

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **GREEN LANE COMMUNITY SPECIAL SCHOOL**

Green Lane, Padgate, Warrington

LEA area: Warrington

Unique reference number: 111495

Headteacher: Mr P King

Reporting inspector: Mr J Morris  
23696

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> February 2001

Inspection number: 192643

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special  
School category: Community special  
Age range of pupils: 4 to 16 years  
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Green Lane  
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Warrington  
Postcode: WA1 4JL  
Telephone number: 01925 480128  
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Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Dr J Chamberlain

Date of previous inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1997

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23696	Mr J Morris	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Modern foreign languages Personal, social and health education The Foundation Stage	How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
19342	Mr T Heavey	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils or students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23733	Mrs A Anderson	Team inspector	Science Design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
23549	Mrs H Eadington	Team inspector	English Religious education Equal opportunities	
32055	Mr G Davies	Team inspector	Geography Music	
30142	Mr J T Morris	Team inspector	History Physical education	
19996	Mr G Watson	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Special educational needs	How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Green Lane Community Special School is pleasantly situated in Padgate, Warrington and provides 117 places for pupils with moderate and severe learning difficulties between four and sixteen years of age. There are 112 pupils on roll comprising 69 boys and 42 girls. About 60 per cent of pupils have moderate learning difficulties and most of the other pupils have severe learning difficulties. A small but increasing percentage of pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties or are described as having autistic spectrum disorders. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Thirty per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals and this is above average. Attainment on entry is well below average. There are no pupils with English as an additional language.

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

This is an effective and improving school. The headteacher is providing very strong leadership. Teaching is good overall. Pupils make good progress. The teaching of pupils between seven and eleven years of age is excellent and the progress these pupils make is very good. The school provides good value for money.

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

- The quality of teaching is good. It is excellent for pupils between seven and eleven years of age. As a result pupils learn well.
- The new headteacher is providing very strong, effective leadership.
- The pupils' attitudes to school are excellent and their behaviour is very good in school and out in the community.
- The school's provision for the pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- There are very productive links with the local community and partner institutions.

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

- The role of the subject co-ordinator is not clearly defined and the whole school overview of the curriculum is not clear enough. Consequently the guidelines to help teachers plan what pupils will learn and when they will learn it do not guarantee that pupils build on what they have already learned to best effect.
- The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress and personal development are not implemented consistently. The targets on the pupils' IEPs do not always identify what pupils will learn.
- There are not enough relevant, accredited vocational educational opportunities in Years 10 and 11.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.*

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

The school was last inspected in March 1997. Improvement has been good overall. There were five key issues for action. There has been very good improvement in development planning, parents' involvement in children's learning and the provision for spiritual development. The improvement on subject co-ordination and the curriculum has been unsatisfactory. In addition, the percentage of unsatisfactory teaching has decreased from eighteen per cent to four per cent. Overall the range and severity of pupils' learning difficulties has increased since the previous inspection. The school is well placed for further improvement.

## STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

Progress in:	by age 6	by age 11	by age 16	Key
speaking and listening	B	A	B	very good A
reading	B	A	B	good B
writing	B	A	B	satisfactory C
mathematics	B	B	D	unsatisfactory D
personal, social and health education	B	A	C	poor E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B	C	

\* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.

Attainment on entry is very low. Children up to the age of six make good progress in all of the areas of learning as described in the nationally recommended Foundation Curriculum. Pupils between seven and eleven years of age achieve very well in English and personal, social and health education and well in mathematics.

Pupils between ages eleven and sixteen make good progress in English and PSHE. They make satisfactory progress overall in other subjects of the curriculum. A measure of the school's success in producing mature and responsible young people is the positive reports the pupils in Year 11 receive when on work experience placements and the successful links with mainstream schools. However, progress in mathematics is unsatisfactory over time because there are too few opportunities for them to use and apply what they learn beyond the classroom. Progress in information and communication technology between eleven and sixteen years of age is unsatisfactory but the school has good plans in place to improve this. Progress in French is unsatisfactory because pupils rarely write down what they have learnt.

The school has set ambitious targets to raise standards and there are plans to extend the currently limited range of opportunities for pupils between ages fourteen and sixteen to follow nationally recognised courses which lead to external accreditation.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils are extremely enthusiastic and very involved in all activities at school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good, both in school and out in the community. In a few instances, the challenging behaviour of a minority of pupils disrupts learning in their class but they respond quickly when corrected by the teachers.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are extremely respectful of other peoples' views and beliefs. Their personal development is underpinned by the very positive relationships throughout the school.
Attendance	Very good. Above average for a school of this type and improving year on year.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 6	aged 5-11	aged 11-16
Lessons seen overall	Good	Excellent	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.*

Seventy-eight lessons were seen during the inspection and 96 per cent of these were satisfactory or better and 43 per cent were very good or better. Four per cent were unsatisfactory. Teaching is excellent in 18 per cent of lessons and this excellent teaching is seen almost entirely in classes for pupils between seven and eleven years of age. This consistently good, and often very good, teaching and the very positive relationships between adults and pupils result in pupils' becoming increasingly involved in lessons. Consequently they learn well. The support staff are very effective in their role and make a significant contribution to the pupils' learning.

English and mathematics are taught well and the school is successfully implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Science and personal, social and health education are taught well overall. The teaching of music is very good and this is a very significant improvement since the previous inspection.

The school meets the needs of different groups of pupils well, including those who present challenging behaviours and those with autistic spectrum disorders.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. The school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The school provides a good range of relevant activities up to the age of eleven. Learning opportunities are satisfactory from eleven to sixteen. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils between fourteen and sixteen to follow vocational courses which lead to relevant accreditation.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good in all respects and a real strength of the school. The provision for spiritual and cultural development is much improved since the previous inspection.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are very good procedures for the care of the pupils which are evident in day-to-day practice. The procedures to assess what pupils know, understand and can do are satisfactory overall but they are used inconsistently.

The school has an effective partnership with parents. The 'Help Your Child with Learning' group is an excellent project and provides a very good basis for future developments.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The new headteacher is giving very strong leadership and a clear educational direction to the work of the school. The staff work well as a team but the role of subject co-ordinator is not clearly defined and this means that there is insufficient guidance to help teachers in their planning.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good overall. The governors are very committed to supporting the school and have very effective arrangements for finding out what is going on in classrooms. They do not have a clear overview of curriculum issues.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good and improving rapidly. Challenging targets have been set this year in a range of areas such as academic tests, pupils' attendance at school and parents' attendance at annual education review meetings.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Specific grants are used well for the stated purpose. Good use is made of available staffing, accommodation and learning resources. However, insufficient use is made of modern technology.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are adequate overall. The school applies the principles of best value well.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Many parents say that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The school helps their child become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Their child likes school.</li> <li>• The school expects their child to work hard and achieve his or her best.</li> <li>• Their child is making good progress.</li> <li>• They are kept well informed about how their child is getting on.</li> </ul>	<p>Some parents say that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school is not providing an interesting range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• Their child does not get enough homework.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views of the school. Extra-curricular activities and homework are satisfactory. Homework is good between the ages of seven and eleven but it is inconsistent in the rest of the school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Attainment on entry is very low. Children up to the age of six (known as the Foundation Stage since September 2000) make good progress in all of the areas of learning as described in the nationally recommended Foundation Curriculum. They make a good start to their education as a result of the good teaching and learning opportunities.
2. Pupils between seven and eleven years of age achieve very well in English and personal, social and health education (PSHE) and well in mathematics. They make at least good and often very good progress in all subjects because of the very high quality teaching they receive and their interest and involvement in lessons.
3. Pupils between eleven and sixteen make good progress in English and PSHE. They make satisfactory progress overall. A measure of the school's success in producing mature and responsible young people is the positive reports the pupils in Year 11 receive when on work experience placements and the successful links with mainstream schools. However, progress in mathematics is unsatisfactory over time because there are too few opportunities for them to use and apply what they learn beyond the classroom. Progress in information and communication technology between eleven and sixteen years of age is unsatisfactory but the school has good plans in place to improve this. Progress in French is unsatisfactory because pupils rarely write down what they have learnt.
4. The school does use the National Curriculum tests and tasks and other standardised tests to measure progress. These results are published in the governors' annual report to parents. The school has set ambitious targets to raise standards and there are plans to extend the currently limited range of opportunities for pupils between ages fourteen and sixteen to follow nationally recognised courses which lead to external accreditation.

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

5. Pupils have excellent attitudes towards school, they behave very well and show very good personal development. These standards reflect a significant improvement compared with the findings of the last inspection, when they were judged to be good, and they remain a notable strength of the school.
6. Pupils' attitudes to learning throughout the school are exceptionally good. They arrive at their lessons promptly and are extremely enthusiastic. They are ready and willing to contribute their own ideas and opinions and will listen to those of other people. Pupils are also very attentive and concentrate well, often becoming absorbed in their work. They pay attention to detail in, for example, their art work, and look after it carefully. The interest of some pupils occasionally fluctuates but they will, when prompted, readily return to the task in hand, accepting correction with good humour.
7. The pupils' very good behaviour, given the nature and range of their difficulties, is recognised by parents and carers. Pupils respond very well when teachers make their expectations and intentions clear and, although a few individual pupils are sometimes disruptive, they understand what is required of them and amend such

behaviour in the face of a patient, firm and consistent approach from staff. Other pupils, notably some of those who have more severe learning difficulties, are occasionally stubborn and will tease their peers but, again, they respond positively when staff anticipate situations and deal with them promptly. The Year 7 and Year 9 classes are large groups and these were the only groups where significant challenging behaviour was noted. Some of the pupils in the Year 7 class in particular are less well behaved and motivated to work hard than elsewhere in the school. Pupils are polite and helpful to visitors, they treat their surroundings with respect, and there is no evidence of vandalism. There are also no issues regarding bullying or racial harassment. Although there were 32 fixed term exclusions last year the school has set a target to reduce this to a maximum of ten this year. There have been no permanent exclusions during the last year.

