

INSPECTION REPORT

CAPENHURST C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Capenhurst

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111271

Headteacher: Mrs L McGeorge

Reporting inspector: Mr J Lea
21193

Dates of inspection: 21 - 24 January 2002

Inspection number: 192640

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 controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Capenhurst Lane Capenhurst Chester
Postcode:	CH1 6HE
Telephone number:	01513392685
Fax number:	01513399910
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Yvonne Pemberton
Date of previous inspection:	25 - 27 February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21193	Mr J Lea	Registered inspector	English Design and technology Music Physical education Religious education Foundation Stage Special educational needs Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9777	Mr D Heath	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?
22291	Mr K Saltfleet	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology History Geography Art and design	How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is located in the village of Capenhurst near Chester and Ellesmere Port. There have been significant alterations to the internal layout of the building over the last five years. The number of pupils on roll has increased since the last inspection from 53 to 89 but is smaller than the average size nationally of 226 pupils. Although some pupils live in the immediate area the vast majority attend from outside the catchment area.

When compared with the national picture the proportion of pupils relatively advantaged in socio-economic terms is average. Unemployment levels in the area are below the average for the country. Children enter the school with average levels of attainment, representing the full ability range. Most pupils have enjoyed some form of pre-school education. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. All pupils are of white ethnic origin. There are currently 11 pupils on the school's register for special educational needs. No pupil has a Statement of Special educational Need. This is well below the national average. The school admits children to the reception class in the September of the school year nearest to their fifth birthday. The ethos of the school is well expressed in its brochure which is 'to provide a Christian environment which is caring, motivating and supporting, allowing all involved to achieve their personal best'.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school, successful in its commitment to raising standards in English, mathematics and science. Pupils are keen to learn and respond positively to teaching, which is consistently good and often very good. Subsequently all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in relation to their ability. The governors support the school and are kept informed of how the school is developing by the headteacher. There is a strong partnership with parents and good arrangements for pupils' welfare. Taking into account the effectiveness of the school in areas of pupils' attainment, attitudes and personal development, the quality of teaching and the leadership of the headteacher, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Raising standards in English, mathematics and science.
- The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.
- The support and guidance given to pupils.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils' behaviour, attitudes and relationships with each other and with their teachers.
- The partnership between school and parents.

What could be improved

- Creative writing.
- Opportunities to develop pupils' investigative skills in mathematics.
- Pupils' knowledge and practical experience of the control aspect of information and communication technology at Key Stage 2.
- The programme of work for developing pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in February 1997. All the main points from the last report have been addressed. The prospectus fulfils all requirements and is updated on an annual basis. The governors' annual report to parents now meets statutory requirements. A marking policy is well established and used consistently throughout the school. Frameworks for the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are in place. Teachers with a particular subject responsibility are becoming more effective in their role. The school development plan has been extended to cover a three year period. In addition, the school accommodation has been tastefully and sympathetically restructured, but is still incomplete.

STANDARDS

By the end of the Foundation Stage all children have achieved the Early Learning Goals and are working on the National Curriculum Programmes of Study in English and mathematics. In both key stages, almost all pupils are on course to meet the standards expected of seven and 11 year olds in English, mathematics and science with a small number to reach a higher level. Overall this represents good achievement. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Attainment in art, design and technology, history, geography, physical education, music and information and communication technology is satisfactory. Standards in religious education are in line with the locally agreed syllabus.

Although comparisons with national and similar schools are unreliable, due to the small numbers of pupils tested, trends over time in English, mathematics and science are in line with those nationally.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils show positive attitudes to learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good throughout the school. There have been no exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is good. They have high self-esteem. Relationships all round are very good.
Attendance	Attendance is very good. The school has very little unauthorised absence.

Pupils behave well in lessons and enjoy their work. The good relationships between pupils, themselves and their teachers, promote positive attitudes to learning throughout the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 - 2	Years 3 - 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The overall quality of teaching is good. A feature of teaching is the good management of pupils and the range of opportunities provided to meet their interests and abilities. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well and make a positive contribution to the standards achieved. Teachers use time well and, by good preparation and organisation, ensure that lessons proceed at a good pace. This keeps pupils very interested in their work and results in good learning. Examples of good teaching were seen in all classes.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced and offers good learning opportunities to all pupils. It is enhanced by an interesting variety of visits and visitors.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The special educational needs co-ordinator, teachers and learning support assistants provide good support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school monitors pupils' academic and personal progress well. It takes good care of its pupils.

The school enjoys a very good partnership with parents who lend support to a wide range of activities.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides good leadership. She is supported by a hard-working team of teachers and other adults.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors take a keen interest in all aspects of the school and fulfil all their responsibilities. They might wish to consider building on their good work so far by arranging a programme of informal visits in order to gain a better overview of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There is a strong commitment to raising standards. The school monitors and evaluates its work and acts promptly on its findings.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of its staffing, members of the community and all available accommodation. Funds are used efficiently, to raise standards and to improve the school building. The school applies the principles of best value to good effect.

Classrooms and offices are attractive, well maintained and welcoming. The school is well resourced.

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 enjoy coming to school.• The standards achieved.• The progress pupils make.• The good behaviour.• Good standards of teaching throughout the school.• The school's expectations.• Promotion of good values and attitudes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arrangements for homework.

Seventeen parents attended the meeting with the registered inspector prior to the inspection and 46 questionnaires were returned. It is clear that the parents strongly support the work of the school. All parents would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. The inspection team agrees with the positive views of the parents. The school is reviewing its arrangements for homework.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Baseline assessment shows that attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is in line with that expected of children of that age, with the full range of ability represented. Inspection evidence indicates that all are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals. They are developing their communication, language and literacy skills and are becoming very comfortable with numbers and shapes. In other areas of the curriculum children are acquiring creative skills, developing physically and finding out about the world in which they live.
2. Results of statutory tasks and tests for seven year olds in 2001 show that, when compared to the national average, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 or above in reading, mathematics and science is very high, but in writing it is close. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 2B or above is well above the national average in reading but below in writing and mathematics. The percentage reaching Level 3 in reading, writing and science is below average but close to the national average in mathematics. A similar comparison for 11 year olds shows that attainment is average in English, below in science and well below in mathematics. Comparisons with similar schools show that by age seven the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 or above in reading, mathematics and science is very high, but below average in writing. The percentage reaching Level 3 is very low in reading, well below in writing and science but close to average in mathematics. Comparative results for 11 year olds, show that attainment in English and science is well below average and mathematics is very low. At Level 5, English is well below average, mathematics is below and science is very low.
3. Comparisons from year to year with national and similar schools can be unreliable, due to the small numbers of pupils tested and the differences in ability of year groups. The effect of one pupil on a school's percentage measure can be considerable, whereas in a larger school it will be less marked. For example, each Year 6 pupil represented approximately 11 per cent. However, by comparing attainment over the last three years, more reliable conclusions can be drawn about the school's achievements. Overall, the trend in the school's average National Curriculum points for English, mathematics and science is broadly in line with the national average.
4. Standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science at the last inspection were described as average. Current inspection evidence indicates improving standards in literacy and numeracy throughout the school. The main reason for this is the consistently good teaching, learning and co-ordination of these subjects throughout the school. Work is planned more accurately and matches the varying needs of pupils. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and, consequently, they work harder and achieve higher standards. The school also uses assessment more effectively to plan appropriate work.
5. At age seven and 11, almost all pupils are on course to attain the level expected for their age in all aspects of English. Reading is particularly good. This represents good achievement for all groups of pupils in relation to ability and reflects the priority the school has placed on implementing the literacy hour. The school has effectively targeted pupils who need extra tuition in some aspects of literacy. However, almost all pupils need to use adventurous, extended vocabulary that gives sparkle, and a

style of writing which will maintain the reader's interest. In addition, although most pupils structure their writing and plan their stories with a setting, characters and plot, there are some pupils in Key Stage 2 who have not yet developed a fluent, joined and legible style of handwriting that is neat, correct, clear and well presented.

