

INSPECTION REPORT

RUFFORD CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Rufford, Ormskirk

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119483

Headteacher: Mrs C Brough

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Boden
12301

Dates of inspection: 4th – 6th June 2001

Inspection number: 192081

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Flash Lane Rufford Ormskirk Lancs.
Postcode:	L40 1SN
Telephone number:	01704 821300
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr H Caunce
Date of previous inspection:	20 th – 24 th January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs J Boden 12301	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography	The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? What could the school do to improve further?
Mrs B Sinclair 9593	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs M Forsman 8263	Team inspector	Science History Physical education The Foundation Stage Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mr I Johnston 7983	Team inspector	English Art and design Music Special educational needs	How well is the school led and managed?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Rufford Primary School is situated in a semi-rural area of West Lancashire. It is a smaller than average voluntary aided school with 146 pupils between the ages of four and eleven. It changed from grant maintained to voluntary aided status in 1999. Children may be admitted in the term following their fourth birthday to attend on a part-time basis initially. All the children begin full-time education in the September before their fifth birthday. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. All the pupils are of white UK origin and speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is below average although the proportion with statements of special educational need is broadly average. Most children have pre-school experience and enter the school with above average attainment, particularly in their social development and language skills.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school that provides good value for money. The quality of teaching is consistently good and this leads to good learning by pupils of all abilities. By the age of eleven, pupils reach high standards in English, mathematics, science, art and design and physical education. In information and communication technology, design and technology, geography, history and music, however, pupils do not learn as much as they should because not enough time is devoted to these subjects. There is a very good team spirit, with the governors, staff and parents working well together to raise standards further. The very good relationships between all members of the school community create a pleasant atmosphere where the pupils feel relaxed, secure and keen to learn. Children join the school with above average attainment; they make good progress and leave well prepared for secondary school.

What the school does well

- The school is well led and managed.
- Pupils get off to a good start because of the good provision in the Foundation Stage.
- The quality of teaching and pupils' learning in English, mathematics, science, art and design and physical education is good throughout the school, and by the age of eleven, pupils achieve high standards in these subjects.
- The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils' behaviour and attendance, and their attitudes to school are very good.
- The school looks after its pupils very well.

What could be improved

- The standards that pupils achieve in information and communication technology, design and technology, geography, history and music are not as high as they should be.
- Some foundation subjects do not have enough time allocated to them.
- The organisation of the school day means that time is not always used effectively.
- There is a shortage of resources for information and communication technology and this is affecting pupils' learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been good improvement since the school was inspected in 1997. The quality of teaching has improved significantly. This, combined with the successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, is having a very positive effect on learning.

There has been good progress in tackling the areas for development identified in the last report. A weakness is the failure to ensure that geography is taught in sufficient depth, particularly in the junior classes. The most significant improvements have been in establishing effective assessment procedures and planning the curriculum so that the learning needs of all the pupils are met with accurately matched work. The school development plan is now an effective working document that is kept under constant review. It gives a clear view of the school's current priorities and the ways it has identified of moving forward. Given the clear vision and commitment to succeed, the school is well placed to continue to improve.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	A	B	A	C	very high A* well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	A*	C	B	C	
science	A	C	C	E	

By the end of their reception year, most children achieve above average standards in all the areas of learning. In the National Curriculum tests, seven-year-olds have achieved above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics over the past three years. In 2000, standards in reading and writing were above average and standards in mathematics were well above. In relation to similar schools the standards are average. By the age of eleven, pupils have achieved above average standards in the English and mathematics tests over the past three years. In 2000, standards were well above average in English and above average in mathematics when compared with all schools. Again, these results are average when compared with similar schools.

The inspection findings indicate that the standards of attainment in English are above average at the end of both key stages and standards in mathematics are well above. By the time they are eleven, most pupils are competent readers and writers. Throughout the school, pupils now have good mental skills that they use very effectively to solve problems involving all four number operations.

In science, teacher assessments for seven-year-olds in 2000 indicate that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level was below average whereas the proportion reaching the higher level was well above average. Overall, standards were above average. By the age of eleven, standards have exceeded the national average over the past three years. However, in the 2000 tests, standards were only average in comparison with schools nationally and well below average when compared with similar schools. The school has placed a greater emphasis on science recently and the evidence of the inspection is that current standards at seven and eleven are above average. Pupils of all ages have good scientific enquiry skills that they use well to develop their knowledge and understanding in all aspects of the science curriculum. The school sets challenging targets based firmly on rigorous assessments of pupils' progress. The current targets for pupils achieving at least the expected levels in English, mathematics and science are well above those achieved nationally in 2000. The latest teacher assessments indicate that these targets will be met and possibly exceeded.

In information and communication technology, design and technology, art and design at Key Stage 1, history and music, pupils attain average standards while in geography standards are average by the age of seven but below average at eleven. Given their good grasp of the basic skills and their positive attitudes to learning, the pupils are capable of achieving more in these areas. In art and design at Key Stage 2 and physical education, pupils achieve above average standards at seven and eleven.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils show an interest in everything they do and they are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and this contributes well to their learning. They behave very well during lunchtimes and playtimes.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils get on well together. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are very good. Pupils take responsibility willingly but there are too few opportunities for them to use their initiative or to take responsibility for their own learning.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance is well above average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and this has a positive effect on pupils' learning. Eighty-three per cent of the lessons seen were good or better. Of these, 21% were very good and 10% were excellent. Three per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. This was an isolated lesson and did not reflect the teacher's normal good practice.

The teachers have an excellent understanding of the literacy and numeracy strategies and use a good variety of strategies to reinforce learning. By teaching the basic skills so well, they provide the pupils with a good set of tools for learning across the curriculum. They have good subject knowledge across most subjects of the curriculum. The exception is geography, where insecure knowledge leads to a lack of confidence and work that is pitched too low. They know their pupils well and skilfully engage them all in discussions by tailoring questions to individual pupils' needs. Despite good teaching in most subjects, pupils do not achieve as well as they should in some subjects because too little time is given to them.

Teachers plan their lessons well and deliver them in a lively and enthusiastic way that makes learning interesting. They match work accurately to the individual learning needs of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well in lessons and in carefully arranged withdrawal groups. The teachers have high expectations of behaviour and of the work that pupils can do. The very good relationships promote a very secure learning environment and the security that pupils feel promotes good attitudes to learning. The teachers maintain a brisk pace to their lessons and this keeps the pupils interested. They use a good range of interesting resources that stimulate and interest the pupils. Support staff and parent helpers are well briefed and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. A

weakness in the teaching, throughout the school, is the over-use of worksheets in geography lessons and the lack of opportunities to develop mapping skills and knowledge of places. There is a consistent approach to the marking of pupils' work. In most subjects it is thorough and indicates to pupils how their work may be improved. The exception is in the marking of geography where it tends to be over-generous and does not guide learning. Teachers use homework satisfactorily to reinforce learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in the rest of the school. Good emphasis is placed on the teaching of literacy and numeracy. The curriculum meets the learning needs of all the pupils. However, some lessons are too long and some subjects are not taught in sufficient depth and pupils do not learn as much as they should. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good throughout the school. These pupils are supported well in lessons and carefully arranged withdrawal groups. As a result, they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is good. Since the last inspection, the school has introduced new and effective initiatives to improve cultural development and provision is now satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Pupils feel valued and secure. The school has very good procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress and attainment. The information gained is used well to plan further learning. The pupils' best interests are at the heart of everything the school does.
Partnership with parents	Good. Many parents provide valuable support in classrooms. Parents receive good quality information about their children's progress and they give their children very good support at home.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher has a clear vision of how the school should develop and has taken appropriate action to tackle the issues raised in the last report. Curriculum co-ordinators have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are well informed and involved well in running the school. They are well aware of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They keep a careful check on the cost effectiveness of their spending decisions. The school successfully applies the principle of best value.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The end of key stage test results are analysed extensively and effective measures to improve standards are put in place.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The finance committee maintains a very effective overview of the budget with realistic plans for expenditure both in the short and long term. There is an adequate number of teachers and support staff and the accommodation is satisfactory overall. There is a shortage of resources for information and communication technology, which is having an adverse effect on pupils' learning. There is a limited range of library books to support pupils' learning.

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 school. • The school is well led and managed. • The teaching is good. • Their children make good progress. • They feel the staff are approachable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents are unhappy that their children are in mixed-age classes. • Some parents would like more information about how their children are getting on.