8. There are very positive relationships throughout the school. These are warm yet respectful, and provide a highly effective foundation for the everyday work, both in classrooms and further afield. Pupils will also co-operate and work very well together as seen, for example, in a mathematics lesson for 14-year-olds on measurement. Pupils of all abilities rub shoulders and mingle with each other in a natural, relaxed way, with the result that occasions such as lunchtimes and breaktimes are orderly, civilised affairs. They are highly considerate both towards tools and equipment and towards other peoples' views and opinions. For example, in one religious education lesson for eight-year-olds, pupils were extremely respectful of the differing points of view that are expressed in Judaism and Christianity.
9. Pupils' personal development is very good, and they respond positively to the trust and expectations of staff. As a result, older pupils are well placed to adopt an increasingly mature and responsible attitude to life in general, and to make the most of opportunities in the wider community such as the school's work experience programme. In general, though, the development of pupils' initiative and personal responsibility is hampered to some extent by the limited opportunities created in the classroom. However, individual pupils will demonstrate points to the class, as happened, for example, in one Year 5 mathematics lesson, and they have a healthy regard for safety issues. Some pupils also offer to help when they see that there are jobs to be done, whilst others spontaneously assist classmates with their work and make allowances when playing with pupils of lesser ability and experience during, for example, breaktimes.

### **Attendance**

10. Attendance is very good. Not only are the rates of attendance above the national average for this type of school, but they have also improved year-on-year for the past three years. Such a good attendance record gives pupils a full experience of the learning opportunities offered and thus helps to raise standards. Punctuality too is very good in spite of the considerable distances travelled by some pupils to reach the school. Little time is lost between activities and the registration process is conducted with calm efficiency.

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

11. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is good up to the age of seven and from eleven to sixteen. It is excellent between the ages of seven and eleven. Seventy-eight lessons were seen during the inspection. Ninety-six per cent of these were satisfactory or better and, therefore, only four per cent were unsatisfactory. This is a very significant improvement since the previous inspection when 18 per cent of the teaching was unsatisfactory. Furthermore, 43 per cent of the teaching was very good or better as opposed to seven per cent four years ago. Teaching is excellent in 18 per cent of lessons and this excellent teaching is seen almost entirely in classes for pupils between seven and eleven years of age.
12. Because the teaching is consistently good, and often very good, and because very positive relationships between adults and pupils are a common feature, the pupils are very involved in lessons and learn well. The support staff are very effective in their role and make a significant contribution to the pupils' learning. Teachers plan lessons well throughout the school and this results in clear objectives and good classroom organisation. The teachers give good consideration to the needs of different groups of pupils such as those with autistic spectrum disorders.
13. Because all the Year 11 pupils were on work experience during the inspection week, there is limited evidence of teaching of pupils between ages fourteen and sixteen. The school describes the classes for pupils up to eleven years of age as the lower school and classes for pupils from eleven to sixteen years of age as the upper school. There is a difference between the overall quality of teaching in these departments. All of the excellent teaching apart from one lesson was seen in the classes for pupils between seven and eleven. All of the small number of lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory were in the upper school. Where teaching is unsatisfactory it is because the teacher does not manage difficult behaviour effectively, the lesson lacks pace and the activities are not well matched to the pupils' needs.
14. English and mathematics are taught well. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented in the lower school and are being used to some extent in the upper school. For example, a mathematics lesson in Year 6 resulted in pupils' making very good gains in coin recognition and addition because a wide variety of activities which met the needs of all the pupils was organised within the recommended three-part lesson structure. Science teaching is very good up to the age of eleven and satisfactory between ages eleven and sixteen. When this teaching is less successful it is because the teachers do not allow the pupils to carry out investigations and experiments independently.
15. The teaching of music is very good throughout the school. This is because a very competent subject specialist teaches all the classes equally well. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. There are weaknesses in the teaching of information and communication technology, modern foreign languages and physical education in the upper school. This results in pupils making less progress in these subjects than they do elsewhere.
16. Homework is generally satisfactory but it is very good in the classes for pupils aged between seven and eleven because the teachers provide a good range of homework activities closely linked to what the pupils are learning at school. This is valued by the parents.

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

17. The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory overall. They are good up to the age of eleven and satisfactory from ages eleven to sixteen. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been introduced appropriately and are especially successful in the lower school. The quality and range of learning opportunities are unsatisfactory in information and communication technology and modern foreign languages in the upper school.
18. There are satisfactory policies for all subjects that pay due regard to the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. However, the guidelines to help teachers plan what they will teach, and when, are not sufficiently detailed to enable teachers to build systematically on the pupils' previous learning and develop their skills and understanding as they move from year to year. In this respect, there has been unsatisfactory progress since the previous inspection. There is no long-term overview of the whole curriculum or work in individual subjects and most of the planning is on a termly basis. The role of subject co-ordinator is not defined clearly enough and as there is more than one co-ordinator in most subjects it is not clear who is responsible for leading developments and monitoring provision.
19. The planning is more effective in the lower school than it is in the upper school. Planning is better when it identifies how teachers will meet the needs of pupils' of different abilities, is carefully related to the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and identifies teaching strategies and learning resources. These plans are more useful, particularly to teachers who are not subject specialists and temporary teachers, when they do this, such as in food studies and less useful when they do not, such as resistant materials work in design and technology. The provision for pupils' personal and social education is good throughout the school and results in good progress. However, this arises more from the teachers' personal knowledge of the pupils and their day-to-day planning rather than the medium- and long-term planning being significantly better than it is in other subjects.
20. The provision for pupils with particular special educational needs, such as those on the autistic disorder spectrum, is of the same as it is for the majority of the pupils in that it is good up to the age of eleven and satisfactory from ages eleven to sixteen. Any particular provision made for pupils with different abilities or difficulties arises from the teacher's short-term planning rather than guidance provided in the medium- or long-term subject planning. The learning opportunities for pupils with communication difficulties are enhanced by the use of signing and pictorial aids but these techniques are used inconsistently across the school. Insufficient use is made of specialist information and communication technology devices such as switches and keyboard overlays.
21. The provision for careers education and the school's 'Leavers Programme' are of high quality and successfully complement the learning opportunities in Years 10 and eleven. The programme of work experience in Year eleven is particularly successful. Pupils derive a great deal of pleasure and increased self-confidence from these placements and the providers have made very positive comments about their performance. The school offers a limited range of courses which lead to recognised accreditation and qualifications between fourteen and sixteen years of age. There are good plans to investigate and provide further opportunities which are appropriate and relevant to the pupils' needs. This was one of the factors which informed the appointment of a new deputy headteacher who is joining the school in the summer term 2001.

22. The provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. There are limited after-school activities, the only established one being a computer club. Schools of this type do have difficulties making such arrangements because of the distances many pupils have to travel. The rich and wide range of educational visits to museums, art galleries, local parks and other community facilities successfully complement classroom activities and broaden the pupils' outlook.
23. The school makes very good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development the corporate life of the school, acts of worship, religious education and other subjects of the curriculum such as music and art. The school provides a welcoming and caring ethos and effectively shares its aims, values and expectations with the parents who are happy that the school has such a positive effect on their children. This is an excellent improvement since the previous inspection when moral and social development were good and spiritual and cultural development were unsatisfactory.
24. There has been careful planning to improve the provision for spiritual development so that it is now very good. Teachers provide good insights into the spirituality of the Christian and other faiths including the sensitive handling of sacred artefacts such as when studying Hinduism or preparing Jewish food. The provision of merit awards and celebration assemblies where many pupils receive special mentions and awards for endeavour and consideration of others effectively raise their self-esteem. Tremendous excitement, stimulation, inspiration and wonder were seen in lessons including a music lesson in the youngest class, a lesson about the planets of the solar system in a junior class and when older pupils were making mechanical toys.
25. The provision for promoting the pupils' moral development is very good because they are taught right from wrong and they understand how to get on with each other and how to care for others. They listen intently to stories with a moral and are helped to understand the significance and deeper meaning of the stories. For example, the story of the dog Gelert who protected the baby princess only to be killed by her father who had misunderstood what had happened.
26. The promotion of the pupils' social development is very effective and there are many opportunities for pupils to develop relevant personal qualities and skills. They frequently show a good degree of care and concern for each other, often in simple ways such as noticing that another friend needs a book or pencil and automatically offering their own or finding one in the classroom. The younger pupils raised over £200 for a charity through carol singing last December. Adults provide good role models for the pupils in their personal relationships. There are very close links with other schools and pupils attend lessons at the local high school and, for example, are contributing to an exhibition based on Aboriginal art. The school successfully promotes good manners and turn taking. Pupils were consulted about the recent introduction of a school uniform and they are particularly proud of their red sweatshirts with one pupil saying: 'It makes me look like everyone else now'.
27. The school's provision for the pupils' cultural development is very successful in developing the pupils' knowledge, understanding and appreciation of their own heritage and the world at large. Many opportunities are created and developed to increase the pupils' awareness of their own culture and other people's cultures in lessons in English, food studies, music, religious education, history, geography and art. This is seen in the high quality displays of pupils' work around the school including Chinese wish boats, Mardi Gras masks, Indian tie-dyeing, North American Indian

wigwams and work based on the art of Lowry. Local artists visit the school and work with pupils and the magnificent Millennium Woodcarving erected outside the school entrance is a lasting reminder of a special experience for those involved. There is a reasonable selection of books in the school library representing other cultures and faiths. Pupils are well prepared for life in a multicultural society.

