

INSPECTION REPORT

**XII APOSTLES (VA) CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Leigh

LEA area: Wigan

Unique reference number: 106503

Headteacher: Mr M A Farrimond

Reporting inspector: Dr B Blundell
23868

Dates of inspection: 19th-22nd November 2001

Inspection number: 192618

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: Nel Pan Lane
Leigh

Postcode: Lancashire
WN7 5JS

Telephone number: 01942 674312

Fax number: N/A

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr E Taylor

Date of previous inspection: March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23868	Dr B Blundell	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Equal opportunities	What sort of a school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
13706	Mrs G Marsland	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?
23453	Ms C Cressey	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language English Art and design Music	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

29263	Ms F Clarke	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Geography History Physical education	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

XII Apostles Roman Catholic Primary School is a very effective school for boys and girls, aged 4 to 11, situated in an Education Action Zone in Leigh, Wigan. There are 224 pupils on roll. The ethnic background of the pupils is largely white with United Kingdom heritage, with a smaller number of pupils being of Chinese and Indian heritages. Seven pupils have English as an additional language; the languages spoken by these pupils include Chinese Cantonese and Hindi. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. Whilst the percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above the national average, the proportion with statements of special needs is average. The nature of pupils' special needs includes specific and moderate learning difficulties, together with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupil mobility is relatively low. Pupils' attainment on entry is below average. Religious education and collective worship are the subject of a separate inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The overall effectiveness of the school is very good. Standards for pupils currently aged eleven are well above average in English, mathematics and science. The overall quality of teaching is very good, and leadership and management are excellent.

The school is providing very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards for pupils aged eleven, in English, mathematics and science are well above average; pupils achieve very well.
- Leadership and management by the headteacher are excellent; he is a most dedicated individual.
- The overall quality of teaching is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good; relationships are excellent.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent; since national testing began, no pupil has left this school at age eleven at less than level 3 in English, mathematics and science.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The school cares very well for its pupils, both academically and in the pastoral sphere.
- Links with parents are very good, and contribute well to pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- The school lacks a dedicated outdoor play area and large outdoor play equipment for children in the Reception class.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March, 1997. The overall quality of teaching, which was good at the last inspection, is now very good. Standards are now well above average in English, mathematics and science. The key issue to raise the generally satisfactory standards in Year 3 and Year 4 has been addressed. Subject and whole-school policies and schemes of work have been developed appropriately. Unauthorised absences are now dealt with effectively. The school has improved very well since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	D	C	A	A*
mathematics	B	C	A*	A*
science	E	B	A	A*

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

In the national tests in 2001 for eleven-year-olds, pupils' attainment was well above the national averages in English and science, and very high in mathematics, being in the top five per cent of schools nationally. Compared with schools of a similar type, pupils' results were very high in English, mathematics and science, being in the top five per cent of similar schools. Over the three years from 1999 to 2001 taken together, pupils have left XII Apostles at the end of Year 6, half a term ahead of pupils nationally in English, nearly one and a half terms ahead in mathematics, and just ahead in science. The results at the end of Year 6, up to 2001, rose at a faster rate than results nationally. The school's targets are appropriately ambitious.

Standards at the end of Year 2 in 2001 were above average in reading, well above average in writing and average in mathematics. Compared to schools of a similar type, pupils' attainment was well above average in reading and writing, and above average in mathematics. Over the three years from 1999 to 2001 taken together, pupils have left Year 2 half a term ahead of pupils nationally in reading, one and a half terms ahead in writing and just ahead in mathematics. The teacher-assessed results in science were average in 2001.

In the work seen during the inspection, standards for pupils aged eleven were well above average in English, science and mathematics. Standards for pupils aged seven were well above average in reading and writing, and above average in mathematics and science. For pupils aged seven and eleven, in design and technology, art and design and information and communication technology, standards matched national expectations. They were above expectations in geography and history for seven-year-olds, and average for eleven-year-olds. Standards for seven-year-olds in music are above those expectations; it was not possible to judge standards for eleven-year-olds due to lack of evidence, nor was it possible to make a judgement on standards attained in physical education for pupils aged seven or eleven, for the same reason. The majority of children in the Reception class meet all areas of the Early Learning Goals. (The Early Learning Goals are the nationally expected standards for children at the end of the Foundation Stage).

Pupils' achievement is very good overall. Standards at this school are now sufficiently high.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to the school are very good; they enjoy working hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour, both in and out of the classrooms, is very good.

Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is good; relationships are excellent both between the pupils and with all the adults in the school.
Attendance	Pupils' attendance is above average; unauthorised absence is below average.

Pupils really want to learn; they have a thirst for knowledge and are not afraid to ask questions.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Very good	Very 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.

Examples of very good teaching were seen in every class in the school. The overall quality of teaching is very good. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is very good; the skills of literacy and numeracy are very well taught throughout.

Particular strengths in teaching include the way in which teachers plan their lessons and their class management. The school meets the needs of all its pupils very well indeed; all pupils are fully included in lessons.

Particular strengths in pupils' learning include their interest, concentration and pace of working.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the curriculum are very good overall.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent. This school identifies pupils' needs and gives the necessary extra support at the earliest possible age.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is very good, and these pupils learn very well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is very good. It is very good for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Provision for multi-cultural development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school's care for its pupils is very good.

The school works in partnership with parents very well. A strength in curricular provision is the way in which the school ensures that extra-curricular visits contribute constructively and imaginatively to pupils' learning; visits are always particularly well thought out. A weakness in the curricular provision is the lack of a dedicated play area for children under five. All areas of the curriculum meet statutory requirements.

A particular strength in the way the school cares for its pupils is the careful way in which it assesses their work and tracks progress in the core subjects.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management are excellent. The headteacher and senior management team work extremely hard on behalf of their pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors' fulfilment of their responsibilities is very good.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's evaluation of its performance is very good indeed.
The strategic use of resources	The school's strategic use of resources is very good.

The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources is good overall. The accommodation is very well maintained by the school caretaker.

Particular strengths in leadership and management include the dedication and hard work of the senior management team. The school's administrative officer is very competent. The school ensures that it gets best value from its spending decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The school is well led and managed. • Teaching is good. • The school expects children to work hard. • The school is helping their children to become mature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small number of parents would like to see a greater range of extra-curricular activities. • A small number of parents would like more information about how their children are getting on.

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views; they find that the range of extra-curricular activities is very good and information for parents is very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. XII Apostles school has a relatively high proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils identified as having special needs is above average. These factors need to be borne in mind when reading about the school's overall results.
2. **Shortly after children enter the Foundation Stage in Reception**, they are assessed to see what they know, understand and can do; social and physical skills are also noted. This is known as the baseline test. The intake in 2001 was judged to be below average. An analysis of previous intakes shows that the intake in 2001 was broadly typical.
3. **By the age of five, near to the end of their time in Reception**, children are again assessed against national standards known as the early learning goals. The majority of the children currently in Reception should meet the majority of these goals.
4. **At the age of seven, close to the end of their time in Year 2**, pupils take the end of Year 2 national tests in reading, writing and mathematics. The pupils who sat these tests in 2001 obtained levels that were above national averages in reading, well above average in writing and average in mathematics. Their attainment when compared to schools of a similar type was well above average in reading and writing, and above average in mathematics. Those who took the tests in 2000 attained standards that were average in reading and mathematics, and well above average in writing. Taking the results over the last three years from 1999 to 2001, averaged together, pupils' performance has been half a term ahead of national averages in reading, six months ahead in writing and just ahead in mathematics. In all three subject areas, boys have performed better than girls.
5. **Inspectors find that pupils currently in Year 2, who will take their national tests in May, 2002, are reaching well above average standards in reading and writing, and above average standards in mathematics and science.** Standards in information and communication technology, art and design and design technology meet national expectations. Standards in history, music and geography are above national expectations. Standards in physical education could not be judged due to insufficient evidence.
6. **By the age of eleven, near to the end of Year 6**, pupils take the end of Year 6 national tests in English, science and mathematics. Pupils' performance in the 2001 tests in terms of national curriculum points scores was well above average in English and science, and very high in mathematics compared with schools nationally (*Note: very high means that these results were in the top five per cent of schools nationally*). Attainment was very high in English, mathematics and science, when compared with that of pupils in schools of a similar type. Pupils' performance was average in English, when compared with schools getting similar **Year 2 results**, and well above average in mathematics and science. Taking the three years from 1999 to 2001 together, pupils have left Year 6 half a term ahead of pupils nationally in English, nearly six months ahead in mathematics, and just ahead in science. If we consider those pupils who took their Year 2 tests in 1996 and then went on to sit the Year 6 tests in 2000; or

those who sat their Year 2 tests in 1997 and then sat Year 6 tests in 2001, the results show that pupils have made at least satisfactory progress overall.