The inspectors agree with the positive views expressed by the parents. They do not support the negative views expressed. The curriculum is well planned to take into account the learning needs of all pupils in mixed-age classes. Inspectors feel that the quality of information provided for parents is good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the reception class with above average levels of attainment, particularly in their social development and in their language and mathematical knowledge. They make good progress and, by the end of the reception year, they are confident learners and achieve above the expected levels in all the areas of learning. They have good speaking and listening skills that serve them well at story time and in class discussions across the curriculum. Most have made a good start to reading and writing. The children benefit from the challenge of working with Year 1 pupils and they are developing good knowledge of number facts.
2. In the National Curriculum tests, seven-year-olds have achieved above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics over the past three years. In 2000, standards in reading and writing were above the national average and standards in mathematics were well above. In relation to similar schools the standards are average. By the age of eleven, pupils have achieved above average standards in the English and mathematics tests over the past three years. In 2000, standards were well above average in English, above average in mathematics and average in science when compared with all schools. These results are average in English and mathematics and well below average in science when compared with similar schools.
3. The inspection findings indicate that the standards of attainment in English are above the national average at the end of both key stages. Attainment in speaking and listening and in reading is well above the national average. Good progress has been made in the teaching of writing and, by the age of eleven, the higher attaining pupils are reaching well above average levels. Standards have been sustained since the previous inspection and have improved in writing especially by the age of eleven. The provision for the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding in English has been enhanced through the careful and well-considered introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and through better assessment procedures.
4. Inspection findings indicate that standards in mathematics, at the end of both key stages, are well above the national average. There has been a marked improvement in standards since the time of the last inspection. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy very successfully and this has had a positive impact on pupils' learning, particularly in developing effective mental strategies. Throughout the school, pupils now have good mental skills that they use very effectively to solve problems involving all four number operations. The majority of pupils in Year 2, for example, use instant recall of 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 times tables to complete number sequences and identify patterns. This is built upon well as pupils move through the school and, by the time they are eleven, the majority of pupils have well above average mental skills that they use to good effect when solving problems involving measurement and money. By the time they are eleven, pupils calculate perimeters and areas of irregular shapes and use the recognised formulae for calculating rectangles and right-angled triangles. They identify angles such as acute, obtuse and reflex correctly by their names, and measure and construct angles accurately to the nearest degree.
5. In science, teacher assessments for seven-year-olds in 2000 indicate that overall standards are above average. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level was below average whereas the proportion reaching the higher level was well above

average. By the age of eleven, standards have exceeded the national average over the past three years. However, in the 2000 tests, standards were average in comparison with schools nationally and well below average when compared with similar schools. The evidence of the inspection is that current standards at seven and eleven are above average. The subject has been a major priority for school improvement and booster classes have been provided to support borderline pupils. These classes have had a good impact on pupils' learning.

6. Pupils' attainment in scientific enquiry is above average at the end of both key stages. Pupils of all ages are gaining a good understanding and familiarity with the process of scientific investigation and they use their skills well to develop their knowledge and understanding in all aspects of the science curriculum.
7. The school has high expectations and sets challenging targets based firmly on rigorous assessments of pupils' progress. The current targets for pupils of eleven achieving at least the expected levels in English, mathematics and science are well above those achieved nationally in 2000. In addition to these targets, the school has set challenging targets for pupils achieving the higher levels. The latest teacher assessments indicate that these targets will be met and possibly exceeded.
8. In information and communication technology, pupils of seven and eleven attain standards in line with national expectations. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. The majority of pupils have access to computers at home and start school with above average understanding of how to use computers. The school extends this learning effectively by providing many good opportunities to use computers as tools for learning in other subjects. From their earliest days in school, the pupils are comfortable using computers and use them independently, for example, to consolidate their learning in mathematics or to research information. The oldest pupils use sensing equipment effectively to collect data on the weather. Having collected the information, they use the appropriate tools to present it in a variety of forms including pie charts and graphs. By the time they are eleven, pupils are beginning to apply their skills creatively. Despite the good teaching, pupils' progress is restricted because the small number of computers available limits 'hands on' time. This means that it takes a long time for everybody in a class to consolidate what they have learnt before a new skill is taught.
9. In art and design at the end of Key Stage 2 and physical education at the end of both key stages, pupils achieve above average standards. The school provides high quality experiences in art and design and there is clear evidence that pupils build up a good range of skills across a wide range of media and techniques. Physical education enjoys a high profile and the school is justifiably proud of the success that pupils have achieved at inter-school and county level.
10. In design and technology, history and music, pupils in both key stages make satisfactory progress and achieve average standards while in geography, progress is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2 and standards are below average by the age of eleven. Given their good grasp of the basic skills and their positive attitudes to learning, the pupils are capable of achieving more in these areas. The main reason they do not do better in these subjects is that not enough time is allocated to them. There are long gaps between units, sometimes more than six months. This means that pupils do not have regular opportunities to build progressively on their prior learning.
11. Pupils of all abilities achieve well as the work is matched accurately to their needs, apart from in geography in Key Stage 2 where it is pitched too low. Pupils with special

educational needs make good progress and attain appropriate levels of attainment that are in line with the targets in their individual educational plans.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils' attitudes to school are good. Since the last inspection the school has continued to engender an ethos of sustained concentration and interest in their work. Children in the Foundation Stage settle quickly into the routines of school life because of the good induction procedures that are in place. All the adults are consistent in their approach to building on the children's good social skills. Older pupils listen attentively to their teachers and carry out work and tasks purposefully. They try hard with their work and seek constantly to improve. There are, however, not enough opportunities for pupils to take initiative in the creation of their work.
13. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. They settle into their morning and afternoon sessions in a bright but orderly manner. They behave very well during lunchtimes and playtimes and get on well together. They are developing good social skills and enjoy talking about their work and interests. Most parents expressed the view that they had no concerns about the behaviour of pupils and if, on rare occasions, incidents of unacceptable behaviour occur, they are dealt with quickly and sensitively.
14. The personal development of pupils is very good. The relationships between the pupils themselves and the pupils and all the adults are very good. There is a mutual respect between the pupils and the adults that supports personal development very effectively. The pupils show enthusiasm and enjoyment for the routines and tasks of daily school life, becoming actively involved in preparing for a wide range of activities, including assemblies. However, although the pupils accept responsibility willingly, there are too few opportunities for them to use their initiative or to take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils are made to feel valued and their achievements, both in and out of school, are acknowledged and celebrated. There have been no exclusions within the last year.
15. The attendance rates throughout the school are very good and are currently well above the national average. Pupils arrive punctually so the day starts smoothly. Registers are maintained in a clear, accurate and effective manner. Monitoring of absences is dealt with promptly and efficiently. These well-established and maintained procedures encourage and contribute to the high level of attendance and pupils' progress. Parents confirm in both the pre-inspection questionnaires and in discussion during the course of the inspection that their children enjoy school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. The overall quality of teaching is good throughout the school and this has a positive effect on pupils' learning. It has improved significantly since the last inspection. During the inspection, 83% of the lessons seen were good or better. Of these, 21% were very good and 10% were excellent. Three per cent of the teaching seen was unsatisfactory. This represents just one lesson where the quality of teaching did not match the teacher's usual high standards. The very good and excellent teaching occurred most notably in literacy and numeracy lessons.
17. The teachers have an excellent understanding of the literacy and numeracy strategies and have the confidence to adapt these to the learning needs of their pupils. They use

a good variety of strategies to reinforce learning and pay good attention to developing the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information technology through other subjects. By teaching the basic skills so well, they provide the pupils with a good set of tools for learning across the curriculum. In literacy, for example, teachers emphasise the need for correct spelling and punctuation. They encourage the pupils in independent research and, as a result, the pupils are adept at seeking out information for themselves from books, CD ROM or the Internet. In numeracy lessons, the challenging introductory mental sessions set the tone for the lessons and encourage the pupils to use a wide variety of strategies to solve number problems that they are then able to transfer to problems regarding money or measurement.

18. The teachers have good subject knowledge across most subjects of the curriculum. The exception is geography in Key Stage 2, where their insecure knowledge leads to a lack of confidence, and work that is pitched too low. In other subjects they use their good subject knowledge to frame effective questions to check pupils' understanding and challenge them to think and develop their own ideas. They know their pupils well and skilfully engage them all in class discussions by tailoring questions to individual pupils' needs. Their questioning takes learning forward in small steps that allow pupils to assimilate what they have learnt. This gives them confidence because they are successful in what they do and they want to learn more.
19. The teachers plan their lessons well and deliver them in a lively and enthusiastic way that makes learning interesting. They use ongoing assessments effectively to match work accurately to the individual learning needs of pupils. The purpose of lessons is clear and teachers explain clearly to pupils what they are going to learn. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in lessons and in carefully arranged withdrawal groups. Teachers and support staff are fully aware of the targets of individual educational plans and use them effectively to take learning forward.
20. The teachers have high expectations of behaviour and of the work that pupils can do. The very good relationships between all members of the school community promote a very secure learning environment where the pupils try their best at everything they do. The security that pupils feel promotes good attitudes to learning.
21. The teachers usually use the time within lessons to good effect. They maintain a brisk pace to their lessons and this keeps the pupils interested. The structure of the timetable, however, means that some lessons, particularly literacy, numeracy and physical education in the infant classes, are over-long. While the teachers fill the extra time with good reinforcement activities, it is not always productive because the pupils do not learn any more. Teachers use a good range of interesting resources that stimulate and interest the pupils. Support staff and parent helpers are well briefed and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. A weakness in the teaching, in both key stages, is the over-use of worksheets in geography lessons and the lack of opportunities to develop mapping skills and knowledge of places.
22. There is a consistent approach to the marking of pupils' work. In most subjects it is thorough and indicates to pupils how their work may be improved. The exception is in the marking of geography where it tends to be over-generous and does not guide learning. Teachers use homework satisfactorily to reinforce learning.