6. Evidence from the inspection and school assessments also confirms an improving picture in mathematics. At age seven and 11, almost all pupils are on course to attain the level expected for their age in this year's national tests, and this represents above average achievement when their abilities are considered. Pupils' understanding of place value of numbers is particularly good. However, pupils have limited opportunities to apply their knowledge to real-life situations.
7. At the age of seven, pupils attain the standards expected of their ages in science and make satisfactory progress. Standards at the end of Year 6 are improving as illustrated in the percentage scores of pupils attaining Level 4 and above in national tests from 1999 – 2001. These are 40, 57 and 89 per cent respectively. Inspection evidence and the school's forecasts suggest that this improvement is set to continue with almost all pupils in the current Year 6 on course to attain the expected Level 4, representing above average achievement. A significant number are expected to reach a higher level. In all lessons there is no apparent difference in the way both boys and girls are taught. There is reason for optimism as the prospects for overall improvement to continue are very favourable.
8. Progress for pupils with special educational needs is good. Their progress in reading and number is particularly good because of the support they receive in working towards their individual targets. Overall this represents good achievement in terms of their earlier attainment. Attainment in art, design and technology, history, geography, physical education, music and information and communication technology is satisfactory. Standards in religious education are in line with the locally agreed syllabus.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Parents agree that their children are keen and eager to come to school and this is confirmed by the level of attendance which in the year 2000/01 was well above the national average. Parents and the school staff work well together to ensure that unauthorised absence is minimal. Occasionally parents need to be reminded of the importance of punctuality.
10. All pupils are fully involved in the life of the school and enjoy the good range of extra-curricular activities on offer. During the reorganisation of the front of the school, pupils enjoyed sharing in the planning of the markings on the playground. In lessons the pupils are eager to help with activities such as collecting and distributing resources.
11. Behaviour in lessons is good. All age groups show interest during lessons. In a numeracy lesson the younger children were seen to be enjoying the activity and in a lesson that involved experimenting with the growth of bean seeds they displayed a good level of concentration and independence. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 show good interest in a physical education lesson on music and movement and discuss increases in heart rate effectively. The older pupils enjoyed role playing in a geography lesson about the environment. Lunch-time is a very orderly occasion, when pupils display good manners and respond well to the good example set by the teachers and staff. There were no incidents of bullying witnessed during the

inspection and there were no exclusions in the last school year. Parents agree that behaviour at the school has improved. The pupils are encouraged to reflect on their actions and to consider its impact on others during circle times and in the daily assemblies. The older pupils enjoy helping the younger children and they show initiative by helping with small tasks throughout the school day.

12. Overall, relationships are very good. Pupils show a good deal of respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of their classmates.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. One hundred per cent of teaching during the inspection was satisfactory or better. Indeed, the overall quality of teaching is good and contributes significantly to the good quality of pupils' learning, their attitudes and the progress that they make. To be more specific, in 12 per cent of lessons it is satisfactory, in 60 per cent of lessons it is good and in a further 28 per cent very good. The best lessons move with pace: quick activities, designed to keep pupils interested and make them work hard for a sustained period. Although examples of good teaching were seen in all classes, most of the very good teaching was seen in the junior classes, particularly in Year 6 where standards have been lowest. This is having a big impact on raising standards and on pupils' achievement. This overall quality is a strength of the school and an improvement on the last inspection when teaching was mainly satisfactory, with one third good.
14. The consistently good, and sometimes very good teaching in the Foundation Stage makes a considerably strong contribution to the progress children make in achieving the Early Learning Goals. It also results in happy, secure and increasingly confident children. Basic skills are taught well and there is good emphasis on the teaching of reading, writing and number through a wide range of practical activities. In the morning there is good support of a classroom assistant. This, together with a good understanding of the needs of young children has a positive impact on their acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding. For example, in a numeracy lesson children were able to experience a variety of activities and the teacher had the time to work with individuals and groups of children to make sure they understand the work, allowing them to concentrate and work hard.
15. Teachers in all classes set high expectations in lessons, particularly of what they expect pupils to achieve and of their behaviour. They make the purpose of the lesson very clear to pupils and refer back to it frequently. A good example of this was seen in an English lesson when skilful questioning by the teacher in Year 3/4 resulted in pupils offering some very good phrases to describe an atmosphere of impending threat. They make good use of resources to support pupils' learning. Work is always closely matched to the needs of individual pupils. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs receive good teaching and a good level of support from learning support assistants and a specialist teacher. Teachers set clear, measurable targets for action, which are reviewed regularly. All staff give sensitive and encouraging support that enhances pupils' self-esteem. This good practice enables pupils with special educational need to make good progress and achieve the targets set for them in their individual education plans.
16. All pupils have equal opportunities and are included in all activities. For example, girls play football and boys cook, and teachers make no differences between boys and girls when asking questions.

17. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They know and understand their pupils well. Throughout the school, the whole staff work as an effective team, recognising and addressing the needs of all pupils quickly and efficiently. Teachers use time well and, by good preparation and organisation, ensure that lessons proceed at a good pace. This keeps pupils very interested in their work and results in good learning.
18. Teachers manage pupils well in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 and very well in Key Stage 2, insisting on courtesy and good behaviour. There is a whole-school approach to this and it encourages pupils to work together and to share resources and ideas productively. Relationships are very good and in the best lessons teacher and pupil work in partnership and because of this pupils want to learn. They know that learning can be fun. The teacher's enthusiasm and obvious love for teaching are contagious. A good example was seen in a Year 5/6 geography lesson where the class teacher acted the part of a property developer wanting to build a new golf course. Pupils responded enthusiastically and in a mature way so by the end of the lesson they had aired their views and covered most of the issues.
19. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good throughout the school. In the class with the oldest pupils it is consistently of a high quality with the teacher having particularly good subject knowledge in mathematics. Consequently standards are rising and pupils' achievement is above average. Overall, teachers have a good knowledge of planning their lessons using the appropriate strategies and keep to their guidelines. In numeracy, the local education authority has produced guidelines for teaching mixed year groups. These make teachers' planning easier when making sure that work is set at the right level. As a result, pupils learn well and make good progress. In mathematics, they teach the pupils correct vocabulary and encourage them to discuss the strategies and methods used to solve problems. Teachers are confident to teach information and communication technology and overall make satisfactory use of it to support pupils' learning in other subjects.
20. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly, both informally through questioning and by more formal testing and use this information effectively to plan the next stage for each pupil. Work is marked regularly and positively and for junior pupils becomes more evaluative in telling them how well they have done and how to improve. Homework is an issue raised by parents through their questionnaires. It is set regularly but the school is reviewing its current arrangements.
21. Literacy and numeracy are taught successfully each morning. In the afternoon, Year 1 pupils move to work with children in the Foundation Stage, Year 2 pupils are taught by the headteacher as a separate group for three afternoons and sometimes with Year 3. Year 2, and Years 4, 5 and 6 are taught history and religious education by a supply teacher. Planning for these different groups is not easy and there is a need to review the existing curriculum framework. This will enable teachers to plan so that work for each year group, for example, in history for Years 4, 5 and 6, builds on previous learning, and does not repeat any work already done.

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

22. The quality and range of learning opportunities throughout the school are good and meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Since the last inspection schemes of work have been put in place for all subjects and a marking policy has been agreed and implemented.