7. **Inspectors find that pupils currently in Year 6** are working at well above average standards in English, mathematics and science. The quality and quantity of work in their books show that they have made very good progress over the last twelve months in all three subjects. As with pupils lower down the school, standards in information and communications technology, art and design and design technology meet national expectations. In this key stage, standards in history and geography also meet national expectations. Standards in physical education and music could not be judged as there was insufficient evidence.
8. **Since the last inspection**, standards have risen at the end of Year 6 in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Overall, in other subjects taken together, standards have been broadly maintained.
9. The special educational needs co-ordinator, class teachers and teaching assistants provide very high quality support for pupils with special educational needs. This enables pupils to achieve very well, and make very good progress against the targets set for them in their individual education plans. A significant number of pupils with special educational needs achieve standards that are in line with their prior attainment, and often in line with those expected nationally. Pupils for whom English is an additional language also achieve very well; they are well supported from an early age.
10. Pupils are generally achieving very well indeed, considering their prior attainments.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' attitudes to the school are very good and they clearly enjoy coming to school. Parents confirm that they are happy with the attitudes, values and personal development fostered in pupils by the school. The pupils are enthusiastic, interested and involved in most activities. There was a good example of this in a Year 1 numeracy lesson, where the pupils worked very hard. They enjoy classroom discussions and listen attentively to the teacher and to each other. This was evident in a Year 2 science lesson, when the pupils discussed batteries and circuits. The Reception class was also observed listening carefully to the community police officer. Pupils settle to tasks quickly and are very keen to learn. During a Year 1 music lesson, where the pupils were singing 'The sandwich song,' the teacher increased the pupils' enjoyment of the lesson by producing a range of sandwich fillings. Good attitudes to school contribute to successful learning and the standards that the pupils achieve.
12. Behaviour in and around the school is very good and the pupils respond well to the school's high expectations. This confirms the judgement of the last inspection in 1997 and the views of the parents. The pupils understand what is expected of them and know the difference between right and wrong. This is because the school's expectations for good behaviour are clearly stated in the home/school agreement, and the pupils devise their own class rules in co-operation with their teacher. The class teachers and other staff manage behaviour very well because they have established excellent relationships with the pupils. No incidents of challenging behaviour or bullying were seen during the inspection. In the last school year no pupils were excluded from the school. The very good behaviour of the pupils has a positive effect on the quality of learning, and contributes to the family atmosphere in school.

13. Relationships within the school are excellent. Relationships among the pupils and between pupils and staff are caring and friendly. The excellent relationships, based on mutual respect, are key factors that secure positive patterns of behaviour and response in lessons. At lunchtime, the pupils talk sociably with each other and with supervising staff. They work and play together well, regardless of ability, gender or race. A good example of this was seen in a Year 6 physical education (gymnastics) lesson, where the pupils worked well together in teams. Pupils respect the feelings, values and beliefs of others. This was evident in a school assembly, where the pupils shared feelings of responsibility and appreciation of each other's contribution and place in the community. The excellent relationships are a strong feature of the school.
14. The school successfully promotes the personal development of the pupils. Pupils take responsibility for tasks around the school. They act as merit point collectors, milk, pet and register monitors. Year 6 pupils are also involved in paired reading with the younger pupils. Each class has a list of monitors who assist the teacher with tasks in the classroom. The pupils also gain an understanding of the needs of others through the school's fundraising activities. These responsibilities have a good effect on the pupils' personal development.
15. Attendance rates throughout the school are good and above the national average for primary schools. The pupils are punctual for school allowing lessons to start on time. However, although actively discouraged by the school, some families still take holidays in term-time and this reduces the school's overall attendance figures. This problem has been exacerbated by changes in the local school holiday pattern.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The overall quality of teaching is very good; this school has a very competent and most enthusiastic team of teachers; their attitudes are so very positive that they get their pupils to really *want* to learn. This results in pupils' learning being very good. Overall, teaching in the lessons seen was good in the Foundation Stage, very good in Year 2 and very good in Year 6. In all lessons observed, teaching was at least satisfactory and in the Foundation Stage, at least good. Overall, it was satisfactory in 9 per cent of lessons, good in 37 per cent, very good in 35 per cent and excellent in 19 per cent. The headteacher has a very large teaching commitment, and he is an excellent example to the rest of the staff.
17. Whilst overall standards of teaching were at least satisfactory, examples of very good lessons were seen in each of the three sections of the school.
18. The biggest strengths in teaching include the helpful manner in which some teachers share the learning objectives for lessons with their pupils, the way in which they manage their pupils, which is very good throughout the school, and the very good way in which they plan their lessons.
19. Teachers work exceedingly hard and know their pupils well. Pupils are aware of what is expected from them in terms of behaviour, and respond appropriately. In an excellent Year 1 literacy lesson, in which the teacher showed excellent class management, the pupils' response was also excellent and they showed great enjoyment for the subject; these pupils made excellent progress in their writing of sentences. In a very good numeracy lesson for children in Reception, the children responded very well indeed to the excellent class management and routines that the

teacher had established. Classroom support assistants through the school make a most valuable contribution to pupils' learning; they work very well with teachers, are actively involved in planning and know just what their role is in the school.

20. The pace of lessons is very good through the school overall. In the best lessons, pupils are reminded of the time limits on an exercise. For example, in a very good Year 2 numeracy lesson, pupils had to "beat" the class egg-timer. When pupils are given relatively short time spans to complete a piece of work and reminded of this, it ensures that they focus on the work they have to complete, and maximises learning.
21. Throughout the school, literacy and numeracy are very well taught. Lessons generally start with effective question and answer sessions, to revise previous work and set pupils thinking. For example, in an excellent numeracy lesson for pupils in Year 6, the teacher asked probing questions in the effective mental starter. This involved ordering quite complicated fractions, which thoroughly assessed pupils' level of understanding.
22. Teachers' knowledge and understanding are generally very good in all subject areas. The information and communication technology co-ordinator has great expertise in the subject, and by spreading this to other staff, he has made a most valuable impact on pupils' learning in information and communication technology throughout the school.
23. Throughout the school, day-to-day assessment of pupils' work is very good. In literacy and numeracy lessons, teachers use the question and answer sessions most effectively. Day-to-day marking of pupils' work is good overall, but sometimes includes too little to stretch pupils who have completed a particular exercise perfectly. There are generally appropriate comments to praise pupils' efforts.
24. Lessons generally have clear learning objectives, and these are generally looked at again at the end of lessons, to see how far they have been met. However, this is not done consistently throughout the school. Many lessons end with a worthwhile question and answer session, as in the majority of literacy and numeracy lessons. The use of homework is good overall.
25. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good, and often excellent. Individual education plans show a sharp awareness of individual needs. Detailed plans include very specific strategies to support pupils' progress towards their stated targets. Targets are reviewed very regularly and modified to match pupils' progress. This ensures pupils are constantly challenged to improve their work, and to achieve the highest standards they are capable of. Pupils respond very positively to the high expectations the adults have of them, and this has a very positive effect on their rate of learning and the standards of work they produce. Staff

manage pupils in a calm and sensitive manner, which helps them to feel secure. This poise instils confidence, and assists the pupils in settling to their tasks and achieving a sense of success and self-esteem.

26. Standards of teaching throughout the school have improved considerably since the last inspection. At that time, only six per cent of lessons were judged to be very good or better; that has now risen to just over fifty per cent. Teaching in Year 3 and Year 4 has considerably improved.

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

27. Since the previous inspection, the curriculum has been developed well and is now very good. The school meets the needs of its pupils very effectively, helping them to flourish through the provision of a very good range of high quality learning opportunities. A well-planned curriculum ensures that all aspects of English and mathematics are now taught, and that sufficient time is available for all subjects. Policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects, ensuring that skills, knowledge and understanding are effectively developed across the school.
28. All statutory requirements are met and the literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented with enthusiasm and rigour, and have helped to raise standards since the last inspection. The school has a very broad and balanced curriculum, which is stimulating and challenging. It places considerable emphasis on nurturing high quality personal and social skills and this has very positive effect on pupils' standards of achievements and their attitudes to learning.
29. The curriculum provided for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Emphasis is placed on children's personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development.
30. Arrangements for pupils' personal, health and sex education are very good and are underpinned by the school's catholic ethos. The development of citizenship and the responsibilities of the individual and the group are made apparent throughout the curriculum, and manifest in the sensitive way the school is organised. Pupils' rights are highly respected and their integrity is effectively fostered, along with their responsibilities as young citizens. There are agreed policies for health, sex and drugs education in place. Time is made available within lessons to develop these aspects in ways which are appropriate for the ages of the pupils.
31. The school has a very clear commitment to equality of opportunity and this is very apparent in the way all pupils, from the youngest to the oldest, are fully included in the teaching and learning. The special needs of lower- and higher-attaining pupils are recognised, and all pupils' contributions are valued. This has a positive effect on the self-esteem of all pupils, and impacts on the progress they all make. The curriculum prepares pupils very well for the next stage of their education.
32. The provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved further since the previous inspection and is now outstanding. The school maintains a register for special educational needs, complies with the national code of practice and meets statutory obligations. Early identification of individual needs ensures that work is well matched to needs, and considerable additional support is provided where required. Very well structured support is implemented in a variety of ways; in withdrawal groups, by individual support or in-class support. Detailed individual education plans,

which describe the school's strategies for supporting pupils' progress towards clearly stated, specific and appropriate targets, are drawn up for all pupils requiring them. Work in classes is very well matched to pupils' identified needs, and is frequently appraised, to ensure that pupils are making the progress they are capable of. Pupils with statements and those with complex needs are provided with high quality support, and experiences which match the requirements of the statements. Reviews of individual educational plans are carried out and the parents are invited to attend these. This excellent provision has a very positive impact on the pupils' progress.

33. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make similar progress to their peers, and achieve standards which are at least in line with those expected for their ages, and they often achieve very high standards, well above those expected nationally.
34. The school involves the community well, providing a very good range of extra-curricular and sporting activities to enrich the statutory curriculum and enhance personal and social skills. Clubs include netball, rugby league, football, athletics, cricket, drama, art, choir and recorders, and are available at lunchtimes or after school to ensure all pupils have a chance to take part. Funding from local initiatives, such as the Education Action Zone, is used well to provide additional opportunities to enhance pupils' learning. The use of visitors and visits to museums, concerts, theatres and galleries promote pupils' interest, and extend their knowledge and understanding. Such visits are imaginatively planned to provide pupils with interesting experiences, which then stimulate their writing skills. There are very good links with local sports facilities, artists, authors and actors, all adding to the quality of pupils' experiences and enhancing their learning. Visits from the police, fire-service and by the local nurse add to the quality of pupils' education and develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the contribution each member makes to the smooth running of a community. Links with the local church are particularly strong, and develop pupils' awareness of what it means to belong to a particular faith.
35. The school has sound links with partner schools. Before pupils transfer to the high school, information on pupils' progress is exchanged and pupils are able to enjoy time at their new school to familiarise themselves with routines and staff, to ensure a happy and secure transfer.
36. The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development continues to be very good. The school's Christian values, beliefs and principles are very apparent throughout the whole school, and have a very positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning.
37. Provision for spiritual development is very good. Assemblies provide pupils with good opportunities for reflection and prayer. Successes in both academic and personal achievements are recognised and valued. Pupils have opportunities to share personal tragedies, such as the loss of a family member, and time is set aside each day for pupils to express their own concerns through prayer and quiet times. Some classes provide prayer books in which pupils can write their own comments and requests. One such book included a most thoughtful picture and prayer concerning the events of September 11th. Such opportunities help pupils to understand and come to terms with the sadness and loss that tragedy and death bring.

38. Provision for moral development is very good. There is a general expectation that pupils will behave well and consider the implications of their actions on themselves and others. In assemblies, issues such as kindness, friendship and caring are taught well through Bible stories and fables.
39. Provision for social development is similarly very good. The pupils are made very aware of their responsibilities to the school and their local community. Pupils have very good opportunities to develop responsibility, self-confidence and independence, through well-planned lessons and the routines and structures in place, such as organising snacks at break time or considering bringing money for a worthy cause rather than sending Christmas cards to each other. The very positive relationships apparent in lessons ensure that pupils feel comfortable discussing sensitive issues that concern them, such as the war in Afghanistan or the serious illness of a relative. The organisation of lessons provides many opportunities for pupils to work together and to compete fairly. A sense of citizenship is developed as pupils take part in local sport and arts festivals, and raise money to support good causes.
40. Provision for cultural development has improved and is now very good. Pupils have opportunities to learn and appreciate the richness of their own and other people's culture through music, art, geography and history. Local artists and craftsmen are invited into school to bring culture alive for the pupils, and to stimulate their interest in traditions, skills and events. Through religious education lessons, pupils study the major world religions and all pupils are made aware of important festivals such as Christmas, Divali, Eid and the Chinese New Year. Chinese and Indian parents have been invited into school to develop pupils' understanding of the beliefs and customs of people from other cultures and faiths. There are few links with communities that have a diversity of culture and traditions, or other religions; such links would develop further pupils' understanding of how different people live.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. This is a very caring and friendly school where the well-being of the pupils is a priority. The staff know the pupils and many of their families very well. They ensure that the pupils are supervised at all times. A member of the senior management team is always present in the dining hall at lunchtime. Pupils are alert to health and safety issues, which are frequently discussed before lessons such as design and technology and science.
42. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. There is a new policy in place for child protection, and the headteacher is the designated member of staff responsible. The school's procedures are consistent with the local authority's guidance. Teaching and supervising staff understand these procedures and receive regular training. The staff follow the procedures in the governing body's health and safety policy, which is due for review. Fire precautions and electrical checks are carried out annually. The local authority has completed whole-school risk assessments, and the school now plans to form a risk management team. Staff and ancillary assistants supervise the pupils carefully at breaks and lunchtimes. There are good arrangements in place for dealing with accidents. Several of the staff are trained in first-aid, and appropriate resources are distributed throughout the school.
43. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good and have improved since the last inspection, when the recording of absence was raised as an issue. The school has reviewed procedures, and explains authorised and unauthorised absence clearly to parents. The secretary monitors attendance each

day. Staff alert the headteacher or secretary if any problems arise. The educational welfare office also provides very good support during his visit every two weeks. The school takes a firm line on attendance, and requires parents to write a letter of explanation whenever a pupil is absent. The secretary checks that all absence letters are received, and monitors punctuality and medical appointments closely. Good attendance is actively promoted in the home/school agreement, and with certificates and prizes for the pupils at the end of term.

44. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. There is a detailed and effective behaviour and anti-bullying policy in place. However, in line with new guidance, this is due to be reviewed to incorporate procedures for dealing with racism. Staff and lunchtime ancillary assistants consistently implement the behaviour guidelines, which are fully understood by the pupils. The behaviour policy is carefully explained to parents during the pre-school induction sessions for parents and prospective pupils. An appropriate scheme of sanctions is in place. Procedures for promoting good behaviour include the awarding of badges, certificates, merits and 'star of the week' awards. There is a weekly celebration assembly to commend good attitudes, behaviour, work or improvement. Prizes are awarded for the house with the most merits at the end of term. No bullying or challenging behaviour was seen during the inspection. However, when bullying or serious incidents of challenging behaviour do occur, they are recorded by the headteacher, who works closely with staff and parents and takes action as necessary. Issues regarding behaviour and bullying are frequently discussed in assemblies, personal, social and health education, and a classroom discussion period called 'circle time'.
45. Procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development are very good. Although informal, these procedures are founded on the excellent relationships between the staff and pupils. The teachers know the pupils very well and issues are discussed openly and sensibly. Personal, social and health education is taught within lessons and makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' personal development and is supported by the health professionals and the police. Sex education and drugs awareness is incorporated into science, religious education lessons and visits from the 'life education caravan'. The teaching of citizenship is being developed. At present, although the teachers set targets for improving the pupils' English and mathematics, most of the pupils are not involved in their own target setting.
46. The assessment of pupils' work and its use to plan future work is very good overall, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Progress in this area has been made since the last inspection, and tracking is now taking place appropriately. For example, pupils are being assessed using better refined systems. The school appropriately uses the optional national tests in Years 3, 4 and 5. The tracking of pupils' academic progress, particularly in English, mathematics and science is very good.
47. Standardised school tests, diagnostic tests and high quality teacher assessments are used very effectively to help in the early identification of pupils with special educational needs. The progress and development of these pupils is very carefully

monitored. Scrupulously-kept individual records indicate pupils' progress towards their particular targets, and these procedures effectively inform future learning needs.

48. The school very effectively supports pupils with special educational needs through early well-established procedures for the identification, monitoring and evaluation of pupils' educational needs.
49. The staff's support for pupils with special educational needs ensures that most pupils make very good progress, and many achieve their specific learning objectives successfully, which enables the school to remove them from the register. The school has very good links with outside agencies, and keeps parents well informed throughout the process.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. Parents have expressed overwhelming support for the school. The school is held in high esteem by parents overall, and continues to work well in partnership with them. No concerns were raised on the parents' questionnaire or at the pre-inspection parents' meeting.
51. The school maintains very good links with parents. Weekly newsletters are sent home to keep parents informed about events and achievements, and questionnaires on relevant issues have been issued to seek parents' views. Parents are invited to class assemblies, and to the weekly coffee morning. When the school holds Mass, parents and the local community are welcome to attend. The headteacher and staff are accessible to parents who have concerns. A suitable home/school agreement has been distributed, and the majority of parents have signed and returned it. School productions, at Easter and Christmas, and parents' meetings are very well attended. A successful initiative adopted by the school is the pre-school induction programme (INSPIRE). This consists of eight workshops for parents and prospective pupils, and provides a very valuable pre-school link with new parents.
52. Parental involvement has a very good effect on the life of the school. The Friends of the XII Apostles Association provides very good support by organising social and fund-raising events such as the recent 'sponsored bounce'. The Association raises a substantial amount of money each year, used to benefit the pupils through the purchase of computers, musical instruments and physical education equipment. Many parents also give freely of their time to help in classrooms, and to accompany the pupils on educational visits.
53. The quality of information for parents is very good. The school has hosted sessions for parents to help them to understand the aims of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Spelling and reading workshops have been held for the parents of younger pupils. Attendance is variable at the evening sessions, but workshops at the end of the school day are very well attended. The governors' report and school brochure are informative and contain all the required information. Parents have the opportunity to consult the staff formally in the spring and autumn terms, to discuss their children's progress. Pupils' progress reports are of a good quality. They include all the required information and report each subject in detail. They set the pupils targets for improvements, and there is a section for parental comments. The pre-school induction meetings are also a very valuable source of information for the parents of prospective pupils. Three workshops are held at which the headteacher explains the school's policies and procedures in detail to the parents, before they enrol their child at the school.