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

23. The quality of the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good. The children enjoy a good range of learning experiences with the level of work matched accurately to their needs. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the quality of the curriculum is satisfactory overall. It meets statutory requirements but there is an imbalance in the time allocation for the foundation subjects. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught regularly and the school has successfully adapted the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to meet the needs of its pupils. Although the school has reviewed the curriculum guidance and has ensured that the long term planning reflects the requirements of the current National Curriculum, the time allocated to some subjects is not sufficient to teach them in the required depth. The time allocated to science is low while the time allocated to physical education is generous and is double that allocated to history, geography, art, music and design and technology. This has a negative impact on pupils' learning in some subjects.
24. The quality of the curriculum has improved since the last inspection. The school has addressed successfully the needs of pupils in mixed aged classes and introduced rolling programmes to ensure that pupils are challenged appropriately and do not repeat any aspects. There are, however, considerable gaps between subject blocks: up to six months between history units and more than six months between some geography units. These gaps slow pupils' progress and limit the consolidation of knowledge because pupils forget what they have been taught.
25. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the daily lesson pattern does not promote effective use of time. Most lessons are in blocks of more than an hour. In some subjects this extra time does not lead to extra learning. In physical education, for example, the pupils, particularly the younger ones, become tired and in numeracy and literacy pupils find it hard to concentrate for such long periods. Some time slots allocated to subjects are too short to be effective, such as those in the early morning. Literacy hours in both key stages exceed the usual allocation by significant amounts while the time for some foundation subjects, such as music, is restricted.
26. All pupils have equal access to all areas of the curriculum. The provision for pupils with special educational needs meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal social and health education. The school's systems for monitoring pupils' progress also cover personal development and ensure that there is a comprehensive picture of each pupil. Personal and social education is provided effectively through a planned programme for each class. Health education, including drugs awareness, is covered at appropriate points in personal and social education and physical education. It is the school's policy not to teach sex education although the school nurse talks to the Year 6 pupils about puberty.
27. There is good provision of extra-curricular activities including sport, music, drama, crafts and gardening. The school has an admirable record of achievement in a variety of sporting and games events and consistently supports local leagues. The drama group puts on regular performances each year and the music groups perform in church and at local residential homes. The formal curriculum is enhanced by a good range of visits such as to Southport Opera House and the Aquarium of the Lakes and by special visitors, such as a poet and an ornithologist. These visits add significantly to the pupils' interest and enjoyment of learning.
28. There are very good links with the local and wider communities. Strong links are in place with the local parish church, and the residents of all ages in the immediate area

are generous with their support and time. The extra help that they provide in school has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Social events held by the school or jointly with the church are well attended. There are effective and well-maintained links in the wider community with businesses who have offered valuable support and time with particular curricular topics and by their efforts have enhanced the pupils' learning. One particular example was when pupils helped in making plaster mouldings and were involved in the planting of the grounds at Rufford New Hall. The school has very good and well-established links with secondary schools throughout the area and good systems that support the pupils effectively when they transfer to the next stage of their education.

29. There is a good partnership with the local college whose students complete their teaching practice at the school. This is mutually beneficial to both parties as the students bring in new ideas while they learn from the good examples of teaching at the school.
30. Overall the school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development. Spiritual, moral and social provision is good and since the last inspection the school has introduced new initiatives to improve cultural development, which are having a marked effect. Provision for cultural development is now satisfactory.
31. Spiritual development is promoted well, primarily through religious education and worship but also through other subject areas and in the ethos of the school's daily life. During the inspection, the youngest children were fascinated by their observations of snails while older pupils were excited to find out how water travels up a celery stalk. Pupils are given good opportunities for reflection. The habit of reflecting on life and experience is evident in pupils' poetry and their response to words. Good relationships between staff and pupils encourage them to share feelings and experiences and to be aware of the wonder of the world around them.
32. There is good provision for moral and social development. Pupils are given clear direction about right and wrong and have opportunities to discuss issues that concern them. There is a common expectation of good behaviour that is shared by pupils and adults. Pupils in Year 6 act as 'buddies' for the youngest reception children and pupils show genuine concern for each other. This was illustrated in a mathematics lesson in Year 6 when the rest of the class encouraged the pupils who found the work difficult. Adults provide good role models for pupils and give them ample opportunities to be involved in support for the broader community. The school supports a wide variety of charities with which pupils can readily identify, for example, the NSPCC, Northwest Air Ambulance, The Blind Society, and The Lancashire Food Bank. Pupils are also encouraged to support their local community and share responsibility. The school has been commended in the schools' section of the Lancashire Best Kept Village competition and in the Rufford Village Garden Competition. They have also supported the local church by putting on a pageant to demonstrate its history.
33. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory and showing steady improvement. The school is aware of the need to prepare the pupils for life in a multicultural society. Inter-cultural objectives are identified in all planning so that there are regular opportunities for pupils to become aware of cultural diversity. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting were pleased that their children were taught about other faiths and that links had been established with a school of mainly Asian pupils. The school and the parents are well aware of the importance of this aspect in a mono-cultural area. An annual multi-cultural week is held, which includes special events, such as a visit from an African storyteller. The school also encourages pupils to be aware of their local heritage especially through music. Pupils have visited the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall and visiting musicians have performed traditional Lancashire songs and dances. These

experiences have effectively developed the pupils' understanding of their own local culture and heritage.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. The school cares for its pupils very well. All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, hold this as a high priority and are committed to making pupils feel secure. The good induction procedures for children entering the school enable them to settle quickly into the new routines of their daily lives. The pupils' best interests are at the heart of everything the school does.
35. The procedures for child protection and welfare are very good. The named teacher responsible undertakes this role in a dedicated and sensitive manner, and ensures that all members of staff are aware of current systems and legislation. Several members of staff have undertaken specialist training to enhance their understanding of this area of care.
36. The school is particularly vigilant about all areas of health and safety. Regular audits, fire drills, risk assessments and security checks are carried out and fully documented. Five members of staff hold first aid qualifications and these are kept updated on a regular, certified basis. Effective and appropriate systems are in place for contacting parents and carers in the event of accidents or pupils becoming ill while at school.
37. There has been good progress in establishing effective systems for assessment since the last inspection. The school is very effective in supporting and guiding its pupils in their academic and social development. This has a significant impact upon the standards they achieve and the progress they make. Pupils who have special educational needs are identified early in their school life. Their progress is carefully monitored and appropriate education plans are in place. These are of high quality and have clear short-term targets that are regularly reviewed and updated. As a result these pupils make good progress.
38. The school has very good procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress in literacy, numeracy and science and appropriate use is made of formal testing using standardised and optional national tests throughout the school. The results of these are analysed and used effectively to set appropriate targets for individual pupils and to enhance curriculum planning. A recent analysis revealed that the standard of writing was below the attainment in the rest of English and the school acted quickly on this information to institute a programme for developing pupils' skills in that area. There is now a very comprehensive portfolio of accurately assessed pieces of writing with very high quality annotations that are helpful to teachers when they are levelling pupils' work. This means that when the work of pupils in mixed-age classes is compared with these examples, there is a consistency in teachers' assessment which ensures equality of access and provision in the curriculum no matter which classes the pupils are taught in. The school makes good use of the information to track the progress of individual pupils. Learning needs are identified as they arise and extra support is provided through additional teaching to improve the levels of attainment. Appropriate targets are set and these are shared with the pupils. Some pupils are identified as higher attainers and they receive additional extension work to challenge them and broaden their knowledge and understanding. The arrangements for assessment in the other foundation subjects are less well established but informal procedures for recording pupils' progress and attainment are good. Teachers know their pupils well and provide work that closely matches their needs. Samples of work are selected in subjects like art and design and the school keeps a good photographic

record of pupils' work in design and technology. These portfolios give an accurate indication of pupils' progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39. The partnership between the school and parents is good. Since the last inspection the school has given a great deal of attention to the importance of this relationship and has adopted several strategies to ensure its success and development. Parents' involvement in their children's education is good and has a positive impact on their attainment and learning. Many parents help in classrooms throughout the school and provide valuable support. Class teachers appreciate this commitment and parents confirm that they are well guided and supported in their efforts and feel confident in the work they undertake. Many have undertaken 'Parents as Educator' courses within the school. These courses are popular and there is a waiting list of parents wishing to attend future courses. The parents feel that these courses help them in the work they do in the school. The contribution parents make to children's learning at home is very good. Many parents help with reading, mathematics and research projects and value this as a positive link with the school.
40. The quality of information provided for parents is good. The school keeps them informed of activities, news and important information by means of a well-produced newsletter. Termly meetings are held, when parents are invited to discuss with class teachers their children's attainment, progress and targets for improvement. Parents feel that they can approach the school with any concerns they may have. Parent Governors also play an important and supportive role in liaising between the school and parents to answer queries or gain information to support this partnership.
41. There is an extremely active 'Friends Association' that arranges a wide range of activities throughout the year. These are popular and well supported. Many members of the association no longer have children in the school but wish to continue to be actively involved and to support the school in every possible way.
42. Most of the parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting or answered the questionnaire, felt that the school was well led and managed and they were happy with the quality of the education provided. A small minority of parents felt that they were not kept well informed about their children's progress. The inspectors feel that the quality of information provided for the parents is good.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides very good leadership and has developed a strong team spirit within the school involving all members of staff and the governing body. Everyone in the school takes a measure of responsibility for decision-making and this enhances the school's commitment to ongoing development and improvement. This has resulted in the good progress made by the school since the last inspection.
44. The head has a clear vision for how the school should develop and has taken appropriate steps to tackle the issues raised in the last inspection report. Her action plan has been well considered and the issues were addressed in an appropriate priority order so that each area could be tackled in appropriate depth. The school has made a very good start in establishing procedures for monitoring and evaluating its work. The quality of monitoring of teaching and learning is good overall. The agreed criteria are

well focused and the willingness of the teachers to share the outcomes of monitoring has led to improved teaching and learning. The school recognises the need to produce rigorous judgements that can be used as a basis for further development. A strength of the monitoring procedure is the way in which planning is carefully scrutinised by co-ordinators making sure that there is an equality of provision and curriculum opportunity for all pupils. This takes full account of the needs of all pupils in mixed-age classes and ensures a consistent approach to pupils' learning as they move through the school. This reflects the aims of the school, which emphasise the importance of a commitment to whole school development and equality of opportunity and access for all pupils