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

28. The school's very good procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare create a calm atmosphere that effectively promotes the pupils' health and safety, well-being and learning.
29. The headteacher is recognised as the designated person for child protection. He is well experienced and has undergone appropriate training. The clear procedures are properly based on those of the local Area Child Protection Committee. The school has a very good range of fully compliant policies relating to other aspects of health and safety. The practice of not including dates on policy documents however makes it difficult for the school to plan regular reviews of such policies. Responsibility for First Aid rests with the nominated person, who has attended the requisite training and who ensures that accidents and incidents are properly recorded. Fire drills are arranged once each term and the fire fighting appliances are subject to a maintenance contract. Hazardous substance regulations and hygienic kitchen procedures are strictly followed, while electrical and gas appliances are subject to an annual safety check. Proper arrangements are made for the personal security of the children, further enhanced by the classroom initiatives such as 'Stranger Danger' and 'Fit for Life'.
30. The effectiveness of the very good procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance is reflected in the high levels of attendance and punctuality that have a positive impact on pupils' attitude to learning. The school readily acknowledges the Education Welfare Officer's good level of support and advice that assists the school's own efforts.
31. The very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are built on a policy of positive reinforcement that is applied consistently and effectively throughout the school. Its efficacy was exemplified in the case of a young pupil who was behaving inappropriately. The teacher caught her eye and silently counted down from 'five' on her raised hand. By the time the count had reached 'two' the child was back at her desk, and fixing the teacher with a knowing smile. Similarly high standards are demanded through the anti-bullying policy, though the guidelines governing exclusions are not sufficiently clear and detailed.
32. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are satisfactory overall with some good practice up to the age of eleven. Termly targets are set in all subjects and are regularly reviewed. Assessment is a very high priority in the School Development Plan, and a recent audit resulted in the replacement of outmoded procedures and materials by more relevant systems. From January this year a structured system of target setting is being used. This system identifies precise, small-step targets for literacy and numeracy. Some inconsistency in application means that the quality of these targets varies from teacher to teacher and a whole school standard is not yet established. Further innovations such as the summative process to supplement the National Curriculum tests and National Literacy Strategy assessments are currently being piloted in Year 10 and Year 11

using Records of Achievement and Career Action Plans. Annual Reports on pupils' progress have improved in quality and now identify areas for further improvement in the pupil's performance. However, these personal targets are not always specific enough.

33. The use of assessment in curricular planning is satisfactory overall, with some areas of good practice. These include the recent grouping by ability (setting) of pupils between eleven and fourteen for literacy and numeracy, and the current review of accreditation opportunities to ensure these meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. Insufficient use is made of modern technology in assessment. The overall picture is one of improvement due to the new format of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) but there is inevitably some variability in practice whilst this new system is becoming established.
34. There are good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. The pastoral care and welfare of its pupils are prominent among the school's aims, and firmly based on the school's detailed knowledge of those in its care. The setting of personal targets for pupils through their IEPs helps adults in the school to apply the agreed strategy consistently while tailoring it to suit the individual. The assertive discipline policy and the awards and merits system promote a sense of personal responsibility and citizenship that is epitomised in the exemplary conduct of adults in the school. The effectiveness of the strategy can also be seen in the equally exemplary conduct of the Year 11 students who are currently on work placements in the community, and who were praised by their sponsoring companies for their punctuality, their responsible behaviour and their commitment to their work.

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

35. Parents attending the meeting with the registered inspector and those responding to the questionnaire expressed very positive attitudes about the school. More than 90 per cent of them agree that it is a good school which their children like attending, where behaviour and teaching are good, and where their children make good progress. A similar proportion of parents also state that they are kept well informed about their children's progress, and that they would feel comfortable in approaching the school with any concerns about their children. Most parents agree that the school works closely with them, that the school expects their children to work hard and helps their children to become mature and responsible citizens. Some parents feel that their child does not get the right amount of homework and that there are not enough activities outside lessons. As to the former, the inspectors note some unevenness in the allocation of homework. As to the latter, the inspectors acknowledge the practical difficulties in providing activities outside lessons in view of pupils' dependence on organised transport in such a wide catchment area and judge the activities provided to be satisfactory.
36. The good quality of the information provided for parents makes a significant contribution to the effectiveness of the school's links with them. The governors' annual report to parents and the regularly updated prospectus are supported by the school brochure, which provides parents with clear information about the broad range of the services on offer. Termly reports and annual education reviews inform parents about how their child is getting on. These are supplemented by a monthly newsletter and by occasional letters about school events. In addition to the termly parents' evenings the school encourages parents to visit the school informally at any time to discuss any concerns or make suggestions.

37. The good contribution made by parents to their children's work both at school and at home has a positive impact on the work of the school, and helps to raise standards. Parents respond positively to consultations from the school, such as when their views on the proposed new school uniform were sought. Parents' attendance at the governors' annual meeting has greatly improved since it has been held on the same day as the Nativity Play. Though few parents are directly involved in classroom activities, the parents on the Governing Body have each 'adopted' a classroom, and they now visit the school frequently. Other parents help out at school activities such as the weekly swimming lessons. A grant-aided initiative has seen the establishment of the 'Help Your Child with Learning' group in the lower school whereby parents attend classes with their children to become more deeply involved in their learning. Initial reaction to the project is extremely positive and the school plans to extend it to the upper school.

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

38. The new headteacher is providing very strong leadership and a clear educational direction and focus to school improvement. He was previously deputy headteacher at the school and returned as headteacher in September 2000 having broadened his experience through a period of headship elsewhere. This experience and previous knowledge of the school mean that he is well placed to take the school forward. He has successfully involved the staff and governors in the production of a very good School Development Plan for the period 2000-2003.
39. This plan includes very good arrangements for staff development including the induction of newly qualified teachers, performance management in accordance with the new DfEE model and the training and redesignation of the school caretaker to Maintenance Officer. Funding from specific grants, such as the Standards Fund and New Opportunities Fund, is carefully targeted to School Development Plan priorities in accordance with the stated purposes.
40. The headteacher has initiated a rigorous and systematic programme of classroom observations by senior staff and examples were seen of evaluations already carried out which identified clear areas for development for individual teachers. These observations are initially focusing on the teaching of literacy, numeracy and science. There is also a good programme of 'shadowing' between Green Lane and mainstream teachers aimed at improving the teaching in the school and the awareness of colleagues in partner institutions.
41. The school's aims and values are evident in the day-to-day life of the school. The headteacher and governors together have set targets for twelve different areas of the school's work in the academic year 2000-2001. These are prominently displayed in the staffroom and are clearly given high priority. They give a sharp focus to the life of the school and provide an objective measure of its success. They include:
- All pupils between ages fourteen and sixteen having a residential experience;
  - Examination and test targets;
  - Twenty per cent of pupils between ages eleven and sixteen and 10 per cent of pupils between seven and eleven to have a mainstream experience;
  - Fixed term exclusions to be no more than 10 and no permanent exclusions;
  - Ambitious targets for pupils' school attendance and parents' attendance at parents' evenings.

42. The headteacher benefits from the good support of the acting deputy headteacher and staff as a whole. A new deputy headteacher has been appointed to take up post after Easter 2001. Improvement of the school's provision of accredited courses for pupils from ages fourteen to sixteen and modern foreign language teaching have been identified as areas for the deputy headteacher to lead. The school was traditionally organised as a lower school, middle school and upper school. This has resulted in some subjects having two or even three co-ordinators. The new headteacher has re-organised the school into lower and upper school only and re-organisation of the senior management team and subject co-ordination is included in the School Development Plan. However, subject co-ordination is currently variable in practice and at times unsatisfactory. This is because of long-term absence in the case of one teacher. Generally, the lack of clarity about where ultimate responsibility lies has resulted in patchy development in the guidelines to help teachers' planning. Consequently, classroom practice is over-reliant on individual teacher's planning and skills. A good example of this is that three teachers have shared the co-ordination of the school's programme of personal, social and health education. The documentation to support teachers' planning is only just satisfactory. However, classroom provision and pupil progress is good throughout the school.
43. The headteacher and governors finance committee plan and monitor the school's budget efficiently. The two administrators are very experienced, efficient and effective in their respective roles and ensure smooth day-to-day running of the school. The latest external audit of financial control was in December 2000. Most of the recommendations had been addressed by January 2001 and there is a very good action plan in place to resolve the outstanding items.
44. The school governors are highly supportive of the school and each individual governor is attached to a class and visits regularly to see what is going on in the classrooms. The full body and committees are properly constituted. They meet sufficiently often and produce accurate records of these meetings and information for parents to fulfil their statutory responsibilities and play a satisfactory role in contributing to the management and direction of the school. They do not however have clear overview of all aspects of the school's work particularly curricular developments. They have incorrectly assumed that agreed action following the previous inspection had been completed.
45. Satisfactory use is made of modern technology. In addition to the small information and communication technology suite in the upper school, all classes have an overhead projector and at least one computer. A computer has recently been installed in the staff base. There is some very effective use of this technology in classroom displays and a laptop computer and projector were effectively used in a whole school assembly in the hall. Electronic keyboards and the specialised device called 'the Soundbeam' are being used well in music. Nevertheless, not enough use of modern technology is taking place in terms of teachers' planning, recording and assessment activities.
46. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are adequate overall to meet the demands of the provided learning opportunities and needs of the pupil population. The school has sufficient teachers and makes good use of subject specialists, for example, in music and design and technology. Nearly all of the support staff are trained or qualified. There are some good features of the accommodation such as the large hall, outside facilities and separate rooms for design and technology, food studies and art. The specialist science facilities are situated in the Year 11 class

base. They were not used during the inspection and it is hard to imagine this arrangement being productive given the storage of classroom resources on some of the surfaces designed for science work. Classrooms are generally adequate in size but currently the Year 7 and Year 9 groups are rather cramped because of high pupil numbers and the nature of the pupils' needs. The school has recently improved the accommodation for the administrative staff but their situation remains far from ideal.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

### **Key issues**

47. The headteacher and governors should now:

Improve the school's curriculum by:

- Identifying individuals who have overall, clearly defined responsibility for leading developments in each subject of the curriculum;
- Producing a clear whole-school curriculum policy and guidance for teachers;
- Developing clear guidelines in all subjects to help teachers plan what pupils will learn and when they will learn it and which builds progressively on what has gone on before.

