

INSPECTION REPORT

**Utkinton (St Paul's) Church of England
Primary School**

Utkinton, Tarporley

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111261

Headteacher: Mrs A. M. Barnett

Reporting inspector: Mr P. M. Allen
Rgl's OIN: 17531

Dates of inspection: 9th – 11th July 2001

Inspection number: 192695

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Quarry Bank Utkinton Tarporley Cheshire
Postcode:	CW6 0LA
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P. Sirett
Date of previous inspection:	17 th March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17531	Mr P. M. Allen	Registered inspector	English Religious education Art and design Music Physical education Foundation stage	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
8922	Mrs B. McIntosh	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
29381	Mrs A. Brangan	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography History Equal opportunities Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well is the school led and managed?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Utkinton Church of England Primary School is a small rural primary school which serves the village of Utkinton and draws around 40 per cent of its pupils from the surrounding area. There are 46 children on roll, plus a pupil who attends on a part time basis. The number of pupils has increased and the school is over-subscribed. There are slightly more boys than girls. There are two classes, one for Reception and Key Stage 1 and one for Key Stage 2. Of the four teachers, only the headteacher is full time. All the children are of white ethnic origin. Of the full time pupils there are a small number with special educational needs (below the national average), none of whom has a Statement of Special Educational Need. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. Virtually all the children have had pre-school education, many in the nursery at a nearby school shared and managed by local schools. Attainment on entry varies from year to year, although for most it is above what could be expected. The school aims to foster personal and intellectual development in a caring and challenging environment so that each individual can achieve his or her full potential. The school has set priorities for the future, including the further improvement of both the quality of the written work and the information and communication technology curriculum.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very popular village school with a caring, Christian ethos that is valued by parents. The headteacher provides strong leadership and the school is well supported by its governors and the community. The teachers are conscientious, being strongly committed to the school; the quality of teaching is good and often very good. Given the very small number of pupils, attainment can vary from year to year. The very small number at the end of Key Stage 2 makes overall evaluations inappropriate, as a consequence of which their results will not be published. Taking recent years together, the performance of 11 year olds has exceeded national averages in English, mathematics and science. Pupils across the school achieve well relative to their abilities. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- ◆ The quality of teaching is good and often very good.
- ◆ Standards are very good in reading and in speaking and listening.
- ◆ The headteacher provides very good leadership and the governing body is effective.
- ◆ The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and reflects the school's caring Christian ethos
- ◆ There is a very strong partnership between the school and home and parents have a high regard for school.
- ◆ The pupils have very positive attitudes and they are very well behaved.

What could be improved

- ◆ Standards in written work and in handwriting and presentation.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made a good improvement since the previous inspection in March 1997. The two issues from that report have been addressed. The school has significantly developed resources for Reception children and statutory requirements are now met for reporting attendance. Since the previous inspection many improvements have been made. Improvements to the grounds and the building support the quality of education provided and there is a better range of extra-curricular activities. Standards have risen in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, although there is still a need to raise standards in written work. The quality of teaching has improved across the school with more very good teaching than previously. The school has grown in numbers, as a consequence of which there will be a third class in place at the start of the new school year. There is very strong, shared commitment to further improvement and a shared capacity to succeed.

STANDARDS

The number of pupils in each year group is very small and so it is not appropriate to publish a table of standards in national tests.

The youngest children are in line to meet the nationally prescribed Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage (Reception year) and most will exceed them. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are very good in reading and mathematics and well above national averages; standards in writing are good. This judgement is very likely to be reflected in the 2001 test results when a larger than usual cohort was tested. There are too few pupils in Year 6 to make meaningful overall evaluations at the end of Key Stage 2, although these pupils, like those at Key Stage 1, achieve well relative to their abilities. There is recognition in the school that standards in written work can be higher. Standards in information and communication technology are sound across the school with scope for improvement with better resourcing. Standards in religious education are good and meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to school. They are confident, enthusiastic learners with a will to do well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is generally very good across the school; pupils are polite and thoughtful towards others and very welcoming towards visitors.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good. They have very good relationships with each other and with all the adults in the school.
Attendance	Attendance is good. The vast majority of pupils arrive promptly and their enthusiasm makes for a positive start to the school day.