23. In the Foundation Stage, the curriculum is based on the guidance of the Early Learning Goals with full coverage of the areas of learning. The school's long-term framework is based on the changes in Curriculum 2000 and literacy and numeracy are given a high priority. The foundation subjects retain their importance and are covered in depth. Indeed, French is taught, although at the moment only to pupils in Year 2. All pupils have equality of access to the curriculum and have a range of opportunities planned to meet their interests and aptitudes. For example, the school is committed to supporting the 'Bright Sparks' initiative for able and talented pupils, covering a variety of subjects. Although this is held at the weekend the headteacher attends regularly along with pupils and their parents. Visits out of, and visitors to school play an important part in this approach.
24. The school has good strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy based on the national strategies. The local education authority guidance for teaching numeracy to mixed age groups is very helpful. Teachers plan a structured daily mathematics lesson, which includes a high proportion of whole-class time. Oral and mental work feature strongly. However, there is a need to develop further pupils' problem solving skills by giving them more opportunities in using and applying their mathematical knowledge.
25. Policies are in place for all subjects, with a cycle for review. With the exception of art, which is based on the Cheshire model, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines support science and the other Foundation subjects. Short-term planning identifies clear learning objectives with a range of activities to ensure inclusion for pupils of all abilities. With increasing numbers, the recent formation of a fourth class and arrangements for different grouping of pupils in the afternoon there is a need to review the overall curriculum framework and schemes of work in these subjects. Science should be a priority. The way the Programmes of Study are covered should be considered when amending schemes of work so that the knowledge, skills, and understanding are addressed in a coherent way to ensure that they are built on as pupils move through the school. Integral to this review is the way in which pupils' progress is recorded, ideally in line with the school's assessment policy.
26. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and in line with the Code of Practice. There is good involvement with external agencies. For example, the support service teacher works in school with small groups of pupils and monitors their progress. There is extra help for pupils with identified problems in literacy and numeracy through additional literacy support and Springboard sessions. Booster classes after school cater for all abilities in Year 6. Individual education plans are in place. Parents and pupils are involved in setting realistic targets. These are used by teachers in their everyday planning, ensuring that work is focused and relevant to pupils' individual needs. Indeed, the majority make good progress and achieve standards in line with their abilities. Parents agree that all pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
27. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities after school, for example, the guitar, netball, basketball and football clubs. There are sporting contacts with other schools in the cluster but this is limited to netball. The school choir sang Christmas songs at Cheshire Oaks recently and performed in assembly.
28. Equality of access and opportunity is good. The curriculum is fully inclusive and pupils' individuality is taken into account in all its activities. It is clear that in information and communication technology girls and boys show equal enthusiasm for working with computers and readily share. Personal, social and health education is

infused into the wider curriculum. The awareness of drugs is covered in the school's science curriculum and in sex education, issues are dealt with sensitively and appropriately as they arise.

29. There are good links with the local community, which make a useful contribution to pupils' learning. BNFL provide the school with a nearby grassed playing area and coaching by the Chester Jets are a popular provider of after school activities. The 'Parent, Teacher Association' make a substantial contribution to the school in terms of financial support through fund raising and social events. The question of homework was raised by parents before the inspection. They would like the arrangements to be reviewed.
30. Links with other schools and educational establishments are good. The school is an active member of the Comenius project with effective links with schools in Europe and Africa. Students from Chester College, and nursery nurses have placements in school. The school is popular with ex-pupils for work experience. There are good links with the local playgroup which share the village hall, ensuring that pupils transfer to the reception class is as smooth as possible.
31. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Pupils are given opportunities to look into the values and beliefs of others. The school's links with those abroad, for example, Gome in Kenya are very effective in this respect. Pupils develop an understanding and tolerance of others, fair mindedness and recognition of their own strengths and weaknesses and those of others. Assemblies give them time for quiet reflection. Their classmates and their teachers value the youngest children's ideas; for example, in 'show and tell' sessions they talk about special moments in their lives. Older pupils increasingly accept the ideas of others they meet in stories and other subjects.
32. Pupils' moral development is good. The school is keen on promoting the values of honesty and truth so that pupils know right from wrong and as they get older, pupils recognise that they are responsible for their own actions. Parents are in 100 per cent agreement that the school is helping its pupils to become mature and responsible.
33. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are very good and these play an important part in pupils' social development. Pupils themselves get on well with each other and care for each other, for example, in the playground. These good levels of co-operation and willingness to join in all aspects of school life are important contributors to the improvement in standards.
34. Provision for pupils' cultural development is also good. They become aware of their own heritage through visits out of school to museums and art galleries, Holy Trinity Church and by looking at the history of the local area. Links through the Comenius project play a valuable part in pupils' understanding of the wider multicultural world. Subjects such as art develop the creative aspect. The school should continue to strengthen its provision in developing pupils' understanding of living in multicultural Britain.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. Since the last inspection the school has continued to maintain a good standard of care for all its pupils. There are good standards of health and safety for the pupils and staff. Teachers know individual pupils very well and are fully aware of their physical, emotional and intellectual needs.

36. The school has a regular independent health and safety and fire risk inspection. The last reports are satisfactory with some minor items that have been attended to. The school follows the local authority guidelines on child protection and all teachers are aware of procedures to be followed. The headteacher is the named teacher and any concerns are referred to the appropriate authority.
37. The attendance policy is successfully implemented, and attendance levels last year were well above the national average. If a child is absent without notification, the school contacts home to establish the reason for absence. Occasionally the school has to write to parents emphasising the value of punctuality. Registers are called at the beginning of each session. Records are well kept and they are up to date.
38. The school's positive behaviour policy encourages pupils to behave well throughout the day. The system of rewards and sanctions works well and pupils are proud of their achievements. Parents agree that behaviour overall has improved. Procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment are good. Children's progress is tracked against the Early Learning Goals and stepping stones. As pupils move up through the school comprehensive records, particularly in English and mathematics are kept. Individually assessed portfolios of work complete the picture.
39. The pupils update their Records of Achievement on a termly basis with the help of their teacher. Teachers make the pupils aware of their own potential, promoting self-esteem, good relationships and good standards of behaviour which all help in raising standards.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40. The school maintains very good links with parents, carers and the community and this makes a significant contribution to the pupils' education.
41. At the pre-inspection meeting and in the responses to the questionnaire the parents were supportive and appreciative of all aspects of the school's work, commenting that the school had become much more open.
42. Parents are kept very well informed by the annual governors' report, the school prospectus and home-school agreement. There are regular newsletters for parents and the first letter of the term includes details of the curriculum areas. This helps parents to be more involved in the education of their children. The school also organises workshops and information evenings for parents. Communications are also encouraged through the homework diaries and reading records. The annual pupil reports to parents are well detailed and informative.
43. The school has an open door policy, parents are made welcome and the headteacher makes herself available before and after school each day. Parents and friends are encouraged to help in school. There are a small number of regular helpers who provide valuable help in school and on extra-curricular activities.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. Both leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides good leadership and is well supported by a hard working team of teachers and pupil support assistants.

45. The school has explicit aims and values, which are clearly reflected in its work. These are evident in the very good relationships in school and the shared commitment of the teachers and governors to raising standards. It is clear through the returned questionnaires that the vast majority of the parents clearly support the aims and values of the school. They agree that the school is successful in promoting a happy and caring ethos with a commitment to providing an effective learning environment for their children. Since the last inspection there have been a number of improvements to raise standards and move the school forward, for example, all statutory requirements are now being met.
46. In addition to her classroom responsibility, the headteacher co-ordinates a large number of curriculum areas. Nevertheless, the curriculum is carefully monitored by the headteacher and subject co-ordinators. Furthermore, the headteacher has planned opportunities for herself and her teachers to visit classrooms and monitor the quality of teaching and learning. This, together with a closer involvement of the governors, will assist the school in setting shared, appropriate and achievable targets. Appropriate procedures for the professional development of staff are in place and closely linked to the school development plan. Currently the school does not have the resources to be a provider of initial teacher training.
47. The school has satisfactory procedures for evaluating its performance although these are still developing. Baseline assessments, standardised tests and statutory and non-statutory assessment tasks and tests give useful information in this respect. They now need to be developed further in order to provide links on which to base programmes of action.
48. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities. Targets to measure improvement in the performance of these and all other groups of pupils are in place. These are, of course, susceptible to the fluctuations in small cohorts of pupils. It has a committee structure and programme of meetings that ensure important decisions about the future of the school are made carefully. The governing body is kept informed about the strengths, developmental needs and day-to-day workings of the school by the headteacher. They are now in a position to build on this good work to help further shape the direction of the school through a deeper understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.
49. Educational priorities are well supported by financial planning. The school development plan is central to the school's work and is now a useful working document. Key objectives and priorities are identified and linked to costings, to ensure that the best strategic use is made of its resources. The finance committee meet regularly to review spending and consider future projects. There will be a substantial planned carry forward from this year to support the school building programme. The main recommendations of the latest auditor's report are in place. Day-to-day financial administration is good. Use of new technologies enables easy access to current budget information. The school uses additional funds through specific grants for their designated purposes, such as, the use of money allocated through the National Grid for Learning, to improve the school's provision for information and communication technology. The principles of best value are important in this small school and are effectively applied.
50. The school has an adequate number of suitably qualified teachers who provide a good balance of expertise and experience. They relate well and offer support to each other. Pupil support assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. The

caretaker, cook and midday staff work hard and contribute well to the smooth running of the school.