(Paragraphs 18-20, 42, 68, 75, 82, 85, 92, 105-107, 113 and 127)

Improve the school's arrangements to find out what pupils know, understand and can do and the use of this information by:

- Implementing the recently introduced new system consistently across the school and monitoring its impact;
- Reviewing the pupils' Individual Education Plans to ensure that the targets are specific, small steps in learning and that these plans are used in daily teaching.

(Paragraphs 32-33, 67, 75, 82, 99 and 104)

Improve the provision for pupils between eleven and sixteen years of age by:

- Extending the range of available courses for pupils aged fourteen to sixteen which meet the pupils' needs and lead to nationally recognised external accreditation.

(Paragraphs 4, 21 and 42)

### **Minor issues**

48. The headteacher and governors should now:

Improve the quality of teaching in the upper school by ensuring that it is to the same standard in information and communication technology, modern foreign languages and physical education as it is in the other subjects.

(Paragraphs 15, 17, 111, 116 and 123)

The inspection team acknowledges that for all these issues there are either targets in the current School Development Plan or the school is aware of them and has identified the new deputy headteacher as the person responsible for leading developments.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	78
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
18	25	29	24	4	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	112
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	34

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	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.15

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8

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

## Vocational qualifications and external accreditation

	Year 10	Year 11
AEB Literacy	13	12
AEB Numeracy	13	11
Unit Award Scheme	111	135
Work Experience	0	12
Community Work Placement	0	11

## Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	110
Any other minority ethnic group	0

## Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	32	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	8.8
Average class size	12.4

### Education support staff: YR – Y11

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	368

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	634,292
Total expenditure	627,136
Expenditure per pupil	5,550
Balance brought forward from previous year	8,727
Balance carried forward to next year	15,883

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate = 51%

Number of questionnaires sent out	111
Number of questionnaires returned	57

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	23	4	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	53	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	47	5	2	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	47	16	4	9
The teaching is good.	65	32	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	61	30	7	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	81	16	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	32	5	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	56	30	5	4	5
The school is well led and managed.	72	23	0	2	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	40	4	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	32	18	7	9

## **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**

49. The class for the youngest children in the school is a mixed age group with some children who are younger than six and some who are in Year 1. Overall the provision in this class is good. The teacher's planning pays due regard to the Early Learning Goals for the younger children and the National Curriculum programmes of study for the older pupils. A good range of learning opportunities is provided to promote the learning of the children in relation to their learning difficulties. Attainment on entry is well below average. The children achieve well in relation to their difficulties in all of the areas of learning.
50. During the inspection, the class teacher was absent and was taught by a temporary teacher and the headteacher. The quality of teaching is good overall with nearly all the lessons being good, one lesson was very good and one lesson was satisfactory. The support staff in this class make a very significant contribution to the teaching and learning. The very good relationships between the children and adults are a strong feature of the teaching. Lessons are well planned and very well organised and conducted at a lively, sustained pace. Although signing was often used to support the teachers' spoken instructions and explanations this was not always done and as such opportunities were missed to maximise the children's understanding.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

51. The children make good progress in their personal development. All of the children enjoy school and listen well to the staff. The children are familiar with and accepting of school routines and class rules. They learn to share and take turns and really enjoy activities such as dressing up. The classroom relationships and reward system effectively develop the children's self-confidence and self-esteem.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

52. The children make good progress in speaking and listening and the acquisition of early reading and writing skills. All of the classroom and play activities make a substantial contribution to the children's language development. Stories are used well to stimulate the children's interest and they look at the pictures and follow the words closely. Some of the children make few utterances and others speak in clear sentences but all are interested and trying hard and so they are making good progress in learning more and more words.
53. The more able children read their own names and are beginning to make meaningful marks with a pencil. They name objects such as fruit and vegetables and musical instruments. They are learning the names and sounds of letters and recognise words that begin with the same sound. Less able children are making progress through the use of the Picture Exchange Communication System where flash cards are used to aid communication.

#### **Mathematical development**

54. The children make good progress in learning about numbers and shapes. They are learning to count and, for example, through simple cooking activities are developing ideas about measurement. Activities such as singing number rhymes, playing shop and using construction kits are all planned to promote mathematical development. The children are learning to count to five and match objects and numbers.

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

55. The children make good progress in learning about their immediate environment and natural phenomena. They see that things change through simple cooking activities. The children are beginning to compare and contrast related items, for example when tasting, feeling and smelling real and plastic fruits. They explore sand and water and are learning to pour in a controlled manner. The children use construction kits to make towers and simple vehicles.

### **Physical development**

56. Some of the children have very limited balance and body awareness but all are making good progress in their physical development through classroom activities, sessions in the hall and play activities outside. Fine motor skills develop well through the whole range of whole class, table and play activities such as action rhymes, painting, writing and sand play. In the hall the children make good gains in learning how to move in different ways on the floor and apparatus. The apparatus is very well laid out at a low level so the children, for example, climb, roll and jump safely and develop the confidence to find ways themselves of going through over and under pieces of equipment. However, during the lesson seen the children spent too much time watching others because of the way the activities were organised.
57. The effective use of the senior changing rooms is enabling these children to make very good progress in learning to dress and undress independently. The separate covered area used by this class is a valuable resource for play and physical experience. The children are learning to ride bikes. However, the lack of a soft play surface and the limited range of equipment available means that it is not being used to its full potential.

### **Creative development**

58. The children make good progress in art and music activities. They are learning how to use their fingers, a paintbrush or a sponge to apply paint to paper. The children tear or cut paper or card and are learning to use glue. The children are learning about colours through creative activities and one, for example, said that, 'peas are green'.
59. The children responded very positively to the very high quality music teaching. They are captivated by the activities and during one lesson made substantial gains in listening to different instruments, which were out of sight, and identifying them. They played instruments with considerable sensitivity, particularly the triangle. Children listen to songs carefully, copy the adults signing and at times join in with the singing. All of the children enjoyed swaying along to a gentle lullaby and some made excellent progress in this activity. The children were entranced by the staff playing a wide range of instruments including electronic keyboard, guitar, flute and especially the clarinet which one called a rocket.

## ENGLISH

60. Pupils achieve good standards overall and make good progress in all aspects of English. The school's implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has accelerated this progress.
61. Pupils aged five to seven years of age learn to listen carefully to adults. Questions and explanations are matched well to each pupil's needs and, consequently, pupils are confident to respond and are encouraged by the smiles and praise they receive. Pupils learn to use a wide range of vocabulary because the teacher introduces new words very effectively by giving clear explanations, repeating the words often and providing many opportunities for pupils to use them. The teacher's expressive reading enhances the pupils' enjoyment and understanding of stories. Pupils begin to recognise letters and the sounds they represent. By the time they are seven, most recognise their own names and those of others, and higher attainers have an increasing bank of words which they recognise on sight. Pupils overwrite or copy write letters and familiar words with growing accuracy.
62. From seven to eleven years of age, pupils make very good progress because they are taught extremely well. They join confidently in small group and whole-class reading sessions, and their intonation improves steadily because teachers provide excellent role models of expressive reading. Higher attainers make good use of phonic and picture cues, and by the time they are eleven years old, most pupils recognise a wide range of common words and read simple texts with growing fluency. The recently introduced phonic and handwriting programme is making a significant impact on the standards of reading, spelling and writing of pupils of all abilities. By Year 6, pupils are drafting and redrafting their writing in order to improve it and higher attainers are beginning to use capital letters and full stops to separate sentences. Pupils' handwriting becomes increasingly accurate and fluent because teachers emphasise correct letter formation and provide well-structured activities for daily practice. Information and communication technology and homework are effectively used on a regular basis to reinforce and extend pupils' literacy skills.
63. Lessons for pupils between eleven and fourteen years of age result in good progress because they feature a good variety of teaching methods and pupil activities. The recent grouping of pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 into three ability-based classes for English, is giving teachers increased opportunities for providing work at appropriate levels of difficulty. However, work is occasionally too difficult for lower-attaining pupils, and this restricts their progress. Pupils are keen to contribute to discussions, and they join in the end of lesson discussions well. Most pupils recognise many words, and use pictures and their knowledge of phonics effectively in their reading. Higher-attaining pupils begin to use meaning and grammar to make sensible 'guesses' when reading new texts, and their fluency continues to increase. However, a significant minority of pupils is not routinely using a range of cueing systems, and is still dependent on adults for help with unfamiliar words. This limits their access to a wide range of reading material. By the time they are aged fourteen, many pupils understand that punctuation is used to clarify meaning in texts, and make appropriate use of full stops, commas and question marks in their writing. Pupils' independent learning is effectively promoted by the guidance they are given in using dictionaries to check the meanings and spellings of words.
64. In Years 10 and 11, pupils make good progress and achieve well. They respond positively to studying a comprehensive range of poetry and literature, including 'From a Railway Carriage' and adapted passages from 'Macbeth' and 'Kes'. Many pupils can

read independently and with enjoyment, but lower attainers continue to need a high level of support in tackling new words. Most pupils' work shows increasing understanding and use of a range of writing styles, including reports, biography, letters and poetry. They make good use of information and communication technology in presenting their redrafted and edited writing. Teachers prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education. Consequently, they become familiar with the language and conventions required for form filling and letter writing, and this enables them to complete a range of application forms successfully. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow a range of courses leading to external accreditation in literacy skills. The school is seeking to extend these further to ensure that the opportunities offered meet the needs of pupils of all abilities.