54. The contribution that parents make to their children's learning at school and at home is very good. At home, most parents support homework tasks and many listen to their children read. The school has a homework policy in place, and all parents have been informed about the school's expectations regarding homework. Parents have confirmed that homework is given regularly, and they are informed when it is given. The reading diaries are used well by most parents as a valuable link between home and school. Many parents have attended the literacy and numeracy courses run by the local college. At present the school is hosting a computer course. These courses have the potential to help parents to assist their children to learn.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55. The leadership and management by the headteacher are excellent, both academically and in the pastoral sphere. The headteacher is very hard working, committed and able; he has a large teaching commitment, and thus knows his pupils very well. He knows exactly how he wants the school to continue to develop. His leadership ensures very clear educational direction for the school, and he is fully backed by the governing body. The headteacher wants the **very** best for his pupils. The school's aims and values are easily seen in the daily routines of the school, and the school's aims are re-drafted annually, following discussions with staff, governors and parents. Its mission statement has been re-written in simpler terms, and incorporated into the home-school agreement. The deputy headteacher, who is a very competent Year 6 teacher, has responsibility for behaviour through the school. The senior management team, which includes the assistant headteacher who is co-ordinator for Year 2, is committed to school improvement. The subject co-ordinators manage their subjects appropriately, checking planning and marking, although they are not yet involved in the monitoring of teaching in their subjects. Whilst this is an area currently carried out by the senior management team, there are plans to extend the monitoring of teaching by other staff.
56. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities very well; the governing body's annual report to parents complies with all requirements. The governors want the best for the school and are determined that it should continue to succeed. Their role in helping to shape the educational direction of the school is good. Governors visit the school regularly, and have monitored the implementation of some of the curriculum appropriately, particularly numeracy and literacy. The governing body has a very good understanding of the main strengths and weaknesses of the school. Between them, the governors bring a wide range of expertise to the running of this school.
57. The headteacher has checked teaching in all classes, providing all staff with both verbal and detailed, written feedback; staff teaching is observed twice each term. The specific monitoring of teaching by curriculum co-ordinators is not yet under way, although subject co-ordinators monitor the planning and marking of their subjects across the school appropriately.
58. The school's targets are appropriate and sufficiently ambitious. Inspection evidence suggests that the targets for 2002 in English, mathematics and science will at least be met. The school has an excellent capacity to succeed.

59. Procedures for the induction of new staff are very good. The recently appointed teachers in Reception, Year 3 and Year 5 have been appropriately mentored by more experienced teachers. Appropriate policies and plans are in place for performance management.
60. The special educational needs co-ordinator gives excellent leadership. He works very closely with class teachers and support staff, to ensure that the requirements of pupils with special educational needs are met, and that resources are efficiently and effectively targeted at those pupils with the greatest need. The provision of a small class for pupils in Year 2 is particularly effective in giving those pupils a very good impetus to their learning. This has a very positive effect on the progress they make, indicating that a significant number will reach the expected standard for their age. Administrative procedures for special educational needs are excellent and comply with statutory requirements.
61. The teachers and teaching assistants who provide additional support for children with special educational needs are very effectively deployed, and make a very positive contribution to the quality of the provision. They have a good understanding of their role, and are very effective in ensuring that pupils make good progress with their learning. Staff work very closely together to ensure that individual targets are met. Staff are well qualified, and have undertaken additional training to improve their skills.
62. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is currently very good. However, formal job descriptions for class support assistants are lacking. Additionally, whilst support assistants are very effective and well trained in literacy, numeracy and science, more training could be provided in other subject areas. The accommodation is good overall, and is very well maintained. However, some of the classrooms are very small. There is no dedicated outdoor play area for the under-fives. Classrooms have very attractive displays. Resources are generally good both in quality and quantity, although there is a lack of sufficient software for information and communication technology and of large outdoor play equipment for children in the Reception class.
63. The effectiveness of the school's use of new technology is good. The school's administrative officer is most competent; she prepares appropriate and regular financial statements for the governing body. Finances are handled well, and the school ensures that it gets best value from its spending decisions. Specific grants are used appropriately. The school development plan is an excellent working document that clearly prioritises the school's needs.
64. At the time of the last inspection, the headteacher's leadership was described as very good; his leadership remains the driving force behind the school's success and is now excellent.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. In order to improve the school further, the headteacher, senior management team and governing body should:
- provide a well resourced outdoor play area for children in the Reception class (Paragraphs 62, 88).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	54
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	10	19	20	5	0	0	0
Percentage	19	35	37	9	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

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)	N/A	224
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	56

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	59

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Year 2 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Year 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	15	21	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	14	12
	Girls	21	21	21
	Total	33	35	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (91)	97 (97)	92 (97)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	12	13
	Girls	21	21	21
	Total	34	33	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (91)	92 (97)	94 (94)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Year 6 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Year 6 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	15	14	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	14	14
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	27	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (83)	97 (81)	97 (92)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	14	12
	Girls	14	14	13
	Total	25	28	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (72)	97 (72)	86 (69)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	5
White	217
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.3
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	200

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A
Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A
Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

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.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	471,757
Total expenditure	472,108
Expenditure per pupil	2,098
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	-351

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	224
Number of questionnaires returned	126

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	33	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	33	2	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	37	1	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	53	43	4	0	0
The teaching is good.	75	22	2	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	36	6	2	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	18	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	83	16	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	66	30	3	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	83	17	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	68	30	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	57	32	5	0	6

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

Personal, social and emotional development

66. Children start full-time education in the school in the September prior to their fifth birthday. During the inspection, there were 30 children in the Reception class, which is staffed by a teacher and a nursery nurse.
67. The good provision identified in the previous report has been maintained. The curriculum is based on the six areas of learning and provides the children with broad and balanced experiences. The school provides a wide range of focused experiences to promote the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. The quality of teaching throughout the Foundation Stage that is the Reception year in this school is never less than good and is occasionally very good. The teacher and nursery nurse work very well together, to establish good, caring relationships with the children, and provide them with a secure environment. Praise and encouragement are very effective in promoting positive behaviour and personal, social and emotional development. This has a positive effect on the progress children make towards the early learning goals and provides a firm foundation for learning when they reach Year 1.
68. Children with special educational needs are identified very early in the school year. These children, together with those who have English as an additional language, make very good progress because of the very good support they receive from the teacher and the nursery nurse.
69. Plans are detailed, with clear learning objectives linked to the Early Learning Goals. A very informative assessment and record system exists, carefully linked to the planned activities, to indicate children's progress towards those goals. Careful assessments of attainment in all areas of learning and personal development are carried out regularly.
70. Initial assessments, conducted shortly after admission to school, indicate that the language and literacy skills and the personal, social and emotional development of many children are below average for their age. Mathematical development is also below average, but not to such a great extent. As a result of the good support they receive, children make good progress and the majority are in line to reach the early learning goals in all six areas of learning by the end of the Reception year.
71. Arrangements for admitting children to the Reception are exemplary. Through the 'Inspire' programme, a series of meetings and visits are arranged for the parents and for the child over the two terms prior to the child's entry to the school. Every two weeks, children spend an afternoon in the school, engaging in a variety of learning activities. Parents join in and are also informed about other aspects of school life. In this way, everyone is prepared for and knowledgeable about what goes on in the Nursery. This provision successfully promotes the value of the education the child is to receive, and establishes a very positive relationship with parents.

Personal, social and emotional development

72. Most of the children start school with immature skills in personal and social development. By the time they leave the Reception class they are achieving the early learning goals in this area. This good progress reflects skilful teaching. The teacher and the nursery nurse have high expectations that the children will be independent, and children respond to this. The children enjoy coming to school and have a positive attitude towards learning, as shown by their good behaviour and sustained application to concentrate on one activity at a time. Children's behaviour in their physical education lessons and their instant response to teacher's instructions are excellent. They get on well with each other, help one another, and are willing to share when they play with toys or engage in activities such as water play.
73. Teaching is very good, The classroom is well organised to allow the children to get what they need, and the children make use of the available resources confidently. They have many opportunities to develop responsibility and independence, such as selecting an activity or getting ready for a physical education lesson, and tidying up resources at the end of sessions. There are well-planned opportunities for the development of sensitivity and awareness. Children are very aware of the importance of friendship and discuss what makes them happy. There is an appropriate emphasis on health and safety, such as washing hands before getting their jelly out of the fridge.

Communication, language and literacy

74. Almost all children are likely to achieve the early learning goals in this area by the end of the Foundation Stage. This represents good progress, as they generally have a low level of attainment on entry to the Reception class. This progress is a reflection of the good teaching they receive.
75. Reading skills are developing well. Children recognise their own name when they identify their own writing book, or place their name card against a picture of their chosen activity. Most are reading the first books in the school's reading scheme. The quality of teaching is good. Elements of the National Literacy Strategy are used well to promote reading skills. In shared reading and guided reading sessions, children are shown how to follow the story, and use the clues to predict what comes next. Most children recognise the names of characters and simple words in their books. Higher attaining children use initial letter sounds and picture clues to identify new words. Parents are very willing to help their child with reading and are given good guidance by the school on how to do this effectively. Games, such as finding words beginning with "I" for Iggy Sock to eat, effectively focus children's attention on initial letter sounds and make learning fun.
76. Most children write their name independently. Higher attaining children write short sentences and the majority write one or two words and letters to represent what they want to say. The children make good progress in formal writing sessions, for instance when recording events of the day in diary format, but they are not generally encouraged to practise writing independently at other times. There was a writing area for children to write thank-you letters to the community policeman, but, because of a lack of adult intervention, children were not motivated to go to this area, and those who did so engaged mainly in drawing activities.
77. Children spend a lot of time talking with one another. In the role-play area, children discussed what was wrong with a pet. The role-playing vet's diagnosis, that the dog sounded "very croaky", resulted in a discussion as to whether medicine or an operation was needed. Another group discussed taking turns to play in the water tray.