51. As a result of growing pupil numbers, a separate Year 5 and 6 class has been established this year with pupils in the Foundation Stage, Years 1 and 2, 3 and 4, and 5 and 6 being taught together in the morning for literacy and numeracy. This has been successful in allowing teachers to concentrate more fully on a smaller number of pupils and to focus planning more precisely, and to raise standards in the core subjects. As a consequence, on most afternoons pupils are regrouped to compensate for the part-time appointment in the infant class and to provide non-contact time for co-ordinators. However, there are drawbacks. In the Foundation Stage, Year 1 pupils join the class and this almost doubles the number. Although the quality of teaching is still good, there are added strains put on the teacher in terms of planning to ensure that both sets of pupils receive the curriculum entitlement under the Early Learning Goals and the National Curriculum. Classroom help is dependent on parent volunteers and the class teacher concedes that without their help, managing the variety of activities and meeting pupils' individual needs would be harder.

52. In many respects the accommodation of the school is good. Externally the school benefits from hard surfaced play areas. However, the hall is used not only for physical education but for a variety of purposes, for example, Year 5/6 classroom, assemblies, school meals, peripatetic musicians and small working groups. Storage space is very limited. Furthermore the school does not have ownership of the hall; it belongs to the village community. The school has good resources in most subjects. Many are new and have been bought to support the newly organised curriculum, for example, big books and guided reading material to support the literacy hour. Provision for information and communication technology is good with 12 laptop computers, five multi-media computers and access to the Internet. Class libraries have a good range of fiction and non-fiction material. Good use is made of educational visits as additional resources.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53. The school should:

1. Further raise standards throughout the school in English by:
 - a) providing more opportunities for extending pupils' creative writing;
 - b) improving the standard of handwriting presentation.(paras 5, 56, 66)
2. Continue to develop the role of the co-ordinators. As a priority in this development, and in light of increasing pupil numbers, review the current rolling programme in science and the Foundation Subjects to ensure that pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, based on the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum, are built on progressively as they move through the school.
(paras 21, 25, 47, 80)
3. Build on the current provision in information and communication technology at Key Stage 2 by improving opportunities in the use of control.
(paras 74, 97, 102)
4. Further extend pupils' investigative skills in mathematics.
(Paras 6, 24, 71)

Other issues:

The governing body might wish to consider building on their good work so far by arranging a programme of formal visits in order to gain a better overview of the school.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	25
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	7	15	3	0	0	0
Percentage	0	28	60	12	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 four percentage points.

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	89
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	n/a	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	n/a	11

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

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.

Tables of Attainment are not included due to the small number of pupils taking the tests in 2001.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	71
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.16
Average class size	22.25

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	49.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	204,318
Total expenditure	192,782
Expenditure per pupil	2,472
Balance brought forward from previous year	27,036
Balance carried forward to next year	30,761

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0.0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0.0

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	100
Number of questionnaires returned	46

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	37	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	35	4	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	46	7	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	50	37	11	0	2
The teaching is good.	67	28	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	35	7	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	17	4	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	24	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	61	30	9	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	61	35	2	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	50	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	59	33	4	4	0

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

54. Children enter the reception class at the start of the academic year after their fourth birthday. A home-school visiting programme means that all children are familiar with the reception teacher before starting school. This arrangement enables the teacher to advise the parent on how to help their child before it starts school, for example, counting games, number rhymes and a booklet with handy hints. All children have a wide range of learning experiences, which are linked with the Early Learning Goals. Good teaching prepares the children well for statutory education by linking the Early Learning Goals skilfully with the demands of the National Curriculum. As a direct result of well structured planning and good levels of support, by the age of five all children reach expected levels in all areas of learning. Children are identified well in regard to special educational needs and make good progress against the targets set for them.

Personal, social and emotional development

55. Through good teaching and planning children soon develop positive relationships so that by the time they are five, they attain standards expected of their age in personal and social development. They quickly feel secure in the welcoming atmosphere staff create and very soon learn to select independently from a good range of interesting activities and resources. They participate in all these activities with enthusiasm and where necessary take turns, well aware of what is fair. Children are used to meeting with visitors, for example, parents, police, visiting musicians and actors. All children are aware of the clear expectations of good behaviour and as a result there are good relationships between teaching staff and children. A good understanding of children's needs in the area of personal and social development is evident and careful organisation ensures children understand the teacher's intentions.

Communication, language and literacy

56. There is a very clear emphasis on developing children's language and literacy skills and children make good progress in speaking and listening. They talk confidently about their drawings and listen carefully to the teacher in the early part of the literacy lesson. They are taught to speak clearly when, for example, they respond to the teacher's questions. The early reading skills are taught well and children enjoy following the text of a big book, with the teacher, for example, 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. Information and communication technology is used well to help children recognise letters and to reinforce their sounds. Most children are building up a sound phonic base on which to develop their reading skills. They love books and listening to stories and poems, for example, 'The Little Red Hen' and 'Mrs Pepperpot'. In writing, children can copy write their names and a significant number of the letters of the alphabet. However, writing is still an area for development and staff strive to provide situations to enhance learning in this area. A good example was seen when a live hen was introduced to the classroom and stimulated children to write a letter to the giant.

Mathematical development

57. Children are becoming comfortable with numbers and shapes. They can match numbers and objects and name simple shapes and sort and classify objects by colour, shape and size. For example, they can tell the difference between straight lines and curves, sides and corners, and solid and flat shapes. Many activities are practical giving children good opportunities to develop their mathematical concepts. A good example is the use of the play area for role play where children organise a pet shop, café, hat shop, giant's kitchen, hospital, post office and flower and baker's shops for sorting, counting and measuring. Number stories, for example, 'Wheels on the bus' and rhymes such as 'One, two, three, four, five' are used effectively to extend children's mathematical language. Good use is made of information and communication technology to develop number skills and pupils particularly enjoy programmes, such as Millie's Maths House'. By the end of the stage almost all children are able to count and order numbers up to ten and beyond. Many confidently sort and match numbers to six. All can count together when comparing the number of school dinners with sandwiches.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

58. The children are finding out about the world around them both in and beyond their own environment. For example, they identify features of the village and their own route to school. In geography, they collect information about the weather and record rainfall on weather charts using appropriate symbols. They look at the way climate affects the way we live. For example, they contrast life in hotter climates such as Mombassa and New Zealand and talk about the different clothing worn. Children quickly establish skills in their use of technology, for example by matching letter sounds and shapes on a computer. They learn about important events in the Bible, such as the Creation and the life of Jesus, through listening to stories both in the classroom and during assembly. They talk confidently about God and Heaven. They learn about the properties of materials and enjoy baking bread, and preparing a healthy meal following a visit to the supermarket. The teacher has high expectations and wherever possible, makes purposeful links with other areas of the curriculum to extend children's knowledge and understanding of the world.

Physical development

59. Children learn to move confidently, control their bodies and handle equipment. For example, there are opportunities for constructing, cutting and printing in their art and design and technology activities. They handle construction toys with confidence and are very confident in folding their clothing. They show good pencil control. In their physical education children use space well with control and co-ordination and confidently take part in catching and throwing activities. Good preparation and direction ensure that children know what is expected of them and subsequently they perform well. A good range of indoor and outdoor provision, such as wheeled toys, outdoor climbing apparatus and small equipment allows pupils to develop their physical skills and strength and to fully meet the objectives of the Early Learning Goals in this area.