65. Overall the quality of teaching is good. The quality of teaching for pupils between seven and eleven years of age is excellent. Throughout the school lessons are carefully planned, and are usually conducted at a brisk pace that makes the best use of the time available. Most lessons are characterised by the wide range of activities undertaken, and by the very good relationships between the pupils and teachers and support staff. There is a clear expectation that pupils will work hard and behave well. Consequently, they learn in a flexible supportive environment, where they are given many opportunities to succeed and to recognise their own learning. Teachers and support staff throughout the school are sensitive to the difficulties experienced by pupils with limited communication skills, and they use symbols and signing to good effect in their explanations of new vocabulary and ideas.
66. Literacy has developed well since the last inspection. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has given teachers a clearer understanding of all aspects of the subject, and many good examples were seen of carefully planned lessons that focused well on the specific language of, for instance, science, art and personal and social development. The very good support provided by classroom assistants makes a significant contribution to pupils' achievement and progress. Pupils benefit from good sessions at a local high school, where information and communication technology is effectively used to promote literary development. In Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, the 'Help Your Child with Learning' project is proving extremely valuable in enabling parents to give their children more focused support with language development, reading and writing.
67. The assessment and recording of pupils' progress is improving, and the school has identified this as a priority for further development. Although the school's library is too small to be used as a learning resource centre, pupils benefit from regular access to the local library facilities and the local authority's book bank. Additionally, the school's significant investment in 'big book' packages is promoting pupils' learning very well.
68. The two subject co-ordinators provide effective guidance for colleagues, but the lack of whole school subject co-ordination and monitoring is still restricting the development of English on a consistent basis. In this respect, there has been insufficient improvement since the previous inspection. Through the use of well-organised discussion and group work, and well-chosen texts, the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **MATHEMATICS**

69. By the time they are aged seven, pupils' levels of achievement are good. More able pupils can sort articles by colour and shape, and can work out that '5 take away 2

leaves 3'. Less able pupils reinforce their basic understanding of number well, enjoying activities such as sand and water play and simple construction toys, and all pupils apply their learning to good effect in such contexts as classroom songs and routines.

70. By the time they are aged eleven, pupils display excellent attitudes and continue to make good gains in learning, which marks an improvement when compared with the findings of the last inspection. Pupils fill in the missing numbers in sequences up to 20. They use scales to weigh various objects and say which ones are heavy and which are light. Pupils know that '10 take away 1 equals 9', and work out that the next calculation in the sequence is '9 take away 1 equals 8'. They understand that when the big hand is on 12 and the little hand is on 2 then the time is 2 o'clock. More able pupils identify times to the hour correctly on work-sheets, and write the time legibly underneath. They recognise coins and work out that  $50p + 20p + 10p + 10p = 90p$ . Less able pupils turn the hands to the correct number on clock jigsaws, and know that  $1p + 1p + 1p = 3p$ , writing the answer enthusiastically on the whiteboard with the encouragement of their classmates.
71. By the time they are aged fourteen, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Pupils are very interested and involved in activities. They continue to practise simple number exercises, and more able pupils complete double figure addition and single figure subtraction sums correctly. They count up to and down from 100 in fives. They know quarter past and to the hour and convert digital to analogue time and vice-versa. Less able pupils count in twos, but do not have a clear understanding of odd and even numbers. Older pupils in this age group use hand spans and finger widths to measure articles around the classroom, and understand why standard units of measurement are necessary. They collaborate well in pairs, measuring their chest and waist sizes, and recording and comparing their results.
72. Between fourteen and sixteen years of age, pupils continue to consolidate what they have already learned in the classroom, and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in the context of accredited courses in numeracy. Pupils also use numbers to good effect in exercises such as running the school shop at break-times. However, such relevant vocational opportunities are few and pupils' achievement at age sixteen and progress in using and applying mathematics over time are unsatisfactory as a result.
73. Throughout the school, pupils concentrate well and try hard, both individually and during group activities. They accept and recognise their own errors with good humour and refrain from commenting on the mistakes of their classmates. In these respects, their personal and social development is very good.
74. The teaching of mathematics is good overall. It is never less than satisfactory and is usually good. Between seven and eleven years of age, it is very good overall and on occasions excellent. This quality marks a significant improvement when compared with the findings of the last inspection. Lessons are well planned and very well organised. Staff work well together as a team, particularly when considering the needs of different groups of pupils, and the supportive, positive relationships between all concerned ensure that lessons are enjoyable and that no time is wasted. Lessons are delivered with such encouragement that pupils settle quickly, respond eagerly, and rise to the occasion with enthusiasm. Where teaching is most successful, as in a lesson for ten-year-olds on recognising coins and adding money, a wide variety of activities, organised in ways that reflect the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy, is carefully organised to ensure that all pupils understand and can

participate. In lessons that are less effective, the tempo drops, planning does not always address the wide range of ability amongst the pupils, and homework is not always used.

75. The school has a satisfactory policy for mathematics that pays due regard to the National Curriculum guidelines, and has been effective in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy, particularly with primary aged pupils. The guidelines for teachers' planning give appropriate emphasis to the practical use and application of mathematics in everyday life. However, they lack the detail that would help teachers make sure that all pupils, particularly those of secondary school age, build upon what they have already learned in ways that reflect their development as young adults. This reflects an unsatisfactory response to the findings of the last inspection. In addition, opportunities to consider and reinforce mathematics in the context of other subjects, though recognised, have not yet been formalised, and there are insufficient opportunities for pupils' achievements in mathematics to be accredited through vocational courses. The new whole school arrangements for monitoring pupils' progress provide a good platform for judging the effectiveness of its provision in mathematics, but their effect has yet to be fully realised. There is a good range of good quality, simple resources which are used to good effect, although the role of information and communication technology is underdeveloped.

## SCIENCE

76. Standards of achievement and the progress that pupils make in science are very good between six and eleven years of age and satisfactory between eleven and 16 years of age. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection when it was reported that progress was, 'satisfactory at Key Stages 1 and 2 and unsatisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4'. Pupils are fully involved in scientific investigations and experiments up to the age of eleven. However, there is a general reluctance to encourage and allow the older pupils to become fully involved and actually conduct experiments themselves.
77. By the time they are aged seven, pupils are investigating the taste, smell and feel of various objects, for example, comparing the taste and smell of various exotic fruits such as avocado pear, guava, apple and orange and their plastic imitations. They also compare the smell of fruit flavoured soaps. More able pupils describe plum juice as the 'blood of the fruit' and distinguish between sweet and sour tastes, whilst less able pupils register their likes and dislikes.
78. By the age of eleven pupils achieve very well. They know and understand the dangers of electricity around school and in the home. All pupils recognise parts of the human body, both major internal organs and the bones of skeleton. Pupils investigate changes in materials when mixed together, carrying out experiments in small groups, discussing their findings and then reporting back to the rest of the class whether or not the changes to their materials are reversible. They know the planets of the solar system, name the ones they have made models of and correctly describe the colours they have used. More able pupils research planets using the Internet as well as books, discovering new information about Saturn's rings. These pupils also use a CD-Rom programme to assemble a body on the computer screen. Less able pupils discuss pictures and then write simple sentences about the earth's features and discover that a mixture of sand and stones can be separated again.

79. By the age of fourteen pupils understand the differences between solids, liquids and gases. They know that different sugars used in food technology will dissolve at different rates. Pupils understand the reasons why it is important to wear a car seat belt and how this can help in the event of a crash. More able pupils understand that materials such as water, chocolate, sugar change when heated or frozen. They understand what is meant by a 'fair test'. They know that when a vehicle stops suddenly its contents continue to move and are beginning to use technical vocabulary such as inertia. Less able pupils understand what would happen in a car crash when passengers are or are not wearing seat belts.
80. By the age of sixteen pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of scientific facts and concepts. For example, they understand the importance of air in combustion and carry out a fair test by using paper houses with the doors and windows opened and closed in different combinations. They discuss different strategies for putting fires out. More able pupils understand why some fires should not be put out using water.
81. Pupils are learning well because teaching is always at least satisfactory and often better. Between six and eleven years of age it is very good overall and it is occasionally excellent. Between eleven and sixteen years of age teaching is satisfactory. Where teaching and learning are very good pupils are fully active throughout the lesson. They participate fully in their experiments, working very well in small groups investigating the problem they have been set, discussing their findings and then reporting back to the whole class. Teachers are willing to take risks in guiding the experiments but without doing them for their pupils. Planning and learning objectives are shared with and well used by the support assistants, so adults work as an effective team promoting high standards. They share enthusiasm for learning and have fun with the pupils, for example, when tasting the exotic fruits. This encourages pupils to work hard and enjoy learning as well. They relate work in science to other subjects very well and use music and information and communication technology to great advantage. Where teaching and learning is satisfactory the teachers' planning is often good but teachers are not prepared to let pupils carry out experiments for themselves in case things go wrong. They do not have the confidence to let pupils truly investigate.
82. Pupils are receiving an interesting, broad and balanced programme of work in science. However, it is not linked fully to the National Curriculum and the activities for older pupils do not build well enough the very good work done with pupils up to the age of eleven. The present scheme of work consists of interesting modules but there is no real system in place that ensures pupils are extending their previous knowledge. Assessment satisfactorily follows the agreed whole school system. All pupils now have science targets within their IEPs but they are not yet specific enough to meet individual needs. Resources are satisfactory and have been audited within the last year. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