45. The role of subject co-ordinators has been more clearly defined and they fulfil their roles effectively. They now take more responsibility for their subject areas and are empowered to make strategic decisions and plan effectively for development. The exception is in geography where leadership is currently unsatisfactory. This is because the co-ordinator is in her second full year of teaching at the school and she has a heavy workload as deputy head and mathematics co-ordinator. Geography has been neglected for a number of years, but the main priority was to raise standards in mathematics, which has been achieved. The deputy head provides very good support. She is enthusiastic and well informed and regular non-contact time enables her to fulfil her role effectively.
46. The governors are effective in their role and have a well-established committee structure that covers all aspects of the school's work. All statutory requirements are met. There are nominated governors for appropriate curriculum areas, such as literacy and numeracy and for special educational needs. The governors have undergone appropriate training with the local education authority. The finance committee maintains a very effective overview of the budget with realistic plans for expenditure both in the short and long term. A very efficient administrator who controls day-to-day financial matters and has a very positive impact upon the smooth running of the school supports the governors and school very well. The school successfully applies the principles of best value. The governors are well aware of the school's strengths and where there are areas for improvement. The well-documented school development plan is an effective working document, which is under regular review and which gives an overall view of the school's plans to meet current priorities and to plan for the way ahead.
47. The features of the school's ethos include very good relationships between pupils and adults and the very purposeful and happy environment for learning. This has a significant impact upon pupils' academic and social development as they move through the school.
48. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. These pupils are supported well in lessons and carefully arranged withdrawal groups. As a result, they make good progress.
49. The school has an adequate number of suitably qualified staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. All the teachers are dedicated, committed and hard working. The support staff are suitably qualified and in the majority of cases are used effectively. There are good induction procedures for newly qualified teachers and staff new to the school. These combine many strategies to ensure that they are supported effectively. The headteacher shows a high level of commitment and positive belief in the value of staff development, which is incorporated into her vision for the future of the school.
50. Although the school has had some extension work carried out since the last inspection, the accommodation is barely adequate for all activities. The school hall is used for a wide variety of activities including assemblies, lunchtimes and some lessons, including

physical education. The small space restricts energetic movement for the number of pupils involved, particularly in the junior classes. The library is situated in the staff room and this restricts its effective use. Many books have been replaced but there is still a limited range of books available to support pupils learning, research and independent study. These aspects have not improved since the last inspection. There is an adequate quantity of good quality resources to support learning in most subjects, but there is a shortage in information and communication technology resources. This is having a negative impact on pupils' learning. External areas used for play and outdoor games are satisfactory and do not limit activities unduly. The school is maintained to a high standard by the Site Supervisor and his staff and gives a clean, bright and welcoming environment for all involved with the life of the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51. In order to improve the standards of education across the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

1) improve the progress made and the standards achieved by pupils in geography by the end of Key Stage 2 by:

- increasing the amount of curriculum time available for the subject;
- ensuring that each unit of study is taught on a regular basis;
- improving teachers' subject knowledge;
- providing sufficient time for the co-ordinator to assess and review the provision for geography;
- reducing the use of commercially produced worksheets so that pupils of all abilities are sufficiently challenged.
(paragraphs 10, 11, 18, 23, 24, 45, 107-111)

2) raise standards in information and communication technology, design and technology, geography at Key Stage 1, history and music by:

- revising the times allocated to all the subjects so that they are all taught in sufficient depth to allow all pupils to achieve their full potential;
(paragraphs 10, 11, 100, 108, 113, 126)
- Revising the daily timetable so that the best use is made of all available teaching time;
(paragraphs 21, 25, 100, 108, 113, 128)
- ensuring that there are sufficient resources to support pupils' learning effectively in information and communication technology.
(paragraphs 8, 49, 82, 121)

3) continue to improve standards in science by

- ensuring that sufficient time is allocated to the subject and that each area of study is addressed on a more regular basis.
(paragraphs 23, 92)

Other minor issues which should be considered by the school

- the provision of more opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and take more responsibility for their learning, including the provision of a wider range of books to support pupils' independent study and research. (paragraphs 12, 14, 50, 82)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	29
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
10	21	52	14	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	4	142
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		22

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	3.8	School data	0.2
National comparative data	5.2	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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	7	11	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	9	10	10
	Total	16	17	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (88)	94 (82)	94 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	16	16	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (100)	89 (100)	89 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	10	10	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	7	8	9
	Total	16	17	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (80)	85 (76)	90 (76)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	10	10
	Girls	8	7	9
	Total	16	17	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (80)	85 (88)	95 (84)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	128
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.7
Average class size	29.2

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	94

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	390,090
Total expenditure	363,772
Expenditure per pupil	2,509
Balance brought forward from previous year	90,949
Balance carried forward to next year	117,267

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	146
Number of questionnaires returned	68

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	29	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	41	2	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	48	4	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	43	9	0	5
The teaching is good.	57	36	2	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	30	48	16	4	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	27	4	5	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	32	0	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	43	35	16	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	71	29	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	30	0	0	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	43	4	0	7

Other issues raised by parents

A small minority of parents are concerned that their children are taught in mixed-age classes.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

52. The school makes good provision for the children in the Foundation Stage and, as a result the children make good progress in their first year in full-time education. The good provision noted in the previous inspection has been maintained. By the end of the Foundation Stage most children attain beyond the expected levels in all the required areas of learning. Foundation Stage children are prepared well to begin the National Curriculum.
53. Children's overall attainment on entry into full-time education in the Reception Class is above average. Their personal and social development is well advanced and they have good language and mathematical skills. At the time of the inspection the school provided part-time education in the nursery unit for children whose fourth birthdays fall in the autumn and spring terms. Children whose fourth birthdays fall in the summer term begin full-time education at the beginning of the school year in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class. Most children have had playgroup experience before starting school. By the time baseline assessment is made on entry into full-time education, approximately two thirds of children have also had the benefit of part-time reception education.
54. Teaching is consistently good and during the inspection one excellent lesson was seen. There is very good leadership from the Foundation Stage co-ordinator and all the adults involved in teaching show a good understanding of how young children learn. The level of teamwork is very good and ensures that there is a consistency of approach and a common understanding of the teaching intentions. The classroom support assistants are well informed and deployed to good effect. As a result, Reception children receive appropriate opportunities for learning through practical experiences particularly on two days a week when all the Reception children come together to form a single class based in the nursery unit.
55. The quality of planning for teaching and learning is very good. The teaching situation is complex but planning covers learning for both the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage and the first levels of the National Curriculum very well. The children's progress is monitored effectively so that teachers have a good overview over time and within lessons. Assessment information is used effectively to ensure that activities are matched accurately to children's needs. The baseline assessment is repeated at the end of the Reception Year and provides clear evidence of progress and of raised attainment at the beginning of Year 1.

Personal, social and emotional development

56. The children make good progress and by the end of their Reception Year their attainment in this area of learning is above the level expected. Most children are sociable and friendly when they start school. They talk confidently to adults and know the conventions of sharing and taking turns. The part-time setting allows them to become familiar with the whole school environment while having the security of a suitable base. Activities like physical education in the main hall allow them to experience the school in a controlled way. Consequently, when they enter full-time school very little is new to them and they settle in quickly.

57. The quality of teaching is good. The children are well motivated and keen to learn. The staff build very good relationships with the children and this gives them the confidence and encouragement to try things out and to become involved. The classrooms are interesting places that provide a stimulating environment and foster an interest in finding things out. All the staff are skilled in combining questions and discussions and in helping the children to articulate their ideas.
58. Regular well-planned activities are provided for the children to develop their social skills. They have good opportunities to work independently, in pairs and in small groups. They observe the rules for using the sand and water areas and respond quickly to verbal instructions. They change for physical education with the minimum of fuss and are familiar with routines like putting their clothes in their bags. The teaching and support staff provide excellent role models and treat the children with respect and courtesy. There is good emphasis on respect for the individual that promotes children's self-esteem. The 'buddy' system where Year 6 pupils look after the Reception children encourages friendships and communication.

Communication, language and literacy

59. The quality of teaching in this area is good and the children make good progress. The approach is flexible but supportive. The ongoing assessment process ensures that tasks are well matched to children's needs. This has a positive impact on learning because the children experience success and are keen to do more. Children's attainment in communication, language and literacy is above the expected levels by the end of the Reception Year and this means that they have the essential skills for learning across the curriculum. Children speak confidently and relevantly. Teaching includes emphasis on the promotion of clear speaking skills and frequent opportunities are provided through class and group discussions to practise and use these skills. The effective management of these sessions builds children's confidence and they are keen to take part. They follow discussions and sustain appropriate lines of thought. They put forward their ideas in full sentences. They are all accustomed to listening and following stories. The youngest children could recall the scary parts of the story and put forward possibilities like, 'Maybe the bear wanted to play'. The older children have a good range of vocabulary, which the teacher extends through a good variety of strategies and games.
60. Children understand the link between reading and writing. Phonic skills are taught systematically. The vast majority of children are familiar with letter sounds and names and can use their skills to build up words. Most know how to spell simple three letter words and use their knowledge of letter sounds to help with their reading. Some are confident readers. They are given regular opportunities to use their language skills for effective communication with the level of teacher assistance gradually decreasing. By the end of the Foundation Stage most pupils are attempting to write for themselves and some are capable of writing several sentences. Letter formation and spelling vary but are generally justifiable.
61. There is a good balance between practical opportunities to practise language skills and the development of formal recording. With the effective guidance of the teaching assistant, Reception children became very absorbed in the role-play of landing on the moon and quickly employed the new vocabulary.

Mathematical development

62. The children make good progress in this area of learning and by the end of the Reception Year, most children are working beyond the expected levels. Although the

older children are in a mixed-age class, the activities are well planned to ensure there are ample practical opportunities for the Reception children. Children demonstrate confidence in counting up to ten and are familiar with larger numbers. They can order numbers and read the related words. Their learning is reinforced effectively through enjoyable practical activities, such as racing model cars on tracks in the playground. These not only encourage children to understand order but also to read the related vocabulary.