However, opportunities to develop children's thinking and negotiating skills in these role-play situations are missed because staff do not regularly intervene here to develop children's thinking.

78. Elsewhere, great emphasis is placed on getting children to talk, which effectively increases their skills in the whole of this learning area. Adults work hard to widen the children's vocabulary by introducing new words. In a physical education lesson, the teacher talked about increasing and decreasing speed and children used these words too. Children's use of correct terminology to name and describe the attributes of three-dimensional shapes is impressive, as is their use of words such as 'author', 'fiction' and 'non-fiction'.

Mathematical development

79. From a below average attainment in this area when they enter the school, children make good progress in their mathematical development and almost all children are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Higher attaining children count confidently to 30, identifying multiples of 5 as they do so. Their ability to sequence numbers to 10 is demonstrated as they arrange 'aliens' on a number line. They use appropriate mathematical language as they identify corners, sides and faces, and as they identify attributes of three-dimensional shapes.
80. The implementation of elements of the National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive effect on children's achievement. Teaching in whole class sessions and in adult-led activities is very good. Various strategies are used to engage children's attention, and to make number activities fun. Children made very good progress as they identified shapes in a 'feely' bag. Pertinent questioning helped them focus on the particular attributes of spheres and cubes. Spotting the counting mistakes made by Freddie the Frog enabled them to make good progress in their own counting skills.
81. Counting the number of times they managed to throw a ball to their partners in a given time during a games lesson reinforced number skills and also introduced the relevance of mathematics in everyday life. It is this aspect of relating mathematics to children's everyday experience that needs to be developed, particularly when children are engaged in independent activities. Children need to be more aware of the fact that mathematics is all around them. For example, children's knowledge of abstract shapes would be more secure by more reference to the actual shapes around them in the classroom, and in their wider environment.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

82. Progress in this aspect of learning is good and most children are on target to achieve the relevant early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Children are developing a good understanding of the world around them. They learn about the passage of time through celebrating birthdays, writing diaries of their day in school, and discussing the role of parents and grandparents in a topic on 'Ourselves'. This concept is reinforced when they are frequently reminded about what they have learned and have done on previous occasions, and discuss what they will be doing in the future. They are developing basic computer skills, using programmes to support their learning in mathematics, and using the mouse and cursor to access different tools to produce pictures. Their topic on 'Ourselves' has made them aware of features of our body such as the skeleton.

83. Teaching is very good. Interesting activities such as jelly making help children to learn about the changes brought about by heating and cooling. Vigorous physical activity provided an opportunity to discuss the effects of exercise on the body. In a very good lesson, children enjoyed trying on different hats, identifying who might wear them. The teacher's appropriate questioning helped the children realise that some hats are worn to protect people from injury, and they were subsequently able to sort hats according to their protective or non-protective function. Children are very aware of the particular caring role of various adults in the community. The visit of the community policeman successfully reinforced this awareness, and increased the children's knowledge of a policeman's role in society.

Creative development

84. The majority of children are on course to achieve the early learning goals in this area of learning. Teaching is good and sometimes very good. Children are encouraged to express their feelings through exploring media and materials, music, dance, story-making and imaginative play. They have daily opportunities to explore colour through painting, collage and crayoning. One child expressed great delight watching splatters of powder paint explode into colour on wet paper. Children enjoy choosing and cutting materials to make a collage of Police Constable Kelly. They create interesting puppets out of junk materials. They express their feelings as they compose simple prayers, thanking God for their friends, and talk about what makes them happy. The visit of the community policeman was used well to stimulate the children's imagination and they submerged themselves into a policeman's role as they searched for and chased criminals, and stopped traffic.
85. Children are provided with opportunities to use their imagination in the 'vet's surgery', as they take on the roles of vet or customers with 'poorly' pets. Sand and water are available daily, and children enjoy playing in these areas. Opportunities for independent play are well resourced, but opportunities to extend and challenge children in their play are missed because adults tend to concentrate on more formal teaching of groups.
86. Children enjoy musical activities. They take part in singing with the rest of the school in assemblies and sing action songs in their own classroom. They acquired early notation skills as well as awareness of musical rhythms and stress, as they recited and clapped steadily in response to a line of sad and happy faces.

Physical development

87. Progress in physical development is good, and almost all children are on course to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. In physical education lessons, children move around confidently, showing good spatial awareness, changing their speed with increasing co-ordination and developing a variety of body movements. They are learning to control a ball and to develop throwing and catching techniques. Manipulative skills are satisfactory. Children roll, squeeze, push and knead malleable materials to make shapes and letters of the alphabet.
88. The children have regular access to the school playground, joining others in the school for playtimes and also for sessions on their own, when they have opportunities to play with balls and other small equipment. However, they do not have a designated outdoor area of their own with large play equipment. This restricts the development of a range of skills such as balancing, climbing and handling wheeled toys. The school is conscious of the need to develop this provision.

89. The teaching is good overall and occasionally very good, which has a positive impact on standards in physical development. Daily activities ensure the children make good progress in developing finer motor skills. The children demonstrate confident use of a range of classroom equipment, including scissors, pencils and paintbrushes. In a music and movement lesson, children made very good progress in developing different types of movement, as they responded imaginatively to the teacher's directions. The recent visit of the community policeman was used well to stimulate the children's interest, and add relevance to the activity. The teacher had high expectations of what the children could do, and they responded positively to the clear guidance on how to improve their skills.

ENGLISH

90. Since the previous inspection, attainment at the age of seven and of eleven has improved significantly, and is now well above the national average. This level of attainment was reflected in the 2001 national test results, which showed that the standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 were high in relation to the national average, and to pupils in similar schools. Pupils of all attainment levels, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make very good progress and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls.
91. Over the last four years, standards have risen at a faster rate than those nationally and the school has been successful in exceeding its targets. Inspection evidence indicates that this upward trend is set to continue.
92. Areas of weakness highlighted at the last inspection have been addressed well. Literacy is given a very high priority throughout the school and the school builds well on the effective foundation for learning provided for children in the Reception classes. Pupils of above average attainment in the juniors are now suitably challenged and achieve high standards. A significant number of pupils are entered for the higher level 6 in the national tests. The school has enthusiastically implemented the National Literacy Strategy, and this has made a very positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Considerable attention is paid to ensuring that pupils use the skills they are taught in the Literacy Hour in other subjects, as when recording science experiments on evaporation, or contrasting Coniston with their own home town as part of their geography studies. This approach has been particularly effective in raising standards of writing across the school. The

school has also implemented the Additional Literacy Strategy, and booster classes provide additional support for those pupils needing extra help to reach the expected standard.

93. The pupils with special educational needs receive very good support and, as a result, a significant number achieve the nationally expected standards. The additional support that children with special educational needs receive in Year 2 is particularly effective in ensuring that children make significant gains in their literacy skills. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make very good progress, and achieve similar standards to those of their peers.
94. Pupils in the infant and junior classes make good progress in their speaking and listening skills. The very good relationships apparent throughout the school encourage pupils to share conversations with adults and each other. Pupils are interested in other people, and readily initiate conversations. In lessons, pupils have good opportunities to express their ideas and opinions, confident that they will be listened to and their contributions taken seriously. Throughout the school, the emphasis is on encouraging pupils to think about their work and to express themselves well, using interesting, technical and grammatically accurate language. In assemblies, pupils listen attentively to music and story, joining in when it is appropriate. In lessons they listen carefully to their teachers and appreciate the contribution other pupils make to the lessons. By the age of eleven, the pupils are confident speakers, eager to answer questions and to talk and evaluate their work. They express ideas clearly.
95. Pupils in the infant and junior classes make good progress in their reading skills. An exciting display of books, labelled 'Books are magic', is just one way the school engages the pupils' interest and develops their love of reading. Pupils are encouraged to read for a wide variety of purposes, including information and pleasure. Books are well displayed to support topic work and the 'author of the month' encourages pupils to develop their knowledge of different styles and genres. Books are very well matched to pupils' attainment and interest levels, and pupils are very enthusiastic readers of a wide range of texts.
96. In the infant classes, pupils make good progress in their reading. The youngest pupils in these classes are aware of authors and illustrators, and are able to identify the main characters and events in their favourite books. Lower attaining pupils read simple stories with increasing accuracy and understanding.
97. Throughout the school, very effective strategies are used to develop secure understanding of letter sounds, word families and spellings. These give pupils considerable confidence in tackling unfamiliar words, and makes a very positive contribution to the good progress they make in becoming fluent and confident readers. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs recognise words of one and two syllables, and can build their own rhyming words. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 read aloud with considerable confidence, and are beginning to use simple punctuation, such as question marks, to add expression to their reading. Pupils take books home regularly, and family members are encouraged to hear their children read in order to further their progress.
98. In the junior classes, pupils continue to make good and often very good progress. In Year 6, pupils are encouraged to read newspapers, to help them access information on local and world events. Higher attaining pupils express a preference for particular authors and choose books because of particular interests. Higher attaining and average attaining pupils understand plot, setting and characterisation. They show a

mature understanding of different writers' styles and accounts, and are able to make deductions and inferences from their reading. Pupils are developing independent research skills, as they use dictionaries, the thesaurus, encyclopaedias and CD ROMS. The school library is well organised, and books are of a good quality and attractively arranged, to promote pupils' reading and research skills. However, the limited range of books available restricts the development of pupils' research skills, although the imminent implementation of the Internet is intended to go some way towards redressing this weakness.