83. Throughout the school, pupils achieve well in art, notably when developing practical craft skills. They enjoy the subject, and become very interested in the activities and absorbed in their work. The youngest pupils paint bright, bold pieces, and use gummed paper and foil to make collage work illustrating characters and events from the class storybooks such as 'Elmer the Elephant'. By the time they are aged eleven, pupils apply previously acquired skills well, producing images that evoke contrasting

pieces of music, and use aboriginal symbols and designs effectively to illustrate the theme of 'A Journey'. They employ techniques such as tie-dye very effectively to create Indian styles and patterns as part of their work in Hinduism, handle paintbrushes with great care and precision, and know how to mix colours. Between the ages of eleven and fourteen, pupils practise these skills and techniques, and consider the work of artists such as Hogarth, experimenting with styles of shading to enhance shapes and suggest forms. By the time they are aged sixteen, pupils apply their knowledge and understanding in the context of accredited courses. They observe and reproduce the visual effects caused by mirrors, and capture something of the style of Lowry in copying his work. Pupils use collage to illustrate their work on the story of 'Kes', and work with local artists to create a Millennium Sculpture for the school grounds. Throughout the school, pupils respect equipment and handle tools properly; they co-operate well and appreciate each other's efforts in these respects, the subject makes a very positive contribution to the pupils' personal and social development.

84. The teaching of art is very good between seven and eleven years of age and good elsewhere. This represents a satisfactory improvement when compared with the findings of the last inspection. Lessons are purposeful, organised well, and underpinned by very positive relationships between all concerned. As a result, pupils are clear as to what is expected of them, try hard and concentrate well. Planning is generally effective, particularly in activities which enable pupils to practise their practical skills, but opportunities to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of wider issues in art, although created, remain unexploited. Simple resources and media are used very well, with the result that pupils are actively engaged. In the most successful lessons, praise and encouragement are also used very well to help pupils develop their ideas, with the result that they take a pride both in their own work and in that of their classmates.
85. There is a satisfactory policy for art, and the guidelines for teachers' planning pay due regard to promoting both the pupils' practical skills and their knowledge and understanding. However, the lack of detail within these guidelines means that it is difficult for teachers to make sure that their lessons take account of what pupils have already learned, and that pupils use their knowledge to develop their understanding as they grow up and move through the school. In this respect there has been insufficient development in the subject since the time of the last inspection, and the contribution made by the subject to the pupils' spiritual development is not as significant as it should be. However, the subject is used particularly well to support and illustrate other areas of the curriculum. This is readily seen in the excellent, vibrant displays that brighten the corridors and classrooms, and the use of opportunities to exhibit pupils' work in the wider community, such as at the nearby High School and at a local supermarket. This is a very positive feature of the school's provision.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

86. Standards of achievement and progress are good between six and eleven years of age and satisfactory from ages eleven to fourteen. This is an improvement since the last inspection when progress was satisfactory throughout the school. The subject is taught as two discrete areas, 'food technology with textiles' and 'resistant materials'. Standards of achievement in food technology with textiles range from satisfactory to good, whilst in resistant materials they range from excellent to on occasion unsatisfactory.

87. By the age of seven, pupils know and understand the difference in texture between various textiles, more able pupils differentiating between smooth, rough, fluffy and bumpy. More able pupils recognise that a magnet picks up paperclips but not soft materials. Less able pupils colour an outline of a clown to make a simple puppet. All are involved in making vegetable soup, linked to a literacy hour story, and one pupil knows that vegetables 'go all soft in hot water'.
88. By the age of eleven, pupils design and make their own 'mobile phones', construct a wigwam very effectively from rolled up newspaper and make popcorn using a variety of colourings and flavourings. More able pupils work independently, design a wigwam using a computer programme and know that real wigwams use animal skins on a wooden framework for protection from the weather. Less able pupils make their wigwam with much adult support gradually becoming more efficient in the task as they progress. All pupils realise that by adding different flavours popcorn tastes different and the more able understand that because different colours are used the popcorn does not change in taste.
89. By the age of fourteen, pupils make mechanical toys using simple cam principles. All understand what they need to do to enable the toy to work well, for example, sanding down the component parts but not rubbing too hard and making the pegs too small so that they do not fit neatly into the holes. More able pupils succeed with minimal support whilst less able achieve the end result with close one-to-one support. They consider the construction of the strongest tower and put their thoughts into practice well. More able pupils make realistic, stable towers using art straws whilst less able pupils working in pairs understand the idea but have difficulty creating a stable tower. Pupils make a brioche bread pudding, more able pupils work largely independently and understand how to increase the quantity of each ingredient to make a family size dish. The pupils with the most complex learning needs achieve the same result with much support, they struggle to use tools correctly and have difficulty spreading butter and lemon curd.
90. By the age of sixteen, pupils design, plan and make cantilever structures, including lamps. They identify and understand the use of different types of bridges, including rope, rocks, vines, single and multi-arch, suspension, cantilever, moveable and beam bridges. More able pupils create models that twist as well as move up and down. Less able pupils produce simple structures with arms that can be raised and lowered.
91. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is good between six and eleven years of age and fourteen and sixteen years of age and satisfactory between eleven and 14 years of age. This is an improvement since the last inspection when it was satisfactory and often good. Between seven and eleven years of age it is often excellent. Between eleven and fourteen years of age it varies from excellent to, on occasion, unsatisfactory. Where teaching and learning is very good pupils are involved in practical activities throughout the lesson, be it in planning and designing or actually making. Pupils are excited and eager to be involved. Where teaching and learning is less successful, there is excessive teacher demonstration with pupils having an occasional stir rather than each making their own dish. There are good links with other subjects and particularly speaking and listening and pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development through the cooking of religious dishes and the celebration of the Millennium by sewing a tapestry which involved pupils throughout the school. Relationships between pupils and adults are noticeably relaxed, but vigilant, and have a positive effect on pupils' learning. Assessment follows the school's system well. All pupils have targets within their individual education plans but they are not yet fully addressing pupils' needs.

92. The programme of work studied by pupils is broad and balanced. The scheme of work has yet to be fully linked to National Curriculum 2000 and the quality of medium-term planning in resistant materials is inconsistent across the school. In places it is unsatisfactory and consists of one or two words per lesson with no reference to the National Curriculum programmes of study, different groups of pupils or resources needed.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

93. Achievement is good because the quality of teaching is good overall and it is excellent between seven and eleven years of age. In Years 10 and 11, geography is part of the overall curriculum and achievement is satisfactory. In Year 11 the subject forms part of the 'independence programme' organised for the pupils, for example travelling to the shops or leisure centres on their own.
94. Up to the age of seven, geography is taught as part of a topic. Pupils complete work which is mainly oral and linked to other subjects. Pupils are taught about their immediate environment and how to find their way around the school.
95. Achievement between seven and eleven years of age is excellent. This is primarily because the teachers' have extensive knowledge and understanding of pupils' needs and abilities. Learning objectives are clearly identified and pupils' progress evaluated well. Pupils are beginning to develop geographical skills, through, for example, their studies of the local area. They learn about pollution in their own town, the environment in the local park and the importance of recycling various household wastes like glass bottles and jars. They are beginning to understand the differences between rural and urban settings and about other areas of the world like the deserts, rain forests and the polar lands.
96. Achievement between eleven and fourteen years of age is good. This is primarily due to the expectations the teachers have of the pupils and the manner in which the subject is presented. Previous learning is used as a basis of future planning thus ensuring continued development of subject knowledge and understanding. The work covers a good range of topics relevant to the National Curriculum programmes of study. Pupils extend their knowledge about the locality, learn to use a compass, learn about population density and the difference between a developed and an under-developed country. They learn about other peoples in the world and the effect of weather conditions on peoples' lives, for example, the effect of the cyclone that hit Bangladesh.
97. It was not possible to observe lessons involving pupils under seven or over fourteen. However, pupils' completed work was examined and the subject co-ordinators and class teachers were interviewed. Teaching and learning are good up the age of six and satisfactory between ages fourteen and sixteen. They are excellent between seven and eleven years of age when the teaching is imaginative with effective use of local resources. Lessons are clearly planned and organised with interesting activities that help pupils to develop their skills and understanding. The work is matched well to the pupils' needs and abilities, with tasks to extend the learning of the higher attaining pupils. Between eleven and fourteen years of age the teaching is good and is closely linked to other subjects. At both these key stages, lessons are relaxed yet purposeful with very good relationships between teachers and pupils. Support staff make an important contribution to lessons and are deployed well. They provide good support in

helping pupils with additional special educational needs to understand and complete work. Pupils' behaviour is very good, they follow instructions well and learn because they clearly enjoy the subject.

