.

92. The teaching of science is good overall throughout the school. Where teaching is good or better, lessons are well thought out and planned with thorough detailed preparations. Teachers give clear explanations and instructions and they keep the pupils' interest during the introductory period. Most teachers show a good knowledge of the subject and show they know how to develop the pupils' understanding of scientific principles. In one very good lesson the teacher's good knowledge, and the timing of the various activities linked to high but achievable expectations impacted strongly on the class. Not a minute was lost and the pupils' progress was accelerated. Class management is good especially when the pupils are experimenting with materials and liquids and this is helped by the generally good and co-operative behaviour of the pupils. Teachers question the pupils carefully and then extend their knowledge sometimes through making links with previous learning in other subjects, by illustrating with good examples and by making provision for some pupils to give demonstrations. Teachers assess pupils throughout the lessons especially when they are working with materials and testing their hypotheses through experimentation. During this time teachers are active, moving from table to table intervening where necessary and dispensing praise and help. Where teaching is unsatisfactory tasks are not matched well to the pupil's prior attainment and pupils are kept for too long a period listening to the teacher and then are faced with experiments that are too difficult for them to gain a clear understanding. Occasionally class management is unsatisfactory, and sometimes too much teaching time is wasted on a small group of disruptive pupils to the detriment of others. This is the only cause of the unsatisfactory progress.

93. Pupils show considerable interest in a majority of the science lessons, enabling good progress to be sustained. All relationships in the classroom are very good, and pupils work well together in a variety of settings and groups. They listen carefully to their teachers and generally show very good co-operation both with the teacher and each other. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated especially during experiments. In most lessons, pupils are given appropriate follow-up sheets to record their findings, and this enables them to consolidate their learning effectively. Very good classroom organisation by the teachers helps to keep the pupils' interest alive and learning at a good level.

94. There are adequate systems in place for assessing the pupils. However, the subject is not well monitored as the co-ordinator has no release time for classroom observation and there is no overall view to ensure curriculum continuity and progression. Resources are adequate to ensure delivery of the curriculum and include a full size skeleton, models of the eye and ear and two good microscopes shared with other schools. Pupils' knowledge is increased through carefully planned outside school visits such as residential visits at High Ash Farm and a visit to the Science and Industry Museum in Manchester. The curriculum co-ordinator plans to extend the new scheme of work into Key Stage 2 for next year and develop it by adding areas that are of special interest to the school and have proved to be successful in the past.

ART

95. Due to consistently good teaching, attainment in art meets nationally expected levels at the end of both key stages. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection.

96. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils use their art skills to support many other areas of the curriculum. The pupils make stained glass window patterns using tissue paper following an organised visit to a local church, and Celtic and Roman shield patterns support work in history. The clever use of a knowledgeable local artist working alongside and advising the pupils resulted in a very good display of finely executed small watercolours. Pupils gain appropriate knowledge of the work of artists. There is a good quality display on the work of Clarice Cliff supported by other artefacts from the period. Pupils in lower Key Stage 2 undertake some very challenging work. They make their own William Morris style printing blocks with string and produce good designs. They use their knowledge of Indian art to decorate large elephants which they have drawn individually and covered with tissue paper.

97. Pupils in Key Stage 1 use a variety of material, hard and soft leaded pencils, pencil crayons, chalks and a variety of paints. Pictures are often linked to work in literacy and are appropriate for extending understanding especially for the lower attaining pupils and those identified as having special educational needs. Good links with music occur when pictures are produced after the pupils have listened to 'Clair de Lune' and 'Star Wars'. Pictures produced reflect very well the mood of both pieces of music. When the pupils are drawing an object such as a flat iron, most of the pupils have some knowledge of how to use lines to represent shapes.

98. The teaching of art is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 1 and is good in the lessons seen at Key Stage 2. Teaching is best when the lessons are well prepared with interesting materials to hand for the pupils to use and when the practical work is preceded by an interesting and informative introduction, which captures the pupils' imagination. In the best lessons teachers manage the pupils well. They intervene at appropriate points in the lessons to keep the pupils on task, make good suggestions and give extra help to lower attaining pupils. Class management is good overall. Teaching is unsatisfactory when the teacher does not time the activity well and the pupils become disinterested and bored. Generally, pupils enjoy their art lessons and stay on task for quite long periods of time which helps them make good progress. Many pupils in lower Key Stage 2 show enjoyment and commitment and like to talk about their work.