99. Pupils at both key stages make very good progress in writing. From Year 2, pupils are encouraged to write for a variety of purposes, such as instructions for making a pair of sunglasses or writing a newspaper account about the events surrounding Guy Fawkes's attempt to blow up the Houses of Parliament. The youngest of pupils can write interesting sentences, observing the rules of punctuation and using full stops and capital letters accurately. They spell common words correctly and make good attempts to spell more complex words. Higher attaining pupils use appropriate layout, interesting vocabulary and connectives to grasp the reader's interest. Handwriting is neat, and work is well presented. In formal handwriting lessons, pupils are taught to join their letters together. However, they are not encouraged to do so in independent writing, which would raise standards of handwriting further.
100. In the junior classes, pupils develop their ability to write for different purposes, using a wide range of styles. Their work shows an awareness of the need for different presentational skills and style, and a very good use of well-chosen vocabulary to capture the imagination of the reader. Pupils produce diagrams and posters to support their work in other subjects. They write poems, prayers, letters, and scientific, geographical and historical accounts. Writing is very well organised. Higher attaining pupils use paragraphs, correct punctuation, complex grammatical structures and rich, appropriate vocabulary to enliven their writing.
101. In Year 3, pupils write their own play scripts based on the story of 'Little Red Riding Hood'. Higher attaining pupils show a very good understanding of the layout for playscripts, and include speech 'verbs' to add interest to stage directions. Poetry is given a particularly good emphasis throughout the school. Year 2 pupils discuss their favourite poems and read them aloud with considerable expression. Year 6 pupils write their own high quality 'Haiku' poems, using rhythm, well chosen vocabulary, personification, metaphors and alliteration to create atmosphere. Information technology is used effectively to support knowledge and understanding, and to help pupils draft and redraft their work.
102. In lessons, behaviour is invariably very good. Pupils show very favourable attitudes to learning and enjoy very positive relationships with their teachers. This makes a considerable contribution to their rate of progress, and the high standards of attainment achieved. Pupils are very eager to learn, stay on task and show very good levels of independence and concentration. Opportunities to work collaboratively and to develop personal skills are well used. Pupils enjoy English lessons and respond very well to the structure of the Literacy Hour.

103. Overall, teaching in both the infant and junior classes is very good. The teaching observed was never less than good, was frequently very good and, in a fifth of lessons seen, it was excellent. All teachers are confidently implementing the 'Literacy Hour'. Teaching is very carefully structured and well planned to meet the needs of pupils of all attainment levels. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are given a particularly high priority, and pupils are encouraged to use their knowledge and understanding of basic skills in their extended writing and when writing in other subjects. Opportunities for extended writing are made within the curriculum to ensure that progress in this aspect of English is maintained. The use of visits and visitors is particularly effective in providing pupils with an interesting focus to develop their writing skills. For example, as part of pupils' work on report writing, pupils visited a local newspaper. This added greatly to pupils' interest, and provided them with very good examples of what was involved in this particular type of writing. Teachers are very aware of the need to engage the interest of both boys and girls, to ensure they reach the standards they are capable of. Books and topics for writing are carefully planned to capture the imagination of both sexes, and this policy has been successful in raising the achievement of boys in English. Teachers use praise, comments and questions very effectively to confirm understanding and extend thinking. Expectations are particularly high, and the teacher's enthusiasm, clear explanations and secure knowledge have a very positive effect on attainment and progress. Displays in classrooms remind pupils of the strategies they need to improve their work, such as good handwriting, correct spelling and punctuation. Sessions at the end of lessons check that pupils have understood the lesson, and also extend their thinking, pushing them just that bit further. Teachers encourage pupils to discuss their work and to explain what they have learned during lessons. However, they sometimes miss opportunities to share the learning objectives with the pupils at the beginning of lessons, to ensure pupils are clear about what it is they are expected to learn.
104. Assessment and record keeping are now very good. National Curriculum Tests and school tests are used effectively to track individual progress in order to raise standards and to identify areas for school development. Teachers mark work on a regular basis and pupils are given helpful suggestions on how they can improve their work. Homework is set to extend work done in lessons and to check that pupils have fully understood new learning.
105. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the subject, and is a very effective force in improving standards. Formal monitoring of the teaching and planning takes place, and staff are given feedback on how to improve the quality of the teaching and learning.

MATHEMATICS

106. On the basis of 2001 national test results based on average national curriculum points scores, attainment was in line with the national average at the end of Year 2. The percentage of pupils obtaining level 2, the expected level, was average; the proportion obtaining the higher level 3 at the end of Year 2 was also average. Pupils' performance in the Year 2 mathematics test was above average in comparison with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. The average attainment of pupils in the three years 1999 to 2001 was just ahead of the national average in the Year 2 tests. The performance of girls was lower than that of boys in the end of Year 2 tests over the last three years; on average, they were nearly half a term behind.

107. In the 2001 national tests at the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in terms of points scores was very high compared with the national average, being in the top five per cent of schools nationally. The proportion of pupils obtaining level 4, the expected level nationally, was average but the proportion reaching the higher level five was well above average, with half the year group reaching this standard. When compared with pupils from schools of a similar type, standards were again very high. The performance of boys has been slightly higher than that of girls over the last three years.
108. For the current groups of pupils, evidence from the lessons observed, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils indicate that attainment is above average for pupils aged seven, and well above average by the time pupils leave the school at the age of eleven. This represents an improvement on previous years for seven-year-olds, largely due to the fact that Year 2 pupils are set into two classes; this is having a most positive effect on raising standards. In the work seen during the inspection, many pupils aged seven demonstrated good standards in investigative mathematics and number. Pupils aged eleven generally have good knowledge of their multiplication tables, because they are practised regularly. This greatly assists standards in many other areas of mathematics. Pupils aged eleven can order fractions very well, can count in, for example, eighths, saying together "one eighth, one quarter, three eighths, one half" and so on. They work out the perimeters of various shapes and choose correct units in investigations. They are most adept when handling number sequences. Throughout the school, pupils show a liking for "big numbers"; the bigger the better! Pupils use correct mathematical vocabulary throughout the school, and this is having a strong impact on learning. They develop their own strategies when solving problems in their heads, can interpret charts appropriately, and are familiar with different ways of presenting data. Pupils aged seven recognise patterns and relationships appropriately. Those in the "additional" group are competent when counting both forwards and backwards in 1's, 2's and 10's. There was no discernible difference in the performance of girls and boys in the lessons seen. Standards in mathematics are higher than those observed at the time of the last inspection, for pupils at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6. Higher attaining pupils are paired with older pupils, where appropriate, to enhance learning. To raise standards of attainment further in both the infant and junior classes, there is a need to continue the work of building up a consistent mathematical vocabulary, to ensure that all pupils continue to have instant recall of their multiplication tables and to ensure that lower attaining pupils, in particular, have a "main method" of calculation available to them that is consistent through the school.
109. Overall learning of pupils in mathematics is very good in both the infant and junior classes; this includes those pupils having special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Factors aiding progress include the pupils' thirst for mathematical knowledge, the very positive attitudes and behaviour of the pupils, and the overall very good standard of teaching. The overall quality of teaching is very good. In the lessons observed it was excellent in four of the nine lessons seen, very good in four lessons and good in the other one.
110. The features that made the best lessons excellent, and contributed to a very high rate of learning, were very high expectations on the part of the teachers, coupled with thorough planning and a clear enthusiasm from the teachers. In such lessons, teachers clearly explain the learning objectives at the outset, and look again at these at the end of the session to see how far they have been achieved. Every year, pupils are entered for level 6 in mathematics, reinforcing the school's high expectations. Teachers in most numeracy lessons begin with brisk and effective question and

answer sessions, to revise previous work and set pupils thinking. For example, in an excellent lesson for pupils in Year 3, the teacher ran a “Play your cards right” session, in which pupils had to either double or halve the numbers on the revealed cards and then predict whether subsequent unseen cards would result in a higher or lower total. Such brief sessions help pupils’ learning. In numeracy lessons, the likeliest time for pupils to lessen their rate of working is in the “independent learning” sessions. In the best lessons, however, teachers are aware of this and set appropriate time targets, as in, for example, a very good Year 2 lesson on finding as many ways as possible using the four rules of number to make a target number. Pupils loved pitting their wits against the egg-timer clock in such sessions. In an excellent Year 5 lesson on place value, the teacher showed superb knowledge and understanding, despite others in the class attempting to confuse her inadvertently! There has been good improvement overall since the last inspection. The newly appointed co-ordinator is most capable, very enthusiastic and should ensure that standards remain high. Additionally, she is a most competent mathematician.