98. Throughout the school, literacy skills are reinforced through word recognition with the youngest pupils and reading and spelling of the vocabulary introduced for specific pieces of work in the other stages. As they move from Year 3 to Year 11, pupils learn how to use atlases and textbooks to obtain information and, from Year 7 to Year 11, learn how to identify and use grid references well. A piece of work on the water cycle showed that they had a good understanding of the mechanics of this natural phenomenon.
99. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection. The new policy and schemes of work and the planning of the subject across the school, has resulted in an improvement that is reflected in pupils' progress. The school has adopted an accredited course available to Year 10 and 11 pupils to give them an opportunity to study for a recognised qualification. Resources are good and the very good displays around the school contain some well-presented pieces of written work. These have recently been enhanced by large and attractive world maps and aerial photographs of the locality showing the school and the immediate area. Good displays around the school contain some well-presented pieces of written work. Pupils' progress is evaluated on lesson plans and through pieces of work assessed against subject targets set. However, comments are not always specific enough to measure progress accurately and formulate new targets. The subject is well managed. Lesson plans are monitored, but not the teaching. Good liaison between the primary and secondary departments ensures smooth progression and continuity in providing information on pupils' progress, needs and abilities.

## **HISTORY**

100. Pupils' progress in history is never less than satisfactory and on occasions, particularly up to the age of eleven, it is very good or excellent. Between the ages of fourteen and sixteen, history is only studied for two terms when pupils look at famous people and work on the history of the town of Warrington. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on levels of work attained and progress. Achievement is satisfactory at fourteen years of age. Between the ages of eleven and fourteen, pupils have learnt about medieval realms, the making of the United Kingdom, the Black Death, Britain since 1750, and the French Revolution. Pupils make satisfactory progress over time in presentation and handwriting. However, marking is not consistent and frequently lacks direction to guide learning. Teachers rarely present different tasks to pupils of different abilities and on occasions the level of reading expected on worksheets is too difficult to promote learning and the development of knowledge. Opportunities to consolidate and develop literacy skills are often missed, for example through the consistent use of date and heading on work and noting of key words in books.
101. By the age of eleven, achievement is very good. The work is well co-ordinated and linked to practical sessions with artefacts and visits to local museums and houses. The visits and discussions bring awareness of the past to life for the pupils. Work at this age range is well presented with good links to the development of literacy skills. Pupils in Year 6 who are looking at life in Victorian times went on a day's visit to the Quarry Bank museum. The very good photographic evidence clearly shows the enthusiasm of the pupils and evidence of learning as they try out the beds and are

actively involved in jobs in the kitchen and elsewhere including tidying, sweeping, using the dolly tub and pumping water. Pupils also visited the Silk Museum in Macclesfield where they dressed in waistcoats and caps and experienced life in Victorian times through activity and play. All pupils up to the age of eleven have individual targets which are assessed on a termly basis and derive from a checklist linked to key skills. Between the ages of seven and eleven there is very good progress in history. There is insufficient evidence to make judgements about the standards of work seen up to the age of seven, although pupils are looking at a topic of 'myself', in terms of photographs, clothes, birthdays, and a family treasure hunt.

102. The quality of teaching is good overall and ranges from excellent to satisfactory. When teaching is excellent it is with pupils between the ages of seven and eleven. The interactions between adults and pupils and positive learning environment promote speaking and listening skills very well. The teacher is enthusiastic and promotes pupils' self-esteem by encouraging them to handle artefacts and to play on the musical instruments linked to work on the Aztecs. The teacher promotes learning by encouraging pupils to develop and express their own thoughts. One pupil said of one artefact, 'It is a mark for a God', another said, 'It could be a shield mask'. Learning is promoted by excellent interaction between the pupils and support for each other, enabling the pupils to build on their knowledge and understanding. There was excellent support from the learning support assistant in supporting individual pupils and extending their positive experiences within the group.
103. Less progress is made when the teachers do not provide work which is appropriate to the pupils' individual needs and worksheets have a reading level which is far above the reading ages of many pupils. There is a lack of consistency between the development of key words and the use of words on worksheets. Differentiation with pupils between the ages of eleven and fourteen was often too general and needed a clearer focus to develop key words to build on knowledge and understanding. On occasions there is evidence that pupils are pleased with their neat colouring work but there is only limited challenge for higher achievers to develop their learning skills. The attitude and behaviour of pupils in all lessons is good or better and teachers make good use of praise and encouragement to motivate pupils and keep them on task. Older pupils make less progress when, for example, the lack of challenge in colouring activities results in some off-task behaviour. On occasions, there is a need for closer co-ordination between the teacher and learning support assistant to confirm common objectives and more effective learning outcomes when pupils are split into groups.
104. At the time of the last inspection it was noted that, 'there is no whole-school agreed approach to the assessment of progress in history to influence planning and teaching'. This has not been addressed and this is unsatisfactory. The overall co-ordination of assessment and monitoring of individual progress across the school continues to be inconsistent in application and it remains unsatisfactory overall.
105. There are co-ordinators for history for the upper and lower schools. They have met and produced a checklist for individual assessment of progress linked to key skills in history. Between the ages of four and eleven, the assessment sheets are used well to monitor progress. However, within the upper school there is an inconsistent use of assessment to guide learning. The upper school co-ordinator is aware of the current shortcomings in practice. Currently each teacher arranges their own educational visits and the contribution of these is not co-ordinated. The policy and guidelines to support teachers' planning have not been reviewed in relation to the recommendations of National Curriculum 2000.

106. Co-ordination at the lower school has been more effective in promoting active learning. The school has purchased many big books which are successfully used in history lessons. In the lower school a major effort is being successfully made to link history teaching to the development of literacy skills but links between history and other subjects are not made at all stages. The class teachers regularly borrow books, videos, cassettes and artefacts linked to topics under discussion from Winsford library. During the period of the inspection one teacher effectively used a collection of borrowed artefacts on the Aztecs to bring history alive and extend the pupils' knowledge and understanding.
107. Resources within the school are satisfactory although there is not enough use of CD-Rom and the Internet. The co-ordinators do not evaluate the quality of teaching and links with the development of literacy skills. There are plans to develop links with a local primary school next term. The upper school co-ordinator is working on the preparation of a web site on aspects of World War Two with a local high school teacher.

### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

108. Achievement is unsatisfactory by the ages of fourteen and sixteen and satisfactory by the age of eleven. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement at age seven. The subject co-ordinator was absent during the inspection but discussions were held with the headteacher and class teachers and school documentation and pupils completed work were examined. Overall there has been unsatisfactory progress since the previous inspection but there is a good quality subject action plan which aims to develop the quality of teaching and resources.
109. Although no direct teaching was seen in the lower school, completed work and teacher records show that pupils are making satisfactory progress between seven and eleven years of age and the teaching is satisfactory. They learn how to use the keyboard and mouse to enter text and create simple pictures such as faces and houses. Pupils use the Internet to find out information, for example about the planets of the solar system and Hinduism and learn how to use a digital camera. They record the findings of mathematical and scientific investigations such as when they were weighing different items in grams and they were recording the results on the computer using three-figure numbers. In these classes there is some outstanding use of ICT by the teachers to enhance the quality of classroom display.
110. Examination of pupils' work in Years 7 to 11 shows that they are having at least one lesson a week in the ICT suite. Pupils experience activities covering word processing, graphics and simple desktop publishing techniques. Through these experiences, they are acquiring some understanding of how to enter, organise and change the appearance of text. They are learning how to use text and pictures together. However, the provided work does not demonstrate a well-structured programme of activities which enables them to acquire and develop skills and understanding in a systematic manner. There are a few but insufficient examples of data handling activities in Years 10 and 11 only and no examples of control and modelling work. Most of the pupils who have used the Page Maker programme to create booklets have done no more than understand that they can move from page to page and insert text and pictures on each page. Only one example showed any reasonable structure to this activity resulting in a recognisable booklet with a logical sequence and coherence to the contents. More able pupils use more features of the programmes they use such as borders and background colours to enhance the appearance of their work. The work

seen did show some reasonable links being made with other subjects such as English, mathematics, religious education and art. Displayed self-portraits in Year 11 showed some revealing personal statements by these pupils demonstrating their good progress in personal and social education and satisfactory word processing skills.

111. The quality of teaching in the upper school is unsatisfactory. All pupils between ages eleven and sixteen are taught in the ICT suite by the subject co-ordinator and this is supplemented by additional classroom activities. During the inspection the co-ordinator was absent. The examination of pupils' work and the use of ICT during lessons in other subjects show that the teaching in the upper school does not build systematically to extend the skills acquired in the lower school and develop new ones.
112. Two ICT lessons were observed in the upper school. These were taken by the headteacher and they comprised a good lesson with Year 7 pupils and a very good lesson with Year 9 pupils. In both lessons pupils were clear about what it was the teacher wanted them to learn and applied themselves well to the set tasks. Pupils in Year 9 made good gains in learning how to input text, highlight some and move it around using cut and paste techniques. Year 7 pupils were learning how to use the same technique to put a numbered list in numerical order. The teachers' planning and organisation and pupil management were very good. In the Year 9 lesson the set task was too difficult for two pupils to complete without a very high level of support and no use was made of specific strategies or techniques such as keyboard overlays.
113. The school has a small ICT suite in the upper school and there is at least one computer in every classroom. There are plans to move from an iMac based system to a PC based system and develop more structured guidelines for teachers to help them plan what they are going to teach and when and how they are going to teach it. At present the guidelines for teachers and available resources do not provide a good basis for the systematic teaching of ICT and, therefore, pupils' progress is dependent on the individual teachers' skills and planning and is patchy. Insufficient use was made of classroom computers throughout the school during the inspection.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **FRENCH**

114. It was not possible to see any lessons or have a discussion with the subject co-ordinator who teaches French in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10. French is taught on a weekly basis in these classes and this is to the credit of the school since many schools of this type choose not to teach a modern foreign language at all. However, evidence from pupils' completed work is that the progress they make is unsatisfactory. This is because they are doing little or no writing and the school policy and planning guidelines state that pupils will have opportunities to speak, listen, read and write in French.
115. Achievement by the age of 14 is unsatisfactory. As pupils move from year-to-year they make satisfactory progress in acquiring and understanding more and more French vocabulary and features of French culture. In Year 10 they learn the names of parts of the body, vocabulary related to food and drink and transport and about French money. In Year 9 they consolidate and extend the basic vocabulary learnt in Years 7 and 8 and aspects of French geography, culture and customs. A reasonable amount of work is completed which shows a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of

greetings, colours and numbers, the location and names of French cities and rivers and vocabulary related to sporting activities. It is not possible to judge the quality of the pupils' spoken French but the provided work shows that there are very few opportunities to develop their writing skills in French. Because nearly all of the paper tasks are in the form of worksheets where they have to match words to pictures, tick boxes or write single words, often by choosing from a provided list. There are very few examples of pupils writing sentences and none of any more substantial writing than single sentences.