Creative development

60. Staff provide a good range of interesting opportunities and materials for children to explore with an appropriate balance between structured and free activities. Children have good opportunities to experiment with colour, texture and shapes in their art and design work. Almost all children recognise and name the primary colours, and some

can name the secondary colours. The good standard of paintings on display show that children can choose colours and paint and draw confidently. The children are encouraged to listen carefully to music and enthusiastically use a range of untuned instruments and join in confidently with action rhymes and songs. There are good opportunities for them to participate in imaginative play; they have lively conversations and take on a variety of roles. They particularly enjoy making large structures such as boats and acting out the role of a ship's crew.

The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage

61. The quality of teaching is consistently good. It is based on an awareness of the need for young children to develop thinking skills, to formulate ideas and opinions through first hand experience. There is a secure and caring atmosphere where the contributions of all the children are valued. The good use of praise and acknowledgement of the children's good behaviour play an important part in the growth of self-esteem. The teacher's calm manner brings out the best in the children and when they make mistakes they are encouraged to persevere. She is well supported by an experienced support assistant. They make an effective team with a good understanding and awareness of the needs of young children. They use this well to provide a meaningful and relevant curriculum that develops children's understanding and awareness of the world around them. Classroom routines are planned clearly and groups are managed well. An emphasis is placed on encouraging pupils to work independently and make choices. There is a seamless transition from the Early Learning Goals to work at Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum.

ENGLISH

62. Standards of attainment in English at the last inspection were described as average. The Standard Assessment Task results for 2001 show that the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 or above in reading was very high in comparison with the national average. In writing it was close to the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 was below in both reading and writing. Results at Year 6 based on the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 or above were average (78 per cent), with (22 per cent) attaining the higher Level 5. However, comparisons with schools from a similar background show that performance at both key stages was below average. When making comparisons it is worth remembering that a significant factor in performance is the considerable year to year variation in the size of small year groups. Throughout the school, Inspection evidence indicates improving standards in literacy. The main reason for this is the consistently good teaching and co-ordination of the subject throughout the school. At age seven and 11, almost all pupils are on course to attain the level expected for their age. This represents good achievement for all groups of pupils in relation to ability and reflects the priority the school has placed on implementing the literacy hour. The school has effectively targeted pupils who need extra help in some aspects of literacy.

Speaking and listening

63. By the time they are seven pupils' speaking and listening skills are well developed. This is because teachers plan opportunities for pupils from an early age to learn and practise these skills. The youngest pupils listen carefully to what their classmates have to say, for example, when retelling the story of the ugly ducklings, talking about the characters in Cinderella or discussing the games they enjoy. They happily read their stories and poems aloud to the class when asked. By the end of Year 2, they

can talk and listen in different situations and show an understanding of the main points of a discussion. Ideas are well developed and expressed clearly with a growing vocabulary.

64. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3/4 and more rapid progress in Years 5/6. They contribute well to class discussions and assemblies. For example, in the literacy hour, when talking about poems they have read and their reasons for liking them. Most are becoming articulate and listen carefully to each other and their teachers. They ask questions, think about their ideas and are confident to express their own opinions. A good example was seen in Years 3/4 when pupils discussed descriptive passages from 'The Ice Palace' and in Years 5/6 when they talked about the distinguishing features of a breed of dog. By the time they leave school all pupils are talking confidently in a good range of situations and subjects.

Reading

65. Standards of reading throughout the school are good. There are a small number of pupils in Year 2 and a significant number in Year 6 who read at a higher level. From talking to pupils and listening to them read, their enjoyment and interest are evident both in reading at school and at home. From the beginning of Key Stage 1, teachers focus on learning sounds and letters, including beginnings and endings. As they move through the key stage most pupils develop a sound phonic knowledge and an increasing sight vocabulary. They are confident in recognising the high frequency word lists appropriate to their age and can read these in and out of context. All pupils keep a record of books they have read and enjoy talking about the main characters and favourite authors. Pupils who experience reading difficulties have access to a structured programme of reading which is well matched to their abilities. By the time they are seven, pupils are well on the way to becoming fluent and confident readers. As they move up through the juniors, some are capable of reading more demanding books and are aware of different authors and have their favourites. For example, a Year 6 pupil explained how she likes the imaginative and amusing style of Roald Dahl and the descriptive words of J K Rowling. Another said she always felt like one of the characters when she read the Harry Potter books. All pupils understand how to use the contents and index to find information. Almost all know that a glossary can be helpful and are able to use skimming and scanning techniques in their research. By the time they leave the school the vast majority of pupils are independent readers who read with interest, fluency and good pace.

Writing

66. In its school development plan the raising of standards in writing at both key stages has been a high priority. Teaching spelling strategies, and a sustained writing activity each week, means that by the time they are seven almost all pupils can write stories in the correct sequence with properly organised sentences. Teachers work hard to encourage pupils to use the spelling, vocabulary and grammatical skills acquired in the literacy hour. Consequently, spelling, basic grammar and punctuation is usually of a good standard. As they move through the juniors, most pupils write in story form showing a clear development and a sound understanding of how English works; grammar, punctuation and spelling are usually correct. For example, they understand how synonyms, adjectives and adverbs can be used to enhance their written work. A good example was seen when Year 3/4 pupils used adjectives and figurative language to describe settings after reading similes such as 'summer is short and pale like a celandine', or 'winter is long and cold like an icicle'. They recognise the need to write for different purposes and audiences, for example, a letter to a friend and an

account of a visit to Conway. Informative writing is of a good standard. For example, older pupils can write a non-chronological report, about a King Charles spaniel fully understanding the differences between personal and impersonal information. Book reviews are written succinctly, for example, when reviewing Harry Potter; "It is mainly suitable for children aged nine to 11, but anybody can read it". Written comparisons show a good understanding of text, for example, "I prefer the book because it expresses the feeling of the characters, but the actors were absolutely marvellous". They can write very sensitive pieces, such as, "When I'm with my Dad he makes me feel excited, and when I'm not with him I miss him; he means a lot to me". Some good pieces of creative imaginative writing were seen throughout the school. However, almost all pupils need to use adventurous, extended vocabulary that gives sparkle, and a style of writing which will maintain the readers interest. In addition, although most pupils structure their writing and plan their stories with a setting, characters and plot, there are many pupils who have not yet developed a fluent, joined and legible style of handwriting that is neat, correct, clear and well presented.

67. The quality of teaching at both key stages is consistently good. This is a major contributor to pupils' learning and achievement. A feature of this good teaching is the interaction with pupils, including the management of their behaviour. All teachers have good subject knowledge. Objectives are made clear at the beginning of all lessons so that pupils know exactly what they have to do. Work is well planned and taught using the framework of the literacy hour so that pupils develop skills and knowledge in accordance with the strategy. Teachers work hard to ensure that their lessons are interesting. Questions are used well to test pupils' previous learning and to check their understanding. Marking of work is clear and informative. This is an improvement since the last inspection when marking of pupils' work was an issue. Assessment of what pupils can or cannot do in their lessons is now used more systematically throughout the school in order for teachers to plan future work more effectively. Classroom support assistants and parents make a valuable contribution to the teaching of all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs. Information and communication technology plays an important part in developing pupils' literacy skills, for example, in word processing and in giving younger pupils good phonic support when practising their letter sounds. Throughout the school, pupils' responses are good. They get on well together working as a whole class, individually or in groups and these factors contribute significantly to the standards they achieve. They particularly enjoy the introductory discussions and plenary sessions where they answer questions eagerly and sensibly showing a developing degree of confidence and independence.