99. There has been no in-service for the teachers in art for several years as the school had other priorities. Systems for assessing individual pupils' work are not well developed. The art co-ordinator knows her subject well and she is responsible for and organises and monitors whole school displays but she has no opportunity to observe classroom practice. She has reorganised the storage of all materials and makes regular orders of new stock to ensure sufficiency. The curriculum is supported at Key Stage 2 by visits to the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool and a walk around Manchester to look at Greek style architecture. A good link with the local community has been established when the pupils produced posters to advertise local events.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

100. Throughout the school standards in design and technology are satisfactory and have been maintained since the previous inspection. Learning over time is at least satisfactory for all pupils.

101. In Key Stage 2, teaching is satisfactory in maintaining expected standards. Teachers have sufficient subject knowledge to introduce pupils to a range of skills. They give good attention to health and safety as they explain and provide opportunities for pupils to use a variety of appropriate tools. There is good evidence in this key stage of learning building successfully on previous knowledge. For example pupils in Year 6 whilst building a wooden cube employed techniques learnt in Year 5, when making mitred corners for a photo frame. Pupils are learning important principles of review and refinement of their work. In Year 3, when making a water filtration system from junk materials, some pupils realised during the process that it is necessary to determine available resources before commencing work, and another group recognised the value of temporary joints rather than a permanent fixture so that they can refine their prototype. Opportunities for food technology take place in conjunction with other topic work, such as in science when they made sandwiches as part of a topic on healthy eating. Pupils undertake some written work, but it is limited.

102. There is insufficient emphasis in Key Stage 2 on detailed recording of the design, plan, make and evaluate process, although all pupils understand and use the process. Younger pupils are provided with a good worksheet to ensure all the elements are included when writing a design and technology report. Older pupils are expected to record systematically the process of a design and technology project, but there is little evidence of good recording skills.

103. In Key Stage 1, there is a topic approach to the teaching of design and technology. Work is often combined with art, or model making may support other subjects, such as history. As a result progress in this subject is satisfactory. There are opportunities for pupils to work independently to develop their own creative ideas when making model aeroplanes or cars, for example, and this improves the rate of progress made. In other work, pupils are expected to follow a design plan and construct a model copied from an instruction sheet or teacher directions. Pupils in this key stage have access to a collection of construction kits, which develop their hand and eye co-ordination skills well. Recently, pupils in Year 2 made good quality models of swings and slides to represent a local play park. They recorded their work both pictorially and in simple sentences, thereby successfully extending their literacy skills. Some teachers link work together skilfully. Following the production of some good sock puppets in Year 1, pupils wrote some clear descriptions about their puppet in English, and then extended their speaking and listening skills successfully, as they listened to each others' explanations and made a guess to the identity of the puppet.

104. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are happy to talk about their models and will refine their work further as they explain the task. In Key Stage 2, pupils are eager to undertake their tasks and generally work well together sharing tools and ideas amicably. There is some frustration evident among the older pupils if measurements in their work do not prove totally accurate, but they recognise their own errors and seek to improve their mathematical skills.

105. There is a policy for design and technology and a new scheme of work is to be introduced based on a professionally produced programme. The recent introduction of a co-ordination team to lead the development of this subject should prove beneficial in raising its profile across the school. Resources for the subject are adequate for full coverage of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study.

GEOGRAPHY

106. Pupils achieve standards close to national expectations throughout the school. This is a similar position to the previous inspection. Teaching is good and there is evidence of improving progress in many lessons.

107. Pupils begin to acquire a relevant geographical language at Key Stage 1, distinguishing appropriately between features such as urban, rural and seaside landscapes. They identify appropriately buildings and features associated with different areas, such as a pier by the seaside, sheep in rural settings or churches and schools in urban settings. At Key Stage 2, through a good cross-curricular study of India, pupils learn about the differences in weather and climate, and they begin to understand about differences in lifestyles. They show good levels of knowledge about the local area, and have the ability to read geological maps in Years 5 and 6 when studying the salt mining industry in Cheshire. Progress over time is always at least satisfactory, but there have been many changes in staff, which have caused some disruption to the continuity of approach in teaching during the past two years.