63. The quality of teaching is good. The staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have high expectations of the quantity and regularity of work, and this leads to good progress. Children complete number stories and do addition sums competently by adding on. They recognise and complete repeating patterns, know the names of basic two- and three-dimensional shapes and how time is divided. They record their work appropriately and are also developing good recall for mental mathematics. Reception children enjoy the challenge of whole class sessions with Year 1 pupils. Although the teacher is careful to target questions so that the younger children are fully involved, some are clearly operating above the level expected for their age.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

64. Progress is good and by the end of the Reception Year, most children demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live. They are aware of their own past and know that they had different needs when they were younger. Discussions with their teachers give them good opportunities to talk about their experiences and the youngest children happily explain the difference between being at play group and being in the nursery unit. Imaginatively chosen topics also help children understand recent history, such as the moon landings, and provide good opportunities for role-play. Children know they would like to be astronauts 'because they could float.'
65. The children have a good appreciation of their own locality and use the proper names for features, such as the A59. They also have a broad awareness of the wider world. Teachers make good use of children's experiences to build up understanding of travel methods and climate, for example, in packing suitcases for holidays in warm places. They also use favourite books very effectively to provide starting points for learning, such as drawing a map of the 'Bear Hunt'.
66. The quality of teaching and learning is at least good and occasionally excellent especially in areas related to science and information technology. The children's interest in pond life was obviously increased when they were able to see the details of tadpoles and snails through a microscope linked to the computer. The detail allowed them to appreciate how the snail uses its antennae to sense its surroundings. The high level of involvement and discussion encouraged by the teacher enables children to extend their understanding of life processes. Children reflect their teacher's confidence in information technology and show good understanding of its uses and possibilities.

Physical development

67. Most children exceed the expected standards for their age by the end of their Reception Year. The quality of teaching is good. They develop good control and confidence through a wide variety of learning opportunities. Formal physical education sessions are well planned with clear skill focus, such as ball control. Reception children can control the direction and speed of a ball on the ground with a racket and know how to hold a racket correctly. There are regular opportunities for children to use apparatus in the main hall and to use the facilities of the outdoor play area. They are familiar with

a range of large equipment and can travel imaginatively under, over and through climbing apparatus.

68. They move around their classroom sensibly with a good awareness of space and thought for others. Teachers manage outdoor sessions well and consider the most effective ways of giving instructions and organising groups. They also consider the length of lessons and ensure that pace does not flag. As a result children know what is expected of them in formal lessons and they are keen to learn. They behave sensibly and listen carefully to instructions. They readily explain why it is important to warm up because they know the effect of exercise on their bodies.
69. Fine motor control skills are developed effectively through a good range of practical activities. Children hold scissors, brushes, crayons and pencils correctly and use them with control and purpose. They colour carefully within outlines and select the tools appropriately. They thread beads and complete jigsaws confidently.

Creative development

70. By the end of the Reception Year, the majority of children exceed the expected standards for their age in creative development. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The main strength of the teaching in this area is that the children are provided with a wide range of opportunities, for example, art, music and dance that support their creative development very well.
71. Children respond well to what they can see, hear, smell, touch and feel. Teaching staff are sensitive to opportunities to raise children's awareness and provide informal touches as well as planned lessons. Music, for example, is played while children are getting changed for physical education lessons to help them focus and keep up to pace. Good use is made of opportunities in other sessions, such as when children are considering the taste, smell, texture and colour of fruit in science. The children are also encouraged to appreciate their environment and the natural world.
72. The children are developing a good repertoire of songs and rhymes and enjoy making music. They have regular opportunities to develop their dance and music skills. Children show increasing skill in painting and drawing with good attention to detail. Teachers' planning includes regular consideration of opportunities for imaginative role-play. At the time of the inspection, the role-play provision included being a travel agent or customer and manning a space rocket. Children show considerable imagination in their play and put themselves into their roles, for example, demonstrating enthusiastically how to walk on the moon.

ENGLISH

73. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were above average and standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were well above average. Inspection findings indicate that standards of attainment are above the national average at the end of both key stages. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Attainment in speaking and listening and in reading is well above the national average. Good progress has been made in the teaching of writing and by the end of Key Stage 2 the higher attaining pupils are reaching levels that are well above average. The overall standards of attainment have been maintained since the previous inspection and improved in writing especially by the end of Key Stage 2. The provision for the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding has been enhanced through the careful and well-considered introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and through better assessment procedures.

74. In speaking and listening, good teaching enables the pupils to make good progress as they move through the school. Teachers create good opportunities for pupils to contribute orally during lessons. Pupils speak with confidence and use an imaginative and appropriate vocabulary when making their responses. Teachers value their comments and contributions and use them well to build upon pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils are expected to explain their ideas, how they have worked out a particular problem in mathematics or why they have made a specific prediction in science. They are given good opportunities to express their feelings in art and through discussions in circle time. There are also valuable opportunities for role-play in many subjects across the curriculum. In this way pupils consolidate and reinforce their learning effectively. Pupils listen well to instructions and follow them appropriately. They listen in rapt attention when stories are read to them. They listen respectfully to each other and are tolerant of the views of their classmates and, when given the opportunity, enter into appropriate debate about their work.
75. Throughout the school, pupils' attainment in reading is above average. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils read fluently with good expression from appropriate texts. They talk confidently about what they have read and the higher attaining pupils are able to express preferences for particular authors. It is clear that these pupils are cultivating a love of books and reading and are developing good reading habits. Classrooms have good selections of reading material that are displayed attractively and encourage the pupils to make choices from a good selection of library books or from a guided choice from the reading schemes.
76. The pupils continue to make good progress throughout Key Stage 2 and, by the age of eleven, they are all reading from books that provide appropriate challenge and interest. The pupils' own reading records show that they read from a wide variety of sources including poetry and non-fiction. The range of fiction works includes a good variety of genres including humour, fantasy and mystery. The pupils talk animatedly about the books they have read. They can retell the story they are currently reading in an interesting manner. They can identify with the characters and make plausible predictions about the outcomes. Pupils have developed their own useful strategies for selecting reading material, sometimes by author, returning to the same one when they have enjoyed a particular story, or by reading the blurb on the cover and skimming through the pages. The more able pupils read confidently, fluently and with good expression. Those who find reading more difficult are guided to read appropriate texts and they have good strategies for dealing with any unfamiliar words they might come across.
77. All pupils express their love of reading and the majority read avidly in their own time and at home. The majority of pupils throughout the school benefit from the support they receive at home and this has a significant impact upon their achievements. The older pupils make good use of the school library and many are able to visit public libraries with their parents. A valuable feature of the opportunities that the school provides is the regular visit of a mobile library for the pupils in Year 6. Higher order reading skills are well developed. The older pupils are given regular opportunities to develop their research skills by finding information for their work in other subjects from books and through the frequent use of CD ROM and the Internet. Although the stock of books is satisfactory, the library lacks the sort of furnishing they would encourage pupils to browse through books in a comfortable environment. There are no magazines or publications suitable for the pupils to read and, because of recent re-organisation, the younger pupils still find it difficult to access the catalogue and classification system. The retrieval system is computerised and the adult helper is regularly in attendance and gives good support to the pupils.

78. Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in their written work and standards are above the national expectation with a significant number of pupils attaining a higher level by the age of seven. The more able pupils are writing independently. A scrutiny of workbooks shows that pupils make good progress particularly in extended writing where stories have a logical sequence and ideas are expressed clearly. Pupils use simple words and phrases appropriately and convey meaning effectively. Most pupils use appropriate punctuation accurately and the highest attaining pupils already use direct and indirect speech in their writing with the correct use of inverted commas. The highest attaining pupils have a good grasp of grammatical conventions. Teachers provide regular spelling practice and pupils are confident in tackling unfamiliar words when they need them in their written work. The curriculum is broad and the pupils are encouraged to write for a wide range of purposes as teachers create valuable opportunities for developing these skills in other subjects of the curriculum. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, experience appropriate coverage of all areas recommended by the National Literacy Strategy and teachers match the challenge of the tasks accurately to the needs of the pupils. Teachers provide good practice in letter formation but at the age of seven many pupils are at the transition stage to joined writing and have not yet fully made this transfer.
79. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in writing are above average overall. The pupils are tackling high quality written work and the standards reached by the highest attaining pupils are well above average. The content of their work is of a particularly high standard with very colourful and imaginative prose and poetry and an excellent use of vocabulary. Teachers tackle work on grammar in an interesting and enthusiastic manner so that pupils are keen to learn. All pupils tackle similar work although the tasks that they are expected to do are matched accurately to their learning needs, based on their prior attainment. Examples of texts chosen for pupils to analyse and summarise differ according to the pupils' abilities. There is still a wide range of opportunities and pupils regularly experience the work of famous classical and modern writers exploring implicit and explicit writing and engaging in their own persuasive writing in a range of purposeful arguments on topics of current and local interest. Pupils present their own writing in a good range of genres, including horror and tragedy as well as romance, and they are given the opportunity to consider these in classical works by authors, such as Wordsworth and Masfield. As a result of this rich and exciting curriculum, all the pupils make good progress and the majority reach the standard expected by the time they are eleven. Work is well-presented showing pupils' pride and interest in their work.
80. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching is good with some very good features. In a very carefully planned lesson, the teacher used a poem very effectively to encourage the pupils to comment critically on writing, focusing on features, such as mood, rhyming couplets and imagery. She maintained a very brisk pace and challenged all the pupils well in discussion. Her reading of the poem enabled the pupils to join in the humour and to appreciate why the last line is written in italics and how that might affect the reading. She made very good use of an overhead projector to make sure that all the pupils were focused. Through this the pupils could identify strategies that the poet had used to engage the readers' attention, for example, rhyming patterns and repetition. The pupils were engrossed throughout the lesson. They found the tasks that followed not only very challenging but also good fun, for example, finding alternatives to using the words 'yes' and 'no', and then devising questions to which the answers could only be 'yes' or 'no'. The discussion at the end of the lesson showed that all the pupils had learned a lot.