116. It is not possible to make a reliable judgement about the quality of teaching. However, the indications from the provided pupils' work and teachers' planning are that it is unsatisfactory. This is because of the lack of opportunities to develop the pupils' writing and the quality of marking is unsatisfactory. The work provided consists entirely of worksheets and booklets from a commercially produced scheme.

## MUSIC

117. Pupils achieve very well in music from six to fourteen years of age. Achievement is high in relation to the pupils' abilities and learning difficulties. During the four educational key stages these years cover, all the pupils have the opportunity to experience music and participate in a wide range of musical activities. For example, between six and eleven, they join in with action rhymes, sing songs with confidence and play percussion instruments as a group together. Progress continues between the ages of eleven and fourteen when pupils play a range of tuned instruments and begin to understand musical vocabulary. These pupils compose and play their own music. All pupils have good opportunities to explore sounds and respond to a wide range of music. They alter the tempo and the volume of their music to suit suggested moods.
118. The quality of teaching and learning was very good in all the lessons observed. The lessons are carefully prepared and have clear objectives. The pupils are well motivated, attentive and they concentrate on the tasks set. They are given the opportunity to work individually or in pairs. Some of the more able pupils work quickly and confidently, and are developing well as individual learners. The contribution of the learning support assistants is good, helping with the manipulation of the instruments and ensuring that pupils understand the tasks given.
119. Teaching was unsatisfactory throughout the school in the previous inspection and, therefore, there has been very good improvement since that time. The specialist teacher has only been in post for a short period of time and has already made a significant impact on the provision and status of music in the whole-school curriculum. An example of this is the contribution of music in developing the communication skills of pupils between six and eleven.
120. In order to involve music in the whole-school curriculum the co-ordinator is planning to revise the music policy and the scheme of work. In this way it is hoped that music will feature prominently in many aspects of school life. The co-ordinator is also planning to bring in young musicians to demonstrate their musical skills with the aim of encouraging the pupils to develop their own skills and give them confidence to perform in front of their peers in school. Resources are satisfactory and there are plans to improve them in the near future. The teaching of music is developing for the better in many ways through improved co-ordination and resourcing.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

121. Pupils' achievements in physical education are satisfactory overall. By the age of sixteen, pupils' achievements are barely satisfactory due to the lack of breadth in the programme to develop personal fitness and leisure activities. The range of activities on offer within the upper school includes football, badminton, indoor hockey, swimming in Years 10 and 11, cross-country, indoor tennis and indoor athletics. Pupils are involved in external accreditation through the NPRA scheme for awards in football skills and badminton, and for the ASA swimming awards. Pupils have participated in the Cheshire Special Schools' swimming gala and in the SWLSA athletics competition
122. By the age of eleven, achievement in physical education is very good. Pupils are aware of warm up and cool down routines. In gymnastics pupils make good progress in travelling, turning, rolling, jumping and balancing and learn how to put together a sequence of movements. In Year 1, pupils are learning about the basic concepts of movement through activities such as clapping, tapping knees, crossing over hands and tapping shoulders. However, there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about achievement at age seven. Pupils in the lower school go swimming on a weekly basis and many have been successful in gaining the externally accredited 'Duckling and Rainbow Awards'. Pupils are involved in gymnastics, games and dance activities on a termly basis. The school recently hosted a dance workshop from the Ludus Dance Company, and the children in the lower school thought it was marvellous. Pupils have been to see a performance of dance at a local theatre and there is a good photographic display in a lower school classroom of a demonstration in the school by the Chinese Dragon dance group.
123. The quality of teaching in physical education ranges from very good to unsatisfactory, with the unsatisfactory lessons taking place with pupils in the upper school. It is good up to the age of seven and very good between seven and eleven years of age. Common features of all lessons are that staff changed dress appropriately to set an example to pupils and participate in activities themselves. When the teaching is very good the pupils are aware of the specific rules in physical education lessons and their attitudes and behaviour enable learning to take place. The teacher is very enthusiastic and encourages the pupils to build on their limited skills. Pupils listen carefully within a very positive learning environment as the teacher gives clear instructions on how to improve performance. There is good awareness of the abilities and needs of different pupils. Pupils are encouraged to plan what they are going to do and the more able challenged to think about and discover new ways to go through or under apparatus.
124. When teaching is less than satisfactory, inconsistent discipline and control resulted in the unsatisfactory behaviour of a number of pupils disrupting the learning of all. The rules of the game are not explained clearly resulting in pupils arguing and not following instructions. The teacher fails to emphasise the key skills and body positions in activity situations, and to correct poor practice, resulting in the lack of effective participation by pupils. The pace of the lesson is too slow, with pupils frustrated in their efforts to move on. There is a lack of challenge and variation in the activities to maintain pupils on task. The teacher is tending to shout to regain control above the noise of the pupils which results in increased tension until one boy shouts, 'Look out, Mr King is coming!', and order is temporarily restored.
125. The co-ordination of physical education is overall unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator for physical education at the upper school is not a qualified physical education teacher

but has attended courses on the use of gymnastics equipment and table tennis. The co-ordinator of physical education at the lower school was absent during the period of the inspection. The co-ordinators at present meet on an annual basis to discuss the budget and resources. There is no planned co-ordination of curriculum development, monitoring of teaching or progress in terms of a whole school approach. The last inspection report stated: The co-ordination of this subject does not adequately monitor what is taught throughout the school. Assessment processes have yet to be fully put in place and this prevents pupils consistently building on their past attainment'. Progress since that last report has overall been unsatisfactory.

126. Recent support from the local education authority adviser has been beneficial in providing training for staff in developing lessons in gymnastics and small games in the lower school. The school is aware of the different physical needs of the changing pupil population and is planning to develop a more appropriate physical education programme. The school development plan includes the development of sensory work, gymnastics using large mats and soft play equipment.
127. The current policy document for physical education is out of date in terms of the current programmes offered and making links to personal development and external accreditation. The current guidelines to help teachers in their planning do not clearly identify the skills pupils will learn and how they will use these skills in other activities. There is a marked lack of links in the planning with other activities and subjects such as orienteering, work in geography and mathematics, or relating the development of personal fitness to work on the body and diet. The current guidelines are rarely more than a list of activities and do not help teachers plan for the acquisition and application of physical skills. Much of the programme is based upon one-off events and there is no overall assessment in terms of short-and long-term planning of physical fitness programmes linked to personal and social development. Pupils do not currently go to local leisure centres to participate in personal fitness programmes or have access to a wider range of leisure activities. There are no extra-curricular activities offered in physical activities and there are no school teams or outdoor and adventurous activities. There are no school systems or recognised courses for accreditation of achievements in sporting activities.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

128. During the inspection week, four lessons were observed with pupils between the ages of seven and fourteen. A whole school assembly was also observed. Judgements are based on these observations, together with examination of pupils' work, teachers' planning and displays and discussion with staff and pupils.
129. Pupils' achievement and progress are good overall and they are never less than satisfactory. This is because the teachers plan lessons carefully and have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Pupils achieve well in Years 10 and 11, particularly in forming opinions and expressing their views. Higher attaining pupils understand the main similarities and differences between the world's major faiths. They benefit from the opportunities they are given to consider human rights and personal responsibility. By the time pupils are aged fourteen, they understand why parables are important in spreading the Christian message, and can express opinions on why it is important to help each other. Their knowledge of world faiths extends to include Islam and Sikhism, and they recognise that light and water are important symbols in all religions. Pupils learn to appreciate that some people, such as Helen Keller, can face enormous difficulties and still retain a strong faith.

130. Pupils between the ages of seven and eleven achieve very well and make very good progress because teachers have very good subject knowledge and make excellent use of resources. Pupils throughout the school respond very positively to opportunities for discussion but, occasionally, teaching relies too heavily on the use of worksheets and pupils are insufficiently challenged. This restricts their interest and understanding of the subject. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 increase their knowledge of Jesus and His life through hearing and discussing Bible stories. They benefit from the many opportunities they are given to celebrate Christian festivals, and those of other world faiths such as Judaism and Hinduism and the Chinese New Year. They begin to understand that people do not all worship the same God, but that all faiths should be valued and respected. This was clearly evident in the reflective way in which pupils joined in a Rosh Hashanah ceremony, and in their careful handling of Hindu artefacts. Their understanding and use of subject specific vocabulary develops at an impressive rate because teachers explain difficult ideas very clearly, and use exciting and colourful resources. Between the ages of five and seven years pupils increase their knowledge of celebrations, especially birthdays, and know that Christmas is the birthday of Jesus, who is a special person. They learn that God cares for them, and that there are other people who also care, such as their parents and teachers.
131. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection in the overall quality of teaching and learning. Resources have developed well and are very effectively used to support pupils' learning. Teaching and learning in religious education are not yet monitored systematically throughout the school, and in this respect, insufficient improvement has been made. The school has identified this as an area for development. Religious education and the ethos in which it is taught provides very good support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.