108. Teaching is good overall and this leads to good levels of progress over time and learning in most lessons. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. A majority of lessons have a good balance of teacher led activities and group work enabling independence of learning to take place effectively. Pupils readily, and sometimes avidly, discuss their research and findings with each other, and they show keen interest in their studies, making good progress as a result. Older pupils have developed very good levels of map work skills, for example, one pupil knowing that the oldest strata on a geological map are always at the bottom of the key. Teachers prepare their lessons well and focus effectively on developing concepts, such as the effects of the monsoon on lifestyles in India, or the subsidence caused to buildings by excessive salt mining in Cheshire. Challenges are high and pupils are forced to think carefully before answering in class. Pupils with special needs are encouraged to respond, and teachers use good questioning techniques to involve such pupils fully in their lessons. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and lower attainment are fully included and make significant gains in self-esteem and self-confidence. Appropriate extension work is available for higher attaining pupils, who make good progress. In the one isolated example where class control and management was insufficiently firm, and the lesson was held up by the need to repeat instructions, the pace flagged and teaching and progress were unsatisfactory.

109. The subject benefits from a good level of resources such as atlases, globes and maps. They are used very effectively at the start of many lessons, or when pupils work in groups, and they have a significant impact on learning. The use of the globe, for example, to alert pupils to the tilt of the earth's axis, enabled pupils to recognise that hotter areas are close to the equator, and colder areas are adjacent to the poles. This then led successfully into a debate on seasons and the arrival of the monsoons in India. There is a need for more detailed monitoring in the subject, in order to ensure that all teaching is as good as the best, and that progress is as high as it should be in all lessons.

HISTORY

110. By the age of 11, standards are above those seen in the majority of schools due to good planning and teaching. This is good improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils are very clear what the study of history is concerned with. They know of a wide range of sources of evidence and that different sources need to be compared to gain a true picture. Topics studied are remembered well and pupils develop a good sense of chronology. Very good use is made of theme days when pupils have some personal experiences of life in Ancient Greek or Victorian times. Year 6 pupils know that they learn more from these. One of the pupils described a theme day as "a rich experience". Pupils have good knowledge of local history, helped by very good links across the curriculum. When they learn about salt, lessons embrace science, geography and history. Good use is made of computers when pupils research information. Much research is continued at home. As a result, pupils make good progress over time.

111. The teaching seen at Key Stage 1 is good and teachers use artefacts effectively. In a very good lesson in the Year 1/2 class every single pupil was able to explain what a particular artefact was, its use and why it is not used today. They are well aware of the impact and importance of electricity in the home. In another Year 1 lesson, pupils also extended their skills in art, using the artefacts for observational drawing.

112. The good teaching is based on good subject knowledge allied to methods which hold pupils' attention and interest. Pupils learn well, including those with special educational needs. Key Stage 2 pupils research topics in some depth and produce interesting booklets. They learn to empathise with people from the past. Some write begging letters as 'poor Victorian children'. Others act as Roman spies, writing reports to the Emperor about the pros and cons of invading Britain. However, apart from the few pupils who spend a great deal of their own time adding to their work at home, the topic booklets do not show significant higher quality in research and quantity of information in the upper part of the key stage. They do not fully reflect pupils' knowledge and understanding. A good feature of this work is the time that teachers spend reading each completed topic and assessing for content, presentation and effort. Pupils appreciate this and make good progress as a result.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

113. Standards of attainment in information and communication technology are in line with that expected nationally for pupils of seven years of age, and above that expected for pupils of eleven years of age. There has been good improvement in all areas of the information and communication technology curriculum since the last inspection, including staff expertise and confidence. This has resulted in good teaching which is responsible for the good progress made over time. The curriculum now provides good opportunity for pupils to improve their skills and use information and communication technology in other subjects of the National Curriculum appropriately.

114. At the age of seven pupils have made satisfactory progress through the key stage. They enter text into the computer. With adult support they load a program, open a file and print a text. Working independently they use a mouse successfully, and scroll the screen and menu file to read or change instructions. They understand the function of the backspace, space bar and enter key. They are beginning to record information. For example, pupils in Year 2 were entering information about birthdays into the computer during the inspection. Pupils have had experience of working with the powered robot, and enter simple instructions to direct it forwards or backwards. More able pupils in Year 2 are now beginning to experiment with more complex instructions to turn the robot around.

Teachers make good links to other subjects to support learning in information and communication technology, such as making an instruction book in English to order the sequence of tasks to work the robot. There has been some limitation on access to computers in this key stage which has affected the progress of some pupils. As some computers are old and in need of more frequent repair, there are times when there have been no machines available for use. The school has recently addressed this issue and this is beginning to have a beneficial effect on raising standards.