81. Teachers' planning shows great enterprise in providing a rich stimulus and pupils are treated to a wide variety of opportunities for developing and enhancing their skills. Teachers use assessment procedures well and pupils are given appropriate targets for improvement. Marking is generally good and the supportive comments match the targets that have been set. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and are confident in their management of the literacy hour, which they have successfully adapted to meet the needs of the pupils and the issues that arise as a result of the need to teach in mixed age classes. Lessons are well planned with clear intentions for learning and these are shared effectively with the pupils so that they know what to expect. There are very good relationships which give pupils confidence and teachers make good use of humour and appropriate praise. Lessons have good brisk introductions that stimulate the pupils and often generate lively discussion about what has gone before. The tasks that are set are challenging and the pupils are keen to get to work. Discussions are well managed and pupils are given plenty of opportunity to make their own contributions and listen to the thoughts and ideas of others. The work set for pupils who have special educational needs is closely matched to their own education plans and these pupils are well supported both in the classroom as part of the whole class or in carefully managed withdrawal arrangements during group activities.
82. The subject is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator has a very clear idea of where the strengths are and of what needs to be done to raise standards further. The siting of the library in the staff room and the limited range of books available to support the development of pupils' independent study and research skills were weaknesses mentioned in the last report and there has not been any improvement.

MATHEMATICS

83. The results of the end of key stage National Curriculum tests in 2000 indicate that standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are well above average, and at the end of Key Stage 2 they are above average. Standards are average when compared with similar schools. Inspection findings indicate that standards at the end of both key stages are well above the national average. There has been a marked improvement in standards since the time of the last inspection. The improvement in standards at the end of Key Stage 2 is the result of the increased emphasis on developing effective skills and learning to apply them effectively to solve problems. Pupils of all abilities have also benefited from booster classes in preparation for the tests.
84. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy very successfully and this has had a positive impact on pupils' learning, particularly in developing effective mental strategies. The last report noted that not all pupils had a ready facility with numbers although most were able to perform the number procedures that were taught. Throughout the school, pupils now have good mental skills that they use very effectively to solve problems involving all four number operations. The majority of pupils in Year 2, for example, use instant recall of 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 times tables to complete number sequences and identify patterns. This is built upon well as pupils move through the school and, by the time they are eleven, the majority of pupils have well above average mental skills that they use to good effect when solving problems involving measurement and money. Most pupils have a good understanding of fractions and reduce a fraction to its lowest terms. They recognise fractions and their equivalents and use percentages to describe proportions of a whole.
85. In shape and space, pupils in Year 2 are developing a good understanding of reflective symmetry although they do not always recognise all the lines of symmetry in two-

dimensional shapes. They use both non-standard and standard metric units to measure length, capacity and mass. Most pupils can tell the time and can say how much time has elapsed between given events. By the time they are eleven, standards are well above average. Pupils calculate perimeters and areas of irregular shapes and use the recognised formulae for calculating rectangles and right-angled triangles. They identify angles such as acute, obtuse and reflex correctly by their names, and measure and construct angles accurately to the nearest degree.

86. Throughout the school, pupils have many good opportunities to collect and present data. By the time they are seven, pupils can present this information in simple charts and block graphs. By the time they are eleven, pupils display their findings in a good range of charts graphs and tables.
87. The quality of teaching is good overall. All the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Examples of very good teaching were seen in the Year 5 and 6 lessons. The effect of the consistently good teaching on pupils' learning over time is good. The work in pupils' books shows very clear and steady progression as they move through the school. The main strength of the teaching is that teachers know their pupils very well and plan their lessons in great detail with work matched accurately to the needs of each individual pupil. They are clear about what it is they want pupils to learn and share this effectively with the pupils at the beginnings of lessons. Their lively and enthusiastic approach to lessons, combined with the brisk pace, keeps the pupils interested and keen to learn. They use questions very effectively to check understanding and challenge the pupils to take their learning forward. The relationships between teachers and pupils are warm and friendly and this promotes a secure learning environment. Pupils are not afraid to 'have a go' even if they are not really sure. This is particularly valuable for pupils with special educational needs who are supported very well in lessons and make good progress as a result.
88. The pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and it is clear that they enjoy their work. This is particularly true of the quick-fire mental sessions and challenges that the teachers use to such good effect at the beginnings of lessons. The pupils respond well to the high expectations during these sessions and this sets the tone for the rest of the lesson. Pupils' behaviour is good and they concentrate well when they are working on set exercises. They treat one another with respect and listen carefully when other pupils are speaking.
89. The subject is very well led and managed. The National Numeracy Strategy is used effectively to produce good quality lesson planning. The teaching of Key Stage 2 pupils in year groups is an efficient use of the time and expertise of the headteacher, and this has led to improved standards. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable, enthusiastic and fully committed to raising standards further. She has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to achieve this. There are good procedures for assessment, and the information gained is used effectively to set appropriately challenging targets for all groups of pupils.
90. The pupils develop their mathematical skills effectively through other subjects. In science, for example, pupils frequently record measurements in a good variety of graphs and charts. Computers are used effectively to support mathematical knowledge and understanding, particularly quick mental calculations and data presentation.

SCIENCE

91. The standards of attainment at the end of both key stages are above national expectations. Teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 support this judgement. Whereas the performance at the end of Key Stage 2 in the latest published tests was close to the national average and well below average in comparison to similar schools, inspection evidence indicates that this year's performance will improve significantly and targets will be exceeded. The subject has been a major priority for school improvement and booster classes have been provided to support borderline pupils.
92. The school has introduced a rolling programme of topics for each key stage to address the needs of mixed-age classes. The long-term provision meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and avoids repetition by pupils who remain in the same class for two years. The scheme of work ensures that the skills and challenge are at an appropriate level for the each age group. Although some aspects of each area of study are addressed each year there are long gaps between the study of other aspects. This is a weakness. The study of Forces, for example, has not been covered this year and will not be addressed in Key Stage 2 until Spring 2002. The time allocation for this subject is low in comparison with the other core subjects but as the programme is a recent innovation, the full impact has yet to be seen.
93. Pupils' scientific enquiry skills are above average at the end of both key stages. Pupils of all ages are gaining a good understanding and familiarity with the process of scientific investigation. Pupils in Key stage 1 develop a good awareness of the investigation element through regular practical activities, such as testing materials to see if they are waterproof. They understand what fair testing means and know it is important to measure quantities carefully. Teachers use questions well and encourage pupils to articulate and develop their ideas. They present areas for investigation in ways that intrigue pupils and arouse their inquisitiveness. Consequently, pupils are familiar with the concept of prediction, for instance, in suggesting how far sound will carry. There is a consistent emphasis on planning and observation that allows pupils to build up good habits in recording their investigations, for example, in watching the changes as powders are added to water. Occasionally, however, the conclusions are not always recorded with the investigation. Pupils in Year 2 make good use of numeracy skills in recording some of their results in chart form. These skills are built on and formalised in Key Stage 2 so that pupils approach investigations with clear objectives and defined methods. Groups of pupils in Year 6 successfully devised a variety of fair tests to investigate the effect of warmth on seed germination and showed flexibility in considering not only how to warm seeds but also how to keep them cool. They show confidence and familiarity with the procedures for planning and recording their work. Numeracy and information technology skills are applied at a higher level, for example, when pupils logging plant growth measure height against the number of leaves on a computer-generated line graph.
94. Pupils throughout the school have a satisfactory understanding of living things. At the time of the inspection, the focus was on plant and animal life rather than human development. The youngest pupils are very familiar with the life cycle of frogs. During the inspection, the use of a microscopic camera linked to their computer screen enabled them to appreciate the detail of tadpole development. Pupils learn about the importance of healthy eating and exercise. They understand that there are different types of foods, which are helpful for different reasons. Teachers make good use of practical activities to involve pupils, for example, in tasting different fruits and vegetables. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 demonstrate a good knowledge of plant growth. They are well informed about the parts of plants and their functions. They discuss confidently the factors affecting plant germination and growth and have a good

knowledge of the stages of growth. They recognise the importance of plant classification. Teachers have ensured that all pupils have had practical experience of monitoring plant growth with the result that most can explain in detail how to plant and nurture a geranium. Activities are interesting and motivating, which makes pupils keen to learn and work hard. Younger pupils extended their good understanding of seed dispersal by devising a parachute to disperse melon seeds.

95. At the end of both key stages, pupils' knowledge of materials is above expectations. Teachers have provided pupils with many good opportunities to link this aspect of study to the development of their investigation skills. This reinforces their skills effectively because they practise them in a meaningful context. Older pupils in Key Stage 1 have conducted a variety of experiments that have extended their knowledge of materials and their properties. They have tested for insulation, waterproofing and suitability for building and reached individual conclusions through their first hand experiences. Pupils are also developing skills in researching and classifying, for example, in sorting natural and man-made materials. In Key Stage 2, teachers set challenging tasks that require pupils to draw on previous experience and involve practical investigations. Younger pupils clearly enjoyed investigating the elasticity of tights. Year 6 pupils successfully designed and carried out experiments to remove materials from water by filtering, and investigated the saltiness of water that had been evaporated and then condensed. The teachers expect consistently high levels of scientific thought and the pupils respond well to the challenges they present.
96. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of physical processes is average at the end of both key stages. There is a strong element of practical learning through the school in this area. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have a secure understanding of how sound travels and recognise some of the factors that change it. This work is linked effectively with their work on materials as they record the diverse ways in which they succeeded in muffling a noise. They also recognise the uses of electricity and can build simple circuits. Key Stage 2 pupils use their knowledge to build complex circuits and recognise how changes affect the strength of the current. Teachers challenge pupils' understanding of physical processes and require them to combine knowledge from different areas, for example, by investigating whether water conducts electricity. Although pupils demonstrate familiarity with some of the concepts, there has been little recent study of forces.
97. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good. This is particularly evident in the extent of practical experience and opportunities offered to pupils. Teachers plan their lessons well and use a good range of resources effectively to support learning. The active engagement of the pupils in lessons sustains their interest and concentration.
98. The subject is well led and managed. Ongoing assessment is linked securely to the planned curriculum and there is regular monitoring of pupils' progress by the co-ordinator. The performance in standardised national tests is analysed rigorously and areas for development are identified and addressed. This has led to the introduction of booster classes for older pupils, designed to challenge higher attaining pupils and support lower attaining pupils appropriately. The review of the curriculum and the introduction of the targeted support have had a significant impact on pupils' attainment. The science curriculum for both key stages is enhanced by special workshops covering specific topics, such as the electricity workshops for Year 6, and visits from local firms, such as British Aerospace and British Nuclear Fuels. These visits enable the pupils to see the relevance to the wider community of what they are learning.