SCIENCE

111. In the 2001 end of Year 6 National Curriculum tests, attainment in terms of average National Curriculum points scores was well above average. The number of pupils attaining the national expectation of level 4 was above the national average, and the number of pupils attaining the higher level 5 was well above the national average. Pupils' performance overall was very high compared with that of pupils in similar schools. Inspection findings indicate that pupils at the end of the key stage are working well above that expected nationally.
112. In 2001, the teacher assessments of pupils’ attainment at the end of Year 2 show standards broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 3 was also average.
113. The work seen in the inspection shows that, by the age of seven, pupils' attainment is above average. Pupils know that some devices use batteries, which supply electricity, whereas other every-day devices are connected to the mains. They understand that electricity can be dangerous, is used in every day appliances, such as a kettle, and should be used safely and with care. Pupils can carry out their own investigations on subjects such as “light” and record their work in a sensible, scientific manner.
114. The work seen of pupils aged eleven shows that standards are well above the national average. Pupils' strengths lie in investigative work, which promotes their knowledge, skills and understanding. They record their experiments most methodically, under the headings of “aims, method, diagram, results and conclusion”. This rigorous scientific manner promotes pupils’ learning. In an excellent Year 6 lesson on “reflection”, pupils were able to select, plan and use apparatus sensibly. They discussed the fact that black holes absorb light and therefore cannot be seen. In an excellent Year 5 lesson, pupils spoke very confidently, and were able to explain their conclusions on the factors affecting the dissolution of solids to their classmates. Key scientific vocabulary is emphasised and used throughout the school, and this is helping to raise standards even higher.

115. The overall quality of teaching is very good throughout the school. Teachers plan their lessons very well, are most enthusiastic and interesting to listen to, and they manage their classes very well. Expectations are high. This all contributes to a high rate of learning, and fires pupils' enthusiasm. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good indeed; they want to learn. They really enjoy their science work, especially practical activities, and are confident. They share their thinking with others and with the teacher during class plenary sessions. Across year groups, pupils handle materials and equipment carefully. Pupils work very well indeed in groups during investigations; relationships are excellent. Learning, overall, is very good for all pupils, including those who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. The biggest strengths in science teaching are the use of correct scientific vocabulary throughout the school, and the rigour with which investigative work is recorded.
116. Improvements since the last inspection have been very good. The subject has an appropriate scheme of work, which is currently under review. The co-ordinator, who is also the deputy headteacher, is most competent.

ART AND DESIGN

117. The standards achieved by pupils aged seven and eleven are in line with the national expectations and most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in comparison to their prior attainment. There is an effective scheme of work in place to ensure progress and continuity across the school.
118. Owing to the school's timetabling arrangements, it was not possible to observe any teaching. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning indicates that the school provides pupils with a wide range of experiences to develop their skills, techniques and knowledge and understanding of art and design. Work displayed around the school effectively demonstrates this. Visits and artefacts are used effectively to stimulate pupils' interest in art and design, and to provide a focus for their work.
119. From an early age, pupils learn to mix colours, to appreciate shade and texture and to apply paint effectively to produce their own images and pictures. A display of self-portraits indicated pupils' progress in drawing and painting skills. By the age of eleven, pupils' portraits were very detailed and used a range of skills and mediums such as pastels, paint and pencil. Design skills are enhanced as pupils use sketchbooks to build up detail and confidence. In Year 2, pupils used a wide range of materials and skills to design Joseph's coat of many colours. A combination of sewing, gluing, taping, stapling and quilting resulted in pupils producing high quality pieces of finished work.
120. Throughout the school, pupils study a wide range of different artists such as Renoir, Manet, Rembrandt and Hockney, and recreate their style with accuracy.
121. A range of two and three-dimensional work shows that pupils are developing good skills in using a variety of materials, techniques and pattern. Information and communication technology is used very effectively to develop pupils' skills in designing a wall covering. As well as computer generated images pupils, used stippling and stencilling to produce interesting patterns. An awareness of art in different cultures is developed as pupils study Indian, African and Aboriginal art.

122. Art is effectively linked to other subject areas of the curriculum such as religious education, history and geography.
123. Pupils' natural creativity is fostered well through a well-planned curriculum. Pupils work co-operatively, share ideas and appreciate the work of others. Teachers provide a wide range of opportunities, resources and a variety of exciting stimuli to catch pupils' imagination and interest.
124. The curriculum co-ordinator has been in post for only a short time. She is enthusiastic and is working with the headteacher to develop her skills in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning, in order to have an impact on raising standards.
125. Work is well displayed, indicating the value that teachers place on pupils' work, and generally adding to the ambience and attractiveness of the building.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

126. Owing to timetable constraints, it was only possible to see three lessons in design and technology for pupils in Years 1, 4 and 5. Two of these were good lessons and one was very good, with pupils making good progress and achieving standards consistent with national expectations. An analysis of work recently carried out at the school shows that pupils' attainment is average at the end of both key stages. Learning is good overall for all pupils, including those having English as an additional language and those pupils with special educational needs, throughout both key stages. Pupils are now systematically building up the key skills of designing and making as they go through the school. They were aware of food hygiene, for example, in a lesson on making Christmas biscuits. Teachers manage their pupils very well indeed, and have high expectations; this helps to ensure that pupils' learning is good. Examples of previous work carried out include the construction of a variety of containers and small trucks in Year 6.
127. Pupils respond very well indeed and show great enthusiasm for the subject. They enjoy their work. Relationships are excellent.
128. The co-ordinator, who was only appointed last month, is enthusiastic, and has attended relevant in-service training. She has carried out an audit of the resources, and stored them centrally. Since the last inspection, standards have declined from being above average, largely because of the great and appropriate emphasis that the school has given to literacy and numeracy. Nonetheless, the subject is now back to being an integral part of the curriculum and under the expertise of the co-ordinator, standards are set to rise.

GEOGRAPHY

129. In the previous inspection, standards were judged to be average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Since then, they have improved to above average for seven-year-olds. This is due to good teaching, and an emphasis on making the subject matter relevant to the pupils' own experiences and interests. By the time they are seven, most pupils have a good awareness of other places in the British Isles and further

afield. This awareness is increased as they examine postcards sent to the school from a variety of places, and by fieldwork, such as looking at features on a route from the school to Blackpool Zoo.

130. Standards are broadly average for eleven-year-olds, maintaining those of the previous inspection. Pupils enjoy the subject and begin new tasks with enthusiasm. They collaborate well in small groups, for example, in Year 4, when pupils examine maps and photographs of Chembakolli and discuss what inhabitants might do or what buildings might be used for. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their work are always very good. They listen carefully and are always willing to share their ideas.
131. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and always promote the use of correct geographical terminology. All the lessons observed had some very good features. Most lessons begin with lively, stimulating whole-class discussion, to establish what pupils already know, and then go on to extend their knowledge and understanding. For instance, as pupils had secure knowledge of the position and climatic conditions of the Arctic and Antarctic regions, the teacher showed them clearly that the skills they had acquired to analyse climatic features in areas already studied could be successfully applied to the study of another. In all the lessons observed, pupils were given opportunities to engage in interesting and challenging activities to extend specific geographical skills. Year 6 pupils were absorbed in analysing maps and photographs of Coniston to discover what jobs people have, what the landscape is like and what leisure activities are available in the region. They were able to do this well because their teacher had explained the task clearly, and had established pupils' understanding of the processes required by pertinent questioning. First hand knowledge of the area, through a recent residential visit, added greatly to the interest of the work. Occasionally, in Year 6, the very appropriate activities designed for the latter part of each lesson are preceded by more mundane tasks designed to test rather than extend knowledge. These are not necessary when teachers already know that pupils' knowledge is secure.
132. Much of the work done enhances pupils' literacy skills. Year 6 pupils, again using first hand knowledge, wrote interesting accounts of the advantages and disadvantages of living in Leigh and living in Coniston. Year 4 pupils have produced non-chronological reports describing weather conditions in India. A survey on 'Favourite Holiday Places', carried out by Year 2 pupils and involving the whole school, made a good contribution to numeracy, increasing pupils' understanding of the value of graphs in communicating information.
133. The co-ordinator has a strong interest in geography and a good knowledge of how it should be taught. She has been particularly interested and successful in establishing cross-curricular links with other subjects. Resources are very good, easily accessible, and used well. Visits, particularly the residential visit to Coniston, have also enriched the provision for geography.

HISTORY

134. In the previous inspection, standards were judged to be average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Since then they have improved to above average for seven-year-olds and stayed the same for eleven-year-olds. By the age of seven, pupils have well-developed enquiry skills and a thorough understanding of the difference between past and present, when, for example, they compare beaches today with those at the beginning of the century. They know about famous people in the past, recalling in detail events in the life of Guy Fawkes. Year 1 pupils identify old teddy bears and new

teddy bears comparing features such as shape and materials used in their making. They identify modern toys, those that their teacher might have played with and those that might be one hundred years old. Their recent visit to the Toy and Teddy Museum helped reinforce this historical understanding. Older pupils are increasing their knowledge about life style through the ages at a satisfactory rate. A comprehensive variety of topics is covered and emphasis is put on developing historical enquiry skills. Year 5 pupils identify source materials in terms of primary or secondary. They use these well to develop an awareness of the different roles of people in Ancient Egyptian society. Year 6 pupils have a sound knowledge of life in Britain since 1940. They have carried out a range of investigations, including an investigation into the advantages and disadvantages of transport now and in the past.