115. By the age of eleven, pupils are making good progress in information and communication technology. Most pupils compose a text on the machines, change the font, determine the format and the print colour of their work. They create charts, block and line graphs, or incorporate pictures in their work. They print work independently. They are confident in use of machines and use the CD-ROM and Internet to support their learning in other subjects. Pupils understand control well, learning how to program the mobile robot effectively in Key Stage 1 lessons. They use simulation exercises appropriately at Key Stage 2 to learn new skills such as creating databases. During the inspection, pupils in Year 6 used the Clarice Cliff web-site to access information about the artist and preview her art designs. If computers are available, many prefer this method of research for information rather than using reference books and encyclopaedias in the library. Most teachers make good use of computers to support learning in other subjects, helping pupils to recognise the value of this resource as well as improving information and communication technology skills. Recently the school has established a link through email with schools in Leicester and Middleton. Particularly good has been the initiative by some pupils and parents in Year 4 to send emails to school to help pupils improve their skills in composing messages and in using the address book facility.

116. Most pupils are enthusiastic about information and communication technology. They are positive in their learning and show good skills of logical reasoning, as they consider their own requirements, and the files which they need to open for their requirements. Pupils work consistently well in groups or independently. They show good levels of perseverance and pride in their work.

117. All teachers are sufficiently skilled in their delivery of the National Curriculum for teaching pupils in their class. The co-ordinator has good management skills and has worked efficiently to raise the profile of this subject. She has good knowledge of the expertise of the school staff and offers good technical assistance. The co-ordinator has prepared a precise bid for grant funding, and when successful has ensured that best facilities have been provided to raise standards. A draft policy and new scheme of work is now in place and is awaiting governor approval. These are useful documents and will provide good support to staff. At present the co-ordinator has had only limited time to observe the practical use of computers by pupils. The school is seeking to improve this arrangement.

MUSIC

118. Music is a great strength of the school, with standards above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and well above expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. This is the result of consistently good teaching with teachers using enthusiasm and expertise to a high level. The very high standards have been maintained successfully since the previous inspection. This has been achieved by the hard work and dedication of the staff, who have given generously of their time both in preparing high quality lessons, and in lunchtimes and

after school, to ensure that those who wish to extend their musical knowledge are given appropriate opportunities to do so.

119. Singing is good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. Pupils develop clarity when singing together, they learn the techniques of breathing effectively, being able to control their voices well in appropriate loud and softer section. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils sing in round and in 2 parts effectively when learning hymns. Good opportunities are provided for individual pupils to perform in groups, playing the recorders, for example, or singing solos in the verses of hymns.

120. Progress is good in lessons and very good over time, as the result of consistently good teaching. The school benefits from a considerable number of musically talented staff, who help, through their natural talents and enthusiasms, to inspire other teachers and pupils alike. Lessons are thoroughly prepared and very good use is made of the very good level of resources available. These include those pupils who play specialist instruments such as recorders, keyboard and the violin, as well as a wide range of tuned and untuned instruments. Pupils acquire a very good level of knowledge and understanding of rhythm and pitch, for example when listening to, and performing complex pieces of Indian music including the drone, raga and tala.

121. Pupils also have many frequent opportunities to perform, as in, for example, a very good lesson focusing on the mood and effects created in film music. Pupils then used a very wide range of instruments effectively in order to create their own sounds to a very good level. Teachers set high challenges and encourage pupils to demonstrate their skills whenever possible. The good emphasis on performance in groups leads to good levels of collaborative work and equitable sharing of resources. When performing the finished pieces, much improved listening skills result, so that pupils enter on cue appropriately and control both the volume and rhythm well. All pupils, including those with special educational needs are fully included in all lessons and are encouraged to make contributions in performance. This enables good progress to be made.

122. A very good range of opportunities is provided for further study of music in the lunchtimes and after school, by school staff and visiting teachers. This extends the range of learning very well, enabling pupils with particular talents to succeed in their own fields. Combined with drama, the school is able to produce good quality performances on a regular basis.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

123. Standards in physical education are above those generally expected of pupils by the age of 11. Good standards of work are evident at both key stages. This is good improvement since the previous inspection and the result of good planning and good teaching. Swimming is now included in the school curriculum for the summer term, rectifying an omission noted in the previous inspection.