ART AND DESIGN

99. In Key Stage 1, progress is satisfactory and pupils achieve average standards. They make good progress in Key Stage 2 and, by the age of eleven, standards are above average. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards at the end of both key stages were average. The school uses displays very effectively to enhance the pupils' work in art and design and there are close links with other subjects of the curriculum. The current topic on Greeks is giving plenty of good opportunities for work in the style of Greek potters and illustrators, which is having a positive impact on learning because the pupils are so well motivated.
100. In the infant classes, pupils experience a wide range of media. There is good development of their skills as they tackle finger painting where they have been recreating examples of Spanish pottery and extending this into making thumb pots in clay. The decorative printing patterns have also been used on greetings cards. These pupils have been introduced to paper sculpture within lessons on colour mixing and developing painting techniques through illustrations of the characters from their work in literacy. In Year 2, the art work has been closely linked with a science topic using straw, wood and paper for the pupils to make their own successful representations of the houses built by the Three Little Pigs. In religious education, a class picture of Noah's Ark shows good collaborative work using wax and pencil crayons. These pupils have tried several ways of printing using their own polystyrene blocks and string to create a wallpaper effect. Skills development throughout the key stage is good and the wide range of experiences covering a range of curriculum areas and topics provide rich stimulation for pupils up to the age of seven.
101. These high quality experiences continue throughout Key Stage 2. Pupils are taught to consider the work of famous artists, such as Breughel and Hokusai, with their very different techniques and effects. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have looked closely at their pictures and designs and have made good attempts at creating their own effects in the particular styles. In work following an educational visit to York, pupils produced very effective clay tiles depicting places of interest. In links with their science topic they have produced very effective three-dimensional symbols for the weather map and pencil drawings of patterns based on cloud effects. There are sunburst designs of very high quality using a collection of materials including sequins, foil, string, wool and feathers and a range of wax resist painting and patterns. The work is of high quality and there is clear evidence of good progress in skills development across a wide range of media and techniques. It is clear that pupils enjoy these experiences and are proud of their work, which is always well executed.
102. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. A recently adopted programme of work supports teachers' planning appropriately and they plan for progressive skills development through a wide range of contexts. Art and design is not taught in isolation, but is effectively woven into other subject areas providing motivation and interest. Teachers invite artists into school and pupils throughout the school have benefited from these experiences in pottery, in silk printing effects and in other painting techniques. The timetabling arrangements mean that art shares its allocated time with design and technology. In some classes the allocation throughout the year falls below the national recommendation. This has a negative impact on standards and learning, particularly in Key Stage 1, where pupils do not achieve their full potential given that they enter Year 1 with above average creative skills.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. The structure of the timetable meant that only one lesson was observed during the inspection. This was in the class for the very youngest children. Judgements are based mainly on evidence gathered from looking at examples of pupils' past work in Key Stage 1 and photographic evidence in Key Stage 2, in addition to discussions with pupils.
104. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress as they move through the school and attain average standards by the end of both key stages. This is in line with the findings of the last inspection. In Key Stage 1, pupils make a good start to designing. They draw what they would like their finished product to look like and follow this by choosing suitable materials. The work provides good links with science as they explore the properties of materials, for example, transparent materials for windows. Good attention is paid to developing the basic skills of cutting, measuring accurately and joining materials. The work in the pupils' books shows that they have used a good variety of methods for joining materials, including stitching to make glove puppets.
105. This work is built upon satisfactorily in Key Stage 2 as the pupils learn to improve their designs and refine their skills. Photographic evidence shows that the Year 3/4 class investigated the effectiveness of various structures before designing their own photograph frames. They learned, during this process, that triangles are strong shapes that are used frequently for support.
106. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers provide relevant and interesting contexts for the work that pupils do. They make good links with other subjects. In Key Stage 1, pupils design and make houses to support their work in geography and in Key Stage 2 pupils get a feeling for life in Victorian times as they design and make samplers. Good use is made of visits to stimulate pupils' interest and provide good contexts for the work. Pupils in Years 4 and 5, for example, have visited a packaging factory as part of their work in finding out how art is used in industry. After looking at a wide selection of bags, they designed and made their own bags and these were entered in a competition sponsored by the firm.
107. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to developing the pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information technology. A good example of this is shown when the pupils in Key Stage 2 make biscuits. Numeracy skills are developed by the collection and presentation of data about people's preferences and in weighing out the ingredients accurately. Suitable opportunities are presented to debate their findings and to research other recipes and type out their favourite ones.
108. Pupils enjoy their work and are keen to discuss it. This reflects the relevance and interest of the activities. The co-ordinator is well qualified to lead the subject forward. She has put in place a programme of work that addresses the latest curriculum requirements. However, the structure of the school timetable means that the subject does not always receive an appropriate time allocation.

GEOGRAPHY

109. At the time of the last inspection, standards at the end of both key stages were average. This is still the case in respect of pupils in Key Stage 1, but standards at eleven are below average. In Key Stage 1, pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress. By the time they are seven, they have a good awareness of the similarities

and differences between their own village of Rufford and the imaginary Isle of Struay. They recognise that the areas where people live have a direct relationship on the jobs they do. The display outside the classroom shows that they make satisfactory progress in developing early mapping skills. In the one lesson observed in the Year 1/2 class, the pupils used secondary sources of evidence effectively to find out about places further away. They could use pictures, for example, to find the answers to the questions that had been raised in the class discussion about the places Barnaby Bear had visited.

110. In Key Stage 2, pupils make unsatisfactory progress. The main reason for this is that so little work is covered. In the past year all the classes have studied the weather and, while there are some good aspects to the learning, overall it does not include the study of places in enough depth and the pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their geographical knowledge and mapping skills. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their understanding of the water cycle and in interpreting weather symbols. However, there is an over-reliance on commercially produced worksheets and copying exercises that do not challenge the pupils, particularly those of higher ability. The work in pupils' books shows the same low-level worksheet being used for all the pupils in all the classes. Although pupils learn about other environments, such as deserts and the Polar Regions from television programmes, they do not study them in sufficient depth to advance their learning effectively.
111. The pupils have positive attitudes to their work. In the lesson that was observed they worked enthusiastically although a few became understandably frustrated when they could not find the pictures they needed immediately. The positive attitudes of the older pupils are shown by the amount of time and effort they put into their research work.
112. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall although there are some good features. Teachers generally make the work interesting and relevant to the pupils. An example of this was the way the Year 5 pupils had studied the effects of the flooding in York. This was very relevant to them because they had visited York a month earlier and were able to contrast the photographs they had taken with those in the newspapers showing the extent of the floods and the effects on people's lives. Teachers use the subject well to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and information technology skills. Pupils use computers effectively to produce temperature charts and explore CD ROM to find relevant information. The main weakness in the teaching is the lack of challenge in the work that leads to unsatisfactory progress.
113. Management of the subject is currently unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has a heavy workload as deputy head and mathematics co-ordinator. This has meant that, although she has put in place a programme of work in keeping with the latest curriculum requirements, she has not yet had the opportunity to review it and assess its impact. The major factors in the unsatisfactory standards are the insufficient curriculum time and the fragmentation of the timetable. Sometimes there is a gap of more than six months between units of study. This means that pupils do not build satisfactorily on their prior learning because they forget what they have been taught.

HISTORY

114. The standards of attainment at the end of both key stages are in line with national expectations. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the past is sound. The subject has a high profile in the school and there has been an improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. However, standards have not improved because the subject is not taught consistently. Pupils make good progress in lessons in both key

stages when the subject is taught. Inspection evidence, however, shows that there are long gaps between taught units and that the time allocation for the subject is low.