135. Only two classes had history lessons during the inspection, and time tabling arrangements meant only one lesson could be observed. However, the quality of pupils' work in books and displays indicates that teaching is at least good throughout the school. In the Year 2 lesson seen, the teaching and subsequent progress made by the pupils was excellent. The lesson brought together outstanding planning and admirable classroom management skills, based upon exceptional resources. The teacher made excellent use of primary sources to build upon and extend the pupils' historical and general skills of close observation and deduction, insisting upon the need to weigh conclusions and relate them carefully to the evidence. The theme of holidays, now and then, was initially explored through contrasting photographs, and was developed in a very practical way when the teacher brought out boxes of miscellaneous items from holidays past and present, including money, cameras, shells, items of clothing and various documents and papers. In an atmosphere of general excitement and genuine interest, the pupils delved into the boxes and eagerly discussed the objects with one another, finding reasons to assign them to to-day's world or to bygone times according to the clues they provided. The teacher skilfully led the class to make their own discoveries by shrewd, open and carefully phrased questions. This was an excellent lesson, imaginatively introduced, practically and enjoyably developed within strict terms of historical reference. It led to satisfying and rewarding genuine conclusions and insights by these young pupils.
136. In the lesson seen, history made an excellent contribution to literacy in terms of speaking and listening. Analysis of work throughout the school shows that history makes a good contribution to writing skills, as pupils express their learning and ideas in their own words. For example, Year 2 pupils presented their knowledge about Guy Fawkes and events of that time as a newspaper report. Year 6 pupils write about important inventions and discoveries since 1930. Constructing time lines contributes to numeracy. All classes also make good links with geography. For instance, Year 5 pupils analyse features on a map of Ancient Egypt to establish which areas would have been best to live in. Information and communication technology also supports the subject. Good use is made of videos and CD-ROMs, and teachers are looking forward to the school's imminent implementation of their link to the Internet.
137. Co-ordination of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator's enthusiasm for the subject is reflected in the work that goes on throughout the school, but particularly in her own class and in Year 2. Resources for the subject are excellent, and used to very good effect. The school has its own range of appropriate resources and also has access to Wigan Museum's loan service. Visits to local places such as Wigan Pier and Chester, as well as visitors such as the archaeologists from Liverpool Museum also enrich the work done in the subject. The co-ordinator monitors the work through displays and through sampling children's work from each class.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

138. During the inspection, it was only possible to observe two lessons, together with several sessions of pupils working either alone or in pairs. Standards for pupils aged seven and for those aged eleven, meet national expectations. Information and communication technology (ICT) is taught with a cross-curricular approach with all pupils being taught once per week in the recently established ICT suite. Unfortunately, this suite is only able to accommodate half-classes. However, the computers in the suite are all networked to those in the classrooms. By the age of seven, pupils use ICT to assemble text on work in literacy. They are able to generate text and save and retrieve information. By the age of eleven, pupils are able to move, rotate and re-size graphical images. They can present information in different forms. Pupils are aware of their audience and the need for quality in their presentations. Pupils routinely use ICT as a tool to help their work in other subjects of the curriculum.
139. Teaching and learning are good overall in Year 2 and in Year 6, for all pupils, including those having special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. The school makes very efficient use of its ICT suite; all classes are timetabled for one session per week there, and the computers are networked to the computers in the classrooms, enabling further work to be carried out in class. Assessment is not yet used effectively to monitor pupils' progress in this subject.
140. Pupils' response is very good indeed. They show great eagerness for, and interest in, this subject. Pupils work hard in practising their skills and work co-operatively very well; relationships are excellent.
141. The co-ordinator for this subject is extremely knowledgeable and has spread his skills informally through the school. There are appropriate computers in every classroom, which are all networked together and networked to the suite. The school is linked to the Internet. There is insufficient cross-curricular software to support work in other subjects. Standards remain in line with national expectations, as at the time of the last inspection, but are now rising due to the benefit of the recently completed ICT suite.

MUSIC

142. Owing to the school's timetabling arrangements, judgements are made on the observations of a limited number of lessons. By the age of seven, standards in music are above those expected nationally. Insufficient evidence was available to make a judgement on standards at the age of eleven.
143. Music makes a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual and personal development and adds to the quality of assemblies and worship. The playing of an appropriate piece of music sets a reverent atmosphere for reflection and worship, as pupils arrive for assemblies. The school choir adds to the musical quality of the assembly, and develops pupils' skills and confidence in performing. All pupils have opportunities to develop their singing skills through whole-school singing. Pupils sing with enthusiasm, but insufficient attention is paid to encouraging pupils to sing with accuracy, expression, controlled phrasing and articulation.
144. Pupils in Year 1 show a good understanding of musical ideas as they use their voices and unpitched percussion instruments to accompany familiar songs. Pupils have a good sense of rhythm and can clap a steady beat. By Year 2, pupils recognise repeated patterns and changes in a piece of music. In lessons, the teaching helps

the pupils to improve their singing skills well. They develop an understanding of notation and melody, and sing with expression and clear diction. Pupils are encouraged to use accurate musical vocabulary when talking about their work and in answering questions posed by their teachers. They recognise pitch, dynamics and tempo. Pupils make good progress in playing instruments, and are developing good skills in composition and performing.

145. In the limited number of lessons seen in Year 6, teaching built successfully upon this good start. Year 4 pupils worked with considerable effort and concentration to compose a piece of Indian music, using the pentatonic scale and authentic Indian instruments. The compositions were complex, and showed a very good knowledge and understanding of rhythm, simple scales and musical terminology. The lesson made a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development, as they developed an understanding of the similarities and differences in the ways sounds are used from different places. Year 5 pupils' skills were extended well as they used tuned and untuned instruments to develop their understanding of scales and layering.
146. In the limited number of lessons seen the teaching was good in Year 2. Music lessons were well structured and tasks were challenging. Pupils were expected to produce work of a high standard, and tasks were well chosen to stretch pupils' musical skills. Pupils are given very clear strategies to improve their skills. They are encouraged to think as 'musicians' and to use correct musical terms. As a result, pupils enjoy lessons and work with considerable effort and concentration to produce polished performances of difficult works.
147. Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs, who enjoy the lessons, and this has a very good impact on the standards they achieve, particularly by the age of eleven. End of year concerts and opportunities to take part in local music festivals provide pupils with further opportunities to develop their musical and personal skills.
148. Specialist teaching and the enthusiasm of teaching staff, teaching assistants, peripatetic staff and school clubs for choir and recorder make a very positive contribution to pupils' attitudes and high standards.
149. Music is very effectively co-ordinated and makes an important contribution to the aims of the school. The co-ordinator has specialist skills, which are used well to develop a full range of activities to promote effective learning of music. This helps teachers to provide pupils with good opportunities to extend their creative skills.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

150. It was not possible to evaluate standards as only three lessons were seen, and these were all gymnastics lessons. Planning indicates that the curriculum is balanced and covers the National Curriculum programme of study. Pupils learn to play games, participate in gymnastics and respond to music through dance and movement. Pupils in Year 3 have swimming lessons throughout the year, and Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils have a term of swimming in each year. Year 6 pupils engage in adventurous activities during their residential visit to Coniston.
151. Year 1 pupils moved round the hall demonstrating different kinds of jumps. They found a space easily and linked several movements together. These young pupils worked well, and discussed ways of improving their performance with their teacher. Year 3 pupils demonstrated various balances, using different parts of the body as supports. Many found this difficult, and they needed further practice to refine and improve their performance. Year 6 pupils demonstrated a variety of jumps, which they used at the start and end of sequences of movements over apparatus. The performance of most pupils was below that expected of pupils of their age, and reflected the fact that this was their first gymnastics lesson this year. The good provision for swimming ensures that all pupils learn to swim. By the time they leave school all pupils readily achieve the required standard to swim 25 metres. The attitudes of pupils in two of the lessons observed were very good. They listened carefully and performed to the best of their ability, and worked effectively in groups. Attitudes of Year 6 pupils were generally satisfactory but at times they were inattentive and not on task, because the teacher did not always make it clear to them how they should behave.
152. The quality of teaching was satisfactory overall and good in the Year 1 lesson. In this lesson, the teacher set appropriate challenges, gave clear instructions and demonstrations and encouraged pupils to develop their skills. Pupils made good progress in travelling on different parts of the body by sliding. Individual pupils demonstrated their skills to others in the class, and the teacher clarified the good points. The teacher invited other pupils to say what they liked about one another's performance. These factors contributed to the quality of pupils' learning. In the Year 6 lesson, the teacher was not clear about the standards the pupils should be achieving. The teacher described the pupils' movements across the apparatus, but did not always suggest ways in which these could be improved.
153. The newly appointed co-ordinator is very enthusiastic, and recognises that some aspects of the provision need to be improved; there is a need to develop teachers' subject knowledge in some areas of the physical education curriculum. The school is involved in 'Top Sport', and this involvement has brought benefits in terms of planning and equipment for the school. Extra-curricular activities enhance the provision, as does the coaching in rugby by professionals from local clubs. This coaching effectively develops pupils' enthusiasm for the sport, as well as improving games skills. There are opportunities for pupils to take part in competitive sport. They play netball and football matches with other schools in the Wigan area. The school recently entered a team in the Wigan Athletics Tournament and are now in the final!