MATHEMATICS

68. At the last inspection standards of attainment throughout the school were described as average and that standards of numeracy, including mental arithmetic were satisfactory. Standards in mathematics are rising. This is shown in the results of the 2000 and 2001 Standard Assessment Tasks results at Year 6. Most graphically, the number of pupils attaining Level 4 or above increased from 14 per cent to 44 per cent with half this number reaching Level 5 in 2001. Evidence from the inspection and school assessments confirms this improving picture. At the age of seven and 11, almost all pupils are on course to attain the level expected for their age in this year's national tests. Valid comparisons with national averages are difficult to make because of the small numbers of pupils taking the tests. However, this represents above average achievement when their abilities are considered. There is reason for optimism as the prospects for this improvement to continue are favourable. Progress

for pupils with special educational needs is good. Standards in numeracy are good throughout the school.

69. Pupils in Year 2 are developing useful mental strategies and use these effectively in their everyday work. Most pupils can confidently recall number bonds to ten and complete additions of the type $32+9=41$. Higher attaining pupils are confident in using three digit numbers, for example, adding $77+9+14$ and finding the missing number in the equation $23+27+? =100$. They are developing a sound knowledge and understanding of mathematical language such as the concepts of 'more than' and 'less than'. Pupils' understanding of place value of numbers to 100 is good. Most pupils recognise the different characteristics of basic two and three-dimensional shapes, such as a rectangle and triangle, cylinder and cuboid. They measure in non-standard units, such as the length of a chair in handspans, and by the end of Year 2 are comparing these with simple standard measurements. When using money they can calculate the change from £1 and using both analogue and digital faces tell the time on the hour, and at quarter and half past the hour.
70. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 continue to develop their mental arithmetic skills, such as adding and subtracting ten and 100 to develop their understanding of place value. They are developing an understanding of how mathematics works, for example, the importance of the decimal point and place value of numbers to avoid confusion when writing amounts in numbers such as £1.30 and £1.03. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are confident in using the four rules of number. The oldest pupils can add, subtract, divide and multiply large numbers with confidence and use decimals, fractions and percentages to calculate answers. In Year 5, pupils' understanding of angles is good and using a computer program they measure angles to the nearest degree. Pupils' in Year 6 are also confident in their understanding of shape, space and measurement and in rotational symmetry can plot values on a graph and rotate a shape around a given point. They interpret data and are confident in finding the mean, median, average and range of a series of values. In their work on probability pupils use vocabulary such as 'likely', 'certain' and 'impossible' and fractions to calculate the outcomes. This work is demanding and requires careful and deep thought.
71. However, apart from in Years 5 and 6, pupils have limited opportunities to investigate numbers and to apply their knowledge to real-life situations which means that although pupils can often do calculations they are not good enough at applying the same number rules in other contexts. A more structured approach to using and applying mathematics is needed to further improve standards and pupils' understanding, ensuring that all the requirements of the Programmes of Study are met through the application of other attainment targets. The school may wish to consider establishing criteria for assessing pupils' attainment against national levels as part of this approach.
72. Currently the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is having a good impact on raising standards. The clear structure of the strategy, together with the local education authority guidance in planning for mixed aged classes, is helping teachers to be clear in what they want pupils to learn. Pupils with special educational needs work in small groups with pupils of similar attainment, and are often well supported by an adult so they make good progress.
73. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good. It is consistently very good in Class 4 and this is having a positive impact on standards and the achievement of pupils in Year 6. Teachers have clear objectives of the lesson and begin by telling pupils what they will learn. They make their lessons interesting so pupils want to

learn. For example, pupils in Year 6 enjoy 'Harry Potter' mathematics where they have to find the probability of taking a nasty tasting sweet such as Vomit or Bogie from the box. They know that in their investigative work they should work RUDELY and use the acronym as a guide, E – estimate what the answer might be. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace which motivates and enthuses pupils, and teachers have a secure knowledge of teaching the National Numeracy Strategy and keep to its guidelines. In the most successful lessons there is a good level of interaction between pupils and teachers. Questioning is skilful and probes key areas, making pupils think. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and as a consequence they respond well. There is extra support, for example, in Springboard sessions and booster classes, for individual pupils who need extra help to enable them to succeed

74. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good and they apply themselves diligently and work hard. Often pupils are enthusiastic about their learning particularly in oral sessions when the pace is fast and the work challenging. In some lessons, mainly with the older pupils good use is made of information and communication technology in lessons, for example, consolidating their number skills by asking them to fill five railway carriages with 28 people. These opportunities are lost in other classes and should become a regular feature in teachers' planning. Pupils work in books and often in the younger classes on loose worksheets. Presentation is not always of the highest quality. This should be reviewed to ensure that the school's expectations in this area are met.
75. The co-ordination of mathematics is very good and this is a major contributor to the improvement in standards and achievement. A good example is in establishing effective assessment systems that provide clear information on what pupils in each year can and cannot do. Teachers assess pupils' progress during the year, using a variety of tests, and use their assessments to give each pupil targets for improvement. This practice helps pupils see what they need to do to improve.

SCIENCE

76. At the age of seven, pupils attain the standards expected of their ages and make satisfactory progress. Standards at the end of Year 6 are improving as illustrated in the percentage scores of pupils attaining Level 4 and above in national tests from 1999 – 2001. These are 40, 57 and 89 per cent respectively. Inspection evidence and the school's forecasts suggest that this improvement is set to continue with almost all pupils in the current Year 6 on course to attain the expected Level 4, representing above average achievement. A significant number are expected to reach a higher level. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
77. Pupils in Year 2, use their senses to investigate their favourite foods. They make simple predictions and record their results for example, the passion fruit and the pomegranate smelled most, lychees were prickly and the apple smooth. In Year 1, pupils look closely at plants and learn practically about their early life cycle, from seed, to germination and the growing of the first shoots. They can label the main parts of plants; leaves, stem, roots and know that they need water, light and warmth to grow. Pupils in Year 2 are learning about the importance of healthy eating and the organs involved in the digestion of food. "*A gurgly tummy means it's time for food*". Most pupils know about the characteristics and properties of every day materials, and the differences between living and non-living things, and know that living things, for example, a tiger need food and water, grow and reproduce.

78. As they move through the junior classes, pupils build on their existing knowledge, skills, and understanding. Pupils in Year 6 know that when designing an investigation, questions have to be asked and answered such as when finding out how heat can make things move. *“My hypothesis was correct and the investigation worked because all the spirals swirled as the hot air pushed it up”*. Pupils build on their knowledge of life cycles of plants and use terms such as germination, dispersal and pollination accurately and understand the importance of food chains in the life cycles of animals. In their studies of the human body they explore the differences in breathing when resting and exercising and describe lungs as *“spongy bags”*. Pupils understand why some substances dissolve, about evaporation and condensation and use this knowledge to investigate what makes a puddle disappear. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 know about the orbit of the Earth round the sun and its effects on the seasons. The oldest pupils know that forces are measured in Newtons and basic facts about the Earth, sun and moon.
79. The quality of teaching and learning is good and sometimes very good. This is particularly the case with the oldest pupils and these are contributory factors in the raising of standards and the pupils’ achievements. For example, very good subject knowledge gives pupils very clear explanations and insights into their work and because of this involves them in discussions and prompts them to ask questions. Well-planned experimental work makes them think and discover facts for themselves and draw conclusions. Coupled with this is the teacher’s enthusiasm for the subject. This is contagious with the effect that pupils concentrate fully on their work, try hard and want to do well. The majority of pupils can discuss and share ideas and respect the views of others and even the younger pupils work with a good degree of independence.
80. The co-ordinator has been recently appointed and is beginning to stamp her mark on the subject, having identified a number of areas for development. These include reviewing the overall framework for science teaching in the school. With an expansion to four teaching groups it is important that pupils build on their existing knowledge, skills, and understanding as they move through the classes. Assessment procedures are to be more formalised and a portfolio of exemplars of pupils’ work collected for moderation of levels of attainment with the National Curriculum. There are useful links with other subjects. For example, aspects of personal, social and health education such as healthy eating, and computers are regularly used to record findings from experiments.