115. The school has introduced a rolling programme of topics and units to address the needs of the mixed-age classes while meeting the full requirements of the National Curriculum. The new programme is a recent innovation and the full impact has yet to be seen. The arrangement means that all Key Stage 2 classes study the same topic at the same time as do Key Stage 1. Although the subject may be the same the skills focus is appropriate to each age range and the assessment for each unit is clearly identified. At present, however, the gaps between taught units can be as great as six months. Overall, the restricted time allocation limits pupils' opportunities to practise skills and to build their subject knowledge. This is counter-balanced to some degree by the special events and visits which enhance the curriculum. Good links are made with other subject areas, which provide additional contexts for learning.
116. By the age of seven, pupils have a sound appreciation of chronology. They know the vocabulary and conventions associated with time and are aware of their own past. Year 2 pupils give good descriptions of their own memories of favourite toys and include telling details. They recognise the differences between 'now' and 'then' when comparing with their own experiences at school. They are able to sequence events and artefacts, such as teddy bears, using visual clues. Teachers make interesting links for pupils, for example, the popularity of the Teddy Bear with President Roosevelt. These links stimulate the pupils' interest and they are keen to learn more. Pupils are encouraged to develop appropriate enquiry skills. Year 2 pupils found things out for themselves about the Great Fire of London. Teachers encourage pupils to think carefully about the wording of questions. Pupils have a sound knowledge of events and important people from the past in the areas covered but the quantity and breadth of learning is restricted.
117. By the age of eleven, pupils have a sound knowledge about the topics studied. They draw on previous learning and engage in a good level of discussion. This level of thought is not reflected consistently in their written work. Pupils are developing some skills at appropriate levels but others are superficial. They deal competently with matters of time when matching events to dates. They have a broad knowledge of Victorian England and understand the implications of child labour and the factory system and the important inventions of the age. They are used to examining and comparing artefacts borrowed from museum collections. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to use a range of research skills for instance about the Ancient Olympic Games. There is limited evidence of pupils assembling and presenting information in extended writing with a depth of historical knowledge. Pupils' enthusiasm for the subject is obvious and they are willing to undertake their own research and enquiries.
118. When the subject is taught, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and often good. However, the infrequency of study has a negative impact on learning and pupils do not achieve their full potential. The subject is enhanced by a number of exciting visits and visitors, such as an archaeologist from Liverpool University. Year 4's visit to York enables them to visit the Viking village, the Roman fort, mediaeval York and the Archaeological Research Centre. They are able to experience life in the village and train as Roman soldiers as well as seeing how evidence comes from excavations. Opportunities for re-enactment and role-play are provided in school, such as a Victorian school day. The Millennium Celebration of Dance through the ages demonstrated types of dance from the Tudor court to Disco. Teachers show imagination in devising good learning opportunities for pupils through cross-curricular

links with art and design, information and communication technology, and literacy. These links have a positive impact on learning as pupils enjoy learning and presenting their work in a variety of ways.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

119. By the end of both key stages, pupils attain average standards. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress as they move through the school.
120. The majority of pupils have access to computers at home and start school with above average understanding of how to use computers. The school extends this learning effectively by providing many opportunities for the pupils to use computers as tools for learning in other subjects. In the Reception/Year 1 class, for example, the pupils learned more about snails than they would otherwise have done by seeing the image from the microscope transmitted to the computer. They were able to select appropriate icons for adjusting the light, positioning the sample, and saving and printing the image. In Year 2, pupils are developing good word processing and desktop publishing skills. With prompting, they make their work more pleasing by adding pictures, changing the font and moving text around the screen. From their earliest days in school, the pupils are comfortable using computers and use them independently, for example, to consolidate their learning in mathematics or to research information from CD ROM or the Internet. In the geography lesson in the Year 1/2 class, pupils used a CD ROM successfully to find out about earthquakes.
121. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils have many good opportunities to develop their skills further. In their work on the Greeks, pupils in the Year 3/4 class were supported in designing a repeating decorative pattern for a Greek vase. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 use sensing equipment effectively to collect data on the weather. Having collected the information, they can, with help, use the appropriate tools to present it in a variety of forms including pie charts and graphs. By the time they are eleven, pupils are beginning to apply their skills creatively. They understand what is meant by multi-media and readily suggest ways of altering the presentation, for example, by inserting a large-scale picture of a plant part alongside the complete plant to show its position.
122. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. They have very good attitudes to learning and their behaviour is very good overall. When they work independently they are purposeful and concentrate very well. They support one another well; several examples were seen of pupils quietly and sympathetically helping others who had difficulty without interrupting the teacher or disturbing the work of the rest of the class.
123. The quality of teaching is good overall. The teachers have good subject knowledge that enables them to plan well-organised lessons that cater well for the learning needs of all the pupils. They use the computers and related equipment, such as scanners and digital cameras, constantly to support learning in other subjects. They choose appropriate software to reinforce the learning objectives of lessons. This means that pupils make good gains in learning during lessons. Over time, however, the impact on pupils' learning is only satisfactory because the small number of computers available limits 'hands on' time. In the Year 5/6 class, for example, there are only two computers, so even if pupils work in groups of three it takes a long time for them all to have sufficient opportunity to consolidate what they have learnt in a lesson. This limits progress because the pupils forget what they have learnt and lose confidence. Pupils

need more opportunities to practise their skills so that they are able to work independently.

124. There is good management of the subject. The co-ordinator has a very good understanding of the strengths and areas for development and has produced a clear action plan. The resources that the school has are used very efficiently. The school buys in a support assistant for one day a week and her expertise is used to good effect. All the staff are committed to raising standards. Although they already demonstrate good subject knowledge, they are not complacent. They are all seeking to improve their skills as part of their professional development in the current year. Training has been planned to address this. Although teachers keep their own records of what pupils have done, there are no formal procedures in place for assessing pupils' progress in the development of skills.

MUSIC

125. All groups of pupils make satisfactory progress and attain average standards at the end of both key stages. This is similar to the situation reported at the time of the last inspection. Music plays an important part in the wider life of the school and is a significant feature of worship and in performances by the children and visitors to the school. Good opportunities are provided to hear live music through visits, for example, to the Southport Opera House and to the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall. These visits have a positive impact on learning because the pupils find them interesting and enjoyable. The school has recently adopted a new programme of work for music and, although this is not yet fully established, it has contributed successfully to developing pupils' skills
126. Throughout Key Stage 1, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of tempo to an appropriate level. They have learnt to recognise and identify changes in rhythm and beat, and to create rhythm patterns using percussion instruments and body sounds, such as clapping and tapping. These pupils know a variety of action songs and there are useful links with other subjects, such as poetry, geography and music from other cultures.
127. This work is built upon satisfactorily in Key Stage 2 where there is appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study although the time allocated to music sometimes falls short of the recommended time. This is a weakness. The timetable during the inspection meant that no lessons were observed in the junior classes. Teachers' planning indicates that pupils in Years 3 and 4 listen to a suitable variety of music linked to their history topic, with an appropriate focus on the aspects of the musical compositions. Pupils in Year 6 have a planned programme in which they will experience the story of Orpheus through music from other cultures. There is a clear indication that the music becomes more complex as the pupils move through the school. Alongside this, pupils are developing their musical skills. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are satisfactorily composing musical sequences that reflect the sounds of the forest and are performing songs that they have learned before and building on their repertoire by learning new ones.
128. Although the quality of teaching is good and teachers plan thoroughly for the music lessons, the short time allocated to the subject diminishes the impact and progress over time is only satisfactory and pupils do not achieve their full potential. Some lessons are very short but the one observed in the 20 minutes between registration and worship very effectively reinforced young children's understanding of the shape of sounds that rise and fall in tone and pitch. All pupils are well motivated and enjoy the

opportunities that the teachers provide and they respond well to the challenges that are presented to them. The school provides valuable opportunities for additional music in break times and small groups of pupils meet to learn to play the descant recorder. The older pupils are playing simple tunes in rounds and parts with great skill and accuracy.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

129. The standards of attainment at the end of both key stages are above national expectations. The subject has a high profile in school life and contributes significantly to the personal development of pupils. Both individual pupils and school teams achieve success in district and county events. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. The good standards observed at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained.
130. The school offers pupils good experiences across the breadth of the curriculum and ample opportunities to refine and develop particular skills. The long-term curriculum is well planned with a good balance across year groups and key stages with appropriate challenge for pupils in mixed-age classes. The time allocation is generous and provides good opportunities for reinforcement and extension of skills. It also allows for time to be used effectively for some elements of health education, which are a feature of lessons. Some single lessons, however, are too long and the quality of learning slips as lessons lose pace.
131. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are competent in most of the basic skills and employ them in a variety of situations. Younger pupils achieve good control skills, for instance, in hitting a ball along the ground to a partner. In gymnastics they show good awareness of space and position themselves well. They copy, repeat and explore actions, for instance, in movement activities with a partner. They have good co-ordination and balance when using apparatus and climb confidently. They are also developing stamina and enjoy taking part in the school's own cross-country event.
132. By the age of eleven, pupils have considerable knowledge, skills and experience of all aspects of primary physical education as a result of well-informed teaching and good learning opportunities. They know what effect exercise has on their fitness and they are aware of its importance to their health. Pupils in Year 6 have regular swimming lessons and the majority have reached the level of personal survival skills awards. Key Stage 2 pupils follow the English Schools Athletic Association Award Scheme for individual achievements. They show good stamina in their running and demonstrate agility and speed in racing around obstacles. Pupils are familiar with the conventions of team games and understand tactics. The high quality of teacher expertise enables pupils to develop good skill technique, for example, in throwing and catching.
133. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are offered a good range of extra-curricular activities covering netball, football, rugby, rounders, cricket, and cross-country. Dance is taught regularly and was the focus of a special millennium celebration of 'Dance through the Ages'. A large number of pupils have the opportunity to be involved in a wide range of leagues, competitions and events, such as the Ormskirk Schools swimming Gala, the Northwest Tag Rugby Extravaganza, and the District Kwik Cricket Competition. The oldest pupils undertake adventurous outdoor activities during their residential week at the Kingswood Outdoor Centre. This has a positive impact on learning and adds to their ability to work as members of a team.

134. The quality of teaching and learning in both key stages is good. Teachers are confident and enthusiastic and many possess considerable subject expertise. Their clear instructions and demonstrations and the fact that they join in activities effectively improve pupils' performance. Teachers encourage pupils to consider good examples from their peers and to evaluate their own performance. The good relationship between teachers and pupils encourages confidence and allows constructive evaluation. Additional teaching expertise comes from specialist volunteer trainers for rugby and football. The school teams have been successful in the district football and sports, in netball, cricket and cross-country and have represented the district in County Youth Rugby competition. The subject contributes effectively to pupils' social and moral development through the expectations of commitment, co-operation and self-control. This was evident in the winning of the 'Fair Play' award at the Lancashire Youth Games.