124. Standards in dance are very high by the end of Key Stage 2. Year 4 pupils study India as their topic and in their dance lesson they learn basic hand movements for Indian dancing. Most pupils show good timing and work well with partners. Some excellent teaching of Year 5 pupils leads to very high levels of work - as seen in their discussion, performance and skill in observation and critical comment. The lesson benefited from the full active involvement of both teacher and trainee teacher. The high quality of teamwork,

co-operation and sharing is a feature of all physical education lessons, which successfully promotes good quality learning.

125. In games, pupils' skills are above what is expected nationally. This stems from the quality of the teaching, which was very good in all three lessons seen. Year 3 pupils control hockey balls very well in a restricted space. The basic netball skills of passing and receiving are applied well by Year 4 pupils. In small games situations pupils move into space extremely well. Lesson planning is very good, based on progression and interesting activities. Teachers' expectations are very high and are reflected in pupils' attitudes to the subject and to each other. Physical education makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. This is a strength of the school and influences progress in other subjects, for example when pupils work together in groups.

126. Only one gymnastics lesson was seen, with the mixed-age Key Stage 1 class. Excellent teaching resulted in high-quality learning, with pupils demonstrating very good control and an awareness of shape. They are seen quite independently improving their performance, by better leg extension, for example. As in all physical education lessons, the teacher showed concern for safety and had high expectations of behaviour and effort, which were reflected by the pupils.

127. The subject is supported by the provision of a variety of extra-curricular activities for which a number of teachers volunteer their time. Pupils participate in competitive matches against schools, aim high and enjoy their work.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

128. Attainment in religious education at both key stages reaches expected levels, and this is the same finding as that of the previous inspection. The school has made some improvements in the curriculum by including work on Judaism at Key Stage 1 and Hinduism and Buddhism at Key Stage 2.

129. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils associate the importance of the symbol of bread in both the Christian and Jewish religions. They know that wine represents the blood of Jesus and understand about forgiveness and a new start. They know that Rosh Hashanah is a Jewish New Year Festival similar to the Christian New Year. They are familiar with the Christmas story and have drawn locusts, frogs and cattle to make a frieze on the plagues of Egypt.

130. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have made satisfactory progress and have satisfactory knowledge of Christian principles and how they affect their lives and the lives of others. They know that there should be respect shown towards other people's feelings, jobs, ideas and property. They are improving their knowledge of religions and how they underpin the lives of many people and the effect it has on them.

131. Year 6 pupils compare and contrast people's different beliefs and practices. For instance, they know that Hindus worship many gods, that the Quakers have no one leader and that Christian churches have a minister or priest. They know that the local St. Mary's church as well as being a place of worship is important historically and they talk about some of its furnishings such as the lectern. However, not all pupils are secure in their knowledge, with some pupils, for example, not being able to name the altar or the font. They identify the baptism rites in different religions. Pupils know some of the characters and stories to be found in the Old Testament, such as the stories of Daniel, Noah and Adam and Eve. They are less knowledgeable of the New Testament but know some of the

facts about the life of Jesus. They do not understand what a parable is and cannot name any. Towards the end of the key stage, pupils use skills gained in other subjects to explore the Old Testament when they undertake research to find certain pieces of text containing poetry that expresses God's glory and God's fury. Several pupils associate the texts with their own feelings and how they think God to be. They are familiar with the Bible and use the index appropriately. They know that St. Paul wrote letters but cannot explain why.

132. Teaching in religious education lessons is good throughout the school and standards are improving in many lessons. Teachers are now beginning to build effectively on the strengths. For example, pupils behave very well in classrooms, and they are captivated by the stories and activities, and as a result, they listen well and work well. Teachers prepare their work thoroughly and this sustains pupils' interest well. A class of Key Stage 1 pupils was entranced by the story of the last days of Jesus on earth. A good technique employed is the saying of a prayer, sometimes the Lord's Prayer, at the end of lessons when sometimes a few minutes are given for reflection. Teachers question the pupils well to ensure they have a full understanding and the pupils are eager to offer information and opinions. Valuable links are made with the moral development of the pupils and with other subject areas such as English and art. Assessment is not well developed and there is no monitoring in classrooms.

133. The previous inspection stated that there were too few religious artefacts in the school and this is still the case. The school relies heavily on borrowed artefacts, particularly those borrowed from a former mid-day assistant in the school, the books and Bibles the pupils bring from home and artefacts borrowed from local churches. The local Christian churches are very co-operative and visits are encouraged. Talks and thoughts offered by ministers when they visit school link well into the curriculum and help pupils extend their knowledge and understanding effectively.