ART AND DESIGN

81. At the ages of seven and 11, pupils attain the level expected of their age. For these pupils, this represents satisfactory achievement whilst for a significant number of those with special educational needs it is good.
82. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are taught to use a variety of media imaginatively. The younger pupils confidently mix colours, for example, in their finger paintings of Jack’s hen. By close observation and good guidance from the parent helper, they follow the same lines as its feathers to show the different textures and colours. This gives their work realism and a good visual effect. In their three-dimensional work, pupils are taught a variety of techniques using easily managed materials such as a collage of self-portraits and decorating tiles with their favourite patterns. An interesting example was seen in Year 2 when pupils illustrated the ‘old’ books they made in design and technology. They learn to appreciate the work of famous artists and reproduce work using their style.

83. Pupils in Classes 3 and 4 continue to make satisfactory progress and further develop their skills in painting and drawing. A good example was seen in a wall display of pupils' pictures after the style of Kandinsky. Pastels were used in a lively fashion to show how effective the tone can be when colours are blurred. Pupils experiment with different media to find out their effects. For example, mixing and blending colours to match the colours of a variety of leaves and finding which hardness of pencil gives a bolder line. Pupils build on their close observational skills, for example, in their pencil sketches of mathematical shapes. They use cross hatching, dots and squiggly lines to shade and so show the effects of light falling on the different faces. Very good examples of vividly coloured Batik prints were on display in classrooms.
84. In the lessons seen the quality of teaching and learning was good. Teachers are more confident than at the time of the last inspection, shown by their willingness to try new things. Lessons are planned with the intention of making art fun, creative and exciting whilst at the same time making pupils think hard. It often complements other subjects, for example, history when pupils in Class 3 made a collage as part of their work on the Tudors. Pupils clearly enjoy the work prepared by their teachers and work hard.
85. Information and communication technology is used confidently as another medium. Pupils in Class 3 use an art program to extend their work in colour mixing by using the palette to mix colours and the spray command to draw trees in shades of green and brown. Sketchbooks are used to develop pupils' ideas and as a record of their work. Art makes a useful contribution to pupils' cultural development. The school's links with Kenya give them good opportunities to explore African art, look at its patterns and earthy colours. Special days such as the Italian day allow pupils to design and decorate masks for the carnival in Venice.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

86. Only one lesson was seen in design and technology during the week of inspection. However, from the evidence obtained through discussions with teachers and pupils, a scrutiny of planning and samples of work, it is possible to draw positive conclusions about standards in the subject. By the age of seven and 11, pupils attain standards appropriate to their age. Progress for all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good throughout the school.
87. The youngest pupils in Key Stage 1, have acquired skills in a range of activities including making models from a range of recycled materials and construction kits and baking. They understand the importance of making structures strong, stable and safe. Older pupils make models for a purpose and link them with other areas of the curriculum, for example, puppets in drama and mini-beasts in connection with science. All pupils are able to use a variety of materials well, for example, felt, clay, salt-dough, card and disposable cartons to make a variety of models. They can estimate, measure, mark out and cut simple shapes in a range of materials accurately. By the time they are seven, pupils confidently use a range of techniques to successfully join materials, modify designs and make judgements about the end product of their work.
88. In Years 3/4, pupils are learning that their designs have to meet specific needs, for example, when constructing ear defenders and electrically operated games in connection with their work in science. They create colourful designs on materials by waxing those parts not to be dyed. All pupils have explored the merits of cooking

utensils, for example, vegetable peelers. They use these skilfully when preparing an ideal meal for healthy eating. By the time they are ready to leave the school pupils have developed a good understanding of propulsion and can describe the significance of wheels and axles. They can confidently investigate, evaluate and discuss individual ideas leading to a design and have a good understanding of the processes involved.

89. The quality of teaching in the lesson seen was good. This is because good planning developed pupils' previous learning well. Resources were properly organised and good ongoing support from the teacher and voluntary helper motivated all the pupils involved.
90. Pupils have good attitudes towards design and technology. They talk about their designs and models with enjoyment and enthusiasm. They listen well to suggestions and work collaboratively on tasks. The quality of finished products shows that pupils take a pride in their work. Teachers' planning and organisation ensure full coverage of the subject. Resources are sufficient to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum with a good selection of large and small commercial construction kits. There is also a good selection of tools for measuring, marking, cutting and joining.

GEOGRAPHY

91. By the age of seven and 11 pupils reach the standards appropriate for their age. Achievement for most pupils is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. In Year 1 the classroom, school and village are used as important resources to develop their early geographical skills. When exploring journeys, pupils use the physical education equipment in the playground to design and record a route. Simple plans of the classroom help them to develop their understanding of maps and places. As they move through the infants they develop a greater awareness of their surroundings and recognise the difference between physical and human features. To widen their knowledge they study a contrasting location in the United Kingdom, the fictional Isle of Struay in Scotland based on the book by Marie Hedderwick. For example, roads on Struay are very narrow whilst in Capenhurst there is a lot of traffic and this causes many problems. This provides a good link with pupils' work in literacy.
92. In the junior classes pupils build on these firm foundations. They can use an atlas to locate countries and capitals in the World. They contrast their own locality with the Isle of Anglesey. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 study how the environment changes and about the seasons around the world. Links with schools in Europe and Africa and give a valuable insight into the cultural traditions of others, particularly Kenya, a third world country. The oldest pupils look at the issues involved in a change to the local environment and understand that a simple development can have far reaching consequences.
93. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers prepare interesting work for their pupils and pupils respond by listening attentively and working hard. A good example was seen in Class 4 when the teacher played the role of a property developer wishing to build a new golf course and leisure centre in the area. There was good interaction and pupils gave some very well thought out and mature answers, such as how badgers would be put in danger during the construction and the problems of increased traffic entering and leaving the site. Subsequent planning included the use of spreadsheets to record the results of a traffic survey.

HISTORY

94. During the inspection it was only possible to see a single lesson taught. However, additional information gained from talking to pupils and their teachers, and looking at pupils' work, suggests that at the end of Years 2 and 6, almost all pupils achieve standards appropriate to their age and abilities. Progress for pupils with special educational needs is good.
95. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop an understanding of the passing of time by using their own lives as a starting point. Timelines are used to chart the years in which pupils were born and first came to school. They are finding out the reasons why some people become famous by looking closely at their lives, for example, Florence Nightingale. By the end of Year 2 and 3, pupils are confident enough to use artefacts such as family photographs to find out more about how people lived in the past.
96. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 build on these foundations. They extend their local knowledge by studying the village from medieval times to the present day. Local evidence is used, for example, about the Richardson family to reconstruct how people lived in the Victorian period. In their wider study of British history, pupils look closely at the culture of the peoples who invaded and settled in this country. They increasingly understand about chronology, using more detailed timelines to put these dates into context. Through visits out of school, for example, to the Heritage Centre at Chester or Tatton Park pupils confidently compare the similarities and differences between their own lives and those of the Romans and the Tudors. Older pupils learn about history in its wider world context and look at the civilisations of the ancient Greeks and the Egyptians. By the age of 11, pupils know and understand that finding out about the past depends on interpreting evidence from directories, maps, artefacts, photographs, buildings, the landscape itself and written sources.
97. As only a single lesson was observed it is not possible to place a firm judgement on the quality of teaching and learning. However, from talking to pupils in Year 6 it is clear that they enjoy exploring the past. Teachers are beginning to use see the subject's potential in developing pupils' literacy skills. They increasingly use an historical account as a focus in their planning. History makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. Visits out of school, for example, to the Boat museums to see the canal side cottages give pupils valuable first hand experiences of how people dressed. Information and communication technology is used to research information. However, there was little evidence during the inspection of information and communication technology being used to develop pupils' historical enquiry skills and so opportunities to simulate and immerse pupils in the past are missed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

98. Standards of attainment at the ages of seven and 11 are satisfactory although there are areas in which they can be improved. Little direct teaching of information and communication technology was seen during the inspection and opportunities to see pupils working in the classroom, particularly the younger pupils were limited. In the juniors, attainment is better in the communication element than in control.
99. By the age of seven, pupils are becoming confident in using computers and can turn them on and off, use the desktop and open the program they wish to use. They use their developing word-processing skills to present their work, for example, using bullet points and changing the font. Work is saved on individual files for alteration later. Art packages are used confidently to draw pictures and pupils enter information in a

prepared database and print out their results in a graph. In control, pupils can program a floor robot to move forward, backward and turn through a right angle. They send E-mails to their parents and print out their replies.

100. Pupils in the juniors continue to build on their earlier experiences, particularly in word processing. They alter the type and size of font for best emphasis and cut, paste and use the spellchecker to edit text when preparing booklets to send to pupils in other schools. The tools in art packages are used to draw pictures and pupils collect information in databases and use spreadsheets to enter their pulse rates as part of an investigation in science. CD-ROM based encyclopaedias and the Internet are used to develop their personal research skills, for example, to find more about space. The older pupils send E-mails to pupils in schools in Kenya and Crete.
101. It is not possible to make an informed judgement on the quality of teaching. However, all teachers are confident in teaching information and communication technology. Pupils enjoy working with computers and many have access at home. They often work in pairs and are willing to share ideas and collaborate. Information and communication technology is used to help pupils with special educational needs develop their literacy skills. Resources are good. The school uses laptop computers and so they are easily available in the classrooms. Most classes also have a multimedia computer. These are backed with other hardware such as a digital camera and scanners. Pupils' progress is assessed using the procedures developed by the Cheshire Micro Unit.
102. The school recognises that standards can improve further; the potential is there. Pupils need more experience in using control and monitoring with sensors. Opportunities are missed to reinforce pupils' learning, for example, in numeracy for younger pupils to practise their number bonds and to bring the work of older pupils alive. When the curriculum is reviewed, opportunities for teachers to include information and communication technology in other subjects should be identified.

MUSIC

103. From the lessons seen in music during the week of inspection and through evidence obtained observing music in assemblies, discussions with pupils and with teachers it is clear that standards of attainment in music are satisfactory. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Provision covers the requirements of the National Curriculum in performing, listening, appraising and composing.
104. The youngest pupils in the infant stage, enjoy singing, clapping and playing rhythm patterns together and in groups. They successfully sing 'Wheels on the Bus', for example, and can name and choose an untuned instrument to sing and play rhythm patterns. By the time they are seven all pupils can sing, by heart, a good range of songs, confidently and tunefully. They listen quietly to music, for example, Peter and the Wolf, and compare and contrast the various sounds in pieces of the Peer Gynt suite. Pupils are beginning to understand how musical sounds are made in different ways. They appreciate the difference between loud and soft tones and how these can express character and mood. Almost all pupils have a sound grasp of musical elements and are able to keep time and recognise rhythm. By the time they are ready to move into Years 3/4, all pupils can compose simple percussion pieces using, for example, cymbals, chime bars, bells, wood blocks, tambourines and castanets.
105. The youngest pupils in the junior classes, listen to well known popular classics, and music as diverse as New Metal. They extend their music vocabulary by discussing

the differences and similarities between instruments, for example, the guitar and violin. By the age of 11, they are beginning to recognise pieces by famous composers, such as, Mozart, Beethoven and Paganini. They have a good knowledge of musical ideas and understand words, such as pitch and tempo. They are beginning to understand note values and can read simple notation. Almost all pupils can hold and compose a rhythm, perform together and practise and perfect pieces. A good example was seen in Years 5/6 when pupils composed and made good attempts at conducting simple pieces of music. Pupils receiving instrumental tuition, on guitar, are beginning to sight read accurately and show good technical skills.

106. The quality of teaching is good. Pupils are actively encouraged to learn to play a musical instrument and to be self critical of their performance, for example, all pupils are given an opportunity to play the guitar and enjoy demonstrating their achievements. Teachers ensure that all pupils take part in music making and encourage them to be self critical of their performance. They provide good opportunities for all pupils to sing and perform music in the local church of the Holy Trinity, at school concerts and during morning assembly. Throughout the school pupils have good attitudes to music. They enjoy participating in musical activities both individually and in groups. They particularly enjoy the variety of visitors who discuss and perform music from other cultures and countries, for example, African and Indian dance music. Activities outside of lessons such as the Cheshire Oaks festival and the music club help to sustain interest and enhance provision.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

107. Standards of attainment in physical education throughout the school are in line with what might be expected of pupils of this age, and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. All pupils are taught games, gymnastics, athletic activities, outdoor activities and swimming. By the time they leave the school all pupils can swim at least 25 metres. Dance takes place in the form of music and movement. The school has use of the village hall enabling full coverage of gymnastics.
108. The youngest pupils, travel on the floor and on apparatus using a variety of methods, for example, running, jumping, hopping, turning, balancing, swinging and climbing. In response to good teaching they improve their skills and gain confidence in their own ability. Consequently, by the age of seven, all pupils can find a space and perform a series of controlled movements, for example, travelling with a partner, passing a ball. All pupils are aware of each other's movements and can look and move in relation to everyone else. Good examples were seen when pupils in Year 2 developed good dribbling skills in hockey working individually on different pathways paying particular attention to speed and direction. They work successfully with a partner and observe and comment on their performance. By the end of Year 6 pupils practise, improve and refine their performance through increasingly complex sequences of movements in individual activity, working in pairs and working in groups. In dance, pupils learn and develop movements systematically. They discuss ideas with their teacher and then move in sequence to music. They develop good co-operative skills in athletics and in sports such as football, netball, hockey and basketball. This is because teachers focus on developing skills, knowledge and understanding.
109. Pupils have good attitudes to physical education and respond enthusiastically in lessons. As a result, their learning is both effective and enjoyable. All pupils dress properly, behave well, concentrate on their work and show confidence in

performances. From an early age pupils are taught to put out and tidy away items of equipment and this assists the organisation and pace of lessons. It also makes them aware of the safety rules and the need to give other members of the class due consideration.

110. The quality of teaching is good. As a result, all groups of pupils quickly develop appropriate skills in an atmosphere of help and encouragement. Teachers work hard to provide interesting opportunities for pupils, such as games and competitive sport within the local schools' cluster. They arrange visits to the school, for example, from Chester FC and the Chester Jets basketball team. The popular visit to the Conway Centre reinforces skills that can be applied to all sporting activities. The good range of extra-curricular activities, for example, football and netball helps to sustain and enhance provision.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

111. During the week of inspection, only one lesson was observed in religious education. Judgements are therefore based on the one lesson observed, a scrutiny of documentation, pupils' work and discussions with pupils and staff. These show that standards of attainment in religious education, throughout the school are in line with the locally agreed syllabus and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.
112. The school's main focus is Christianity, and pupils are becoming aware of its history and importance in shaping the way in which our culture has evolved. Most pupils in Years 1 and 2 are beginning to understand some basic aspects of customs and beliefs of other major religions, for example, Islam, Hinduism and Judaism. All are familiar with the local church of the Holy Trinity and can talk with confidence about the things they have seen on their visits.
113. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are beginning to compare Christian teaching with other faiths. They talk about Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter, and the Hindu festival of Diwali. Most pupils know that this is a special celebration for Hindus and that it is known as the Festival of Light. By the age of 11, pupils have acquired a satisfactory knowledge of Christianity and some understanding of the basic principles of Judaism, Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism. For example, they know that the Torah is part of the Jewish Tenakh and that the Guru Granth Sahib is central to the beliefs and practises of Sikhs. Most know about special people who gave much of their own time and energy in helping others, for example, Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole. They are familiar with terms such as font, lectern and pulpit and understand the symbolism of bread and wine at communion.
114. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject. They are quiet, well behaved and respectful when listening to stories and are usually eager to join in with discussions.
115. The quality of teaching in the lesson seen was satisfactory with some good features.
116. The school follows the local authority's agreed syllabus, delivered as a discrete subject and also within topics. There is a good collection of books covering a range of moral issues and a variety of artefacts relating to the major faiths studied. Collective acts of worship during assembly make a good contribution to the school's teaching of religious education. In addition, teachers work hard to arrange visiting speakers, for example, a Hindu and a Muslim. They also set aside a day to celebrate a particular religious occasion such as a Hindu wedding or a Passover meal.