The quality of the attitudes, behaviour and personal development make a good contribution to the quality of education provided.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	good	very good	good

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

The quality of teaching observed was good and often very good, especially at Key Stage 1 where the quality of learning was very good. Of the lessons seen, 36 per cent were very good, 50 per cent were good and the rest were satisfactory. Teachers work hard and successfully cater for the range of age, ability and need within the two classes. In the lessons observed, literacy was taught well, although the need is recognised to continue to raise standards in written work. Numeracy is well taught. There is consistently effective support for those pupils with special educational needs. During the inspection there were a number of occasions when pupils were given work to do in pairs, for example, in writing tasks. The school needs to consider when this is most appropriate and when pupils would benefit from making an individual response.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced, although the school plans to review the time given to the various subjects. The school's development of information and communication technology should be enhanced when the school becomes part of the National Grid for Learning. The medium term planning is inconsistent across the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision is very good, guided by clear individual education plans which help the pupils to make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is very good provision for these areas. The pupils respond well and this impacts positively on the quality of teaching and learning.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a high level of care to meet the needs of individual pupils. Educational and pastoral support for pupils is very good.

The school works very effectively in partnership with parents who are very appreciative of the school's caring, Christian ethos.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
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Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and has a clear vision for school improvement. Given that other staff are part time, their co-ordinator roles are being well developed.
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How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is keen and very supportive of the school and benefits from the enthusiasm and close involvement of the chair of governors. Governors are taking an active part in shaping the school's direction and are gaining a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has made a very positive start in monitoring its performance with firm plans to develop further.
The strategic use of resources	There is good use of the available resources. An appropriate financial plan is in place with strategies to allocate the surplus income.

There is an adequate number of teaching and support staff. The accommodation, although well cared for and attractive, is cramped with no proper hall for physical education and a small infant classroom with too little space for play based activities for the youngest children. Facilities will improve with the extra space provided by the new extension. One small room serves as an office, headteacher's room and staff room that disadvantages the school. Outside, the facilities are now very good with the excellent field opposite, together with the newly developed imaginative outdoor play area. Resources are good and due to improve soon for information and communication technology. The school gives good consideration to the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The children like school and make good progress. ◆ The quality of teaching and the amount of homework set. ◆ The information given on progress, the school's partnership with parents, the extra-curricular activities and the way the children are helped to become responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Apart from a very small number of points raised by individual parents, there were no areas identified for improvement.

The support for the school was clearly evident in the very positive responses made to the parents' questionnaire by the high proportion who responded. All parents who responded gave indication of their approval of the standards of behaviour, the approachability of the school, the expectation that children will work hard and of the quality of the leadership and management. Parents see this as a good school and the inspection team supports that judgement. One parent summed up the views of many when he said, "It's a small school and it's like a big family."

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter school at the beginning of the school year in which they reach five years of age. Attainment on entry varies from year to year, although the majority of pupils fall within the average to above average category. Most pupils are well supported by parents and start school with enthusiasm and readiness to learn. Their language and communication skills are usually good. All pupils make good progress in the Reception year as a result of good teaching. By the end of the year, the children are in line to achieve the Early Learning Goals set out for this age group and most will exceed them. The children attain well across the six areas of learning, especially so in communication, language and literacy, in mathematical development and in personal, social and emotional development.

2. Test results do not give a reliable picture of the pupils' performance from year to year as very small numbers of pupils take the tests. The effect of one additional pupil on a school percentage measure can be considerable and, indeed, one recent cohort only contained one pupil. Results are also influenced by differences between the year groups; for example, the number of pupils with special educational needs.

3. Currently, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are very good in reading and mathematics and well above national averages; standards in writing are good. This judgement is very likely to be reflected in the 2001 test results when a larger than usual cohort was tested. Caution is needed in comparing these results with those of 2000 which were not published due to the very small number of pupils assessed. Similarly caution is also needed in comparing the school's results with those of similar schools. Using national performance data to consider results over three years gives a better, if tentative, indication of performance compared with the national averages. The 7 year olds' performance in reading, writing and mathematics over the last three years has exceeded the national average, most significantly in reading and mathematics. This pattern of attainment reflects the current one. These standards are similar to those described in the previous report in English but higher than the judgements made in mathematics and science.

4. There are too few pupils in Year 6 to make meaningful overall evaluations for the end of Key Stage 2, although these pupils, like those at Key Stage 1, achieve well relative to their abilities. Results for Year 6 pupils will reflect the individual abilities of the very small number of pupils involved. Taking the three years from 1998 to 2000 together the 11 year olds exceeded the national averages, most significantly in English and then in mathematics. These levels of performance are similar to those described in the last report. In the standards at both key stages there are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls. The school has set challenging yet realistic targets for the period ahead.

5. At the time of the previous inspection, pupils with special educational needs attained well in relation to their abilities. Good standards for these pupils have been sustained as a result of the good provision which gives equal access to the curriculum and enables pupils to make good and sometimes very good progress. Higher attaining pupils achieve appropriately in most subjects of the curriculum and they are usually given work with sufficient challenge.

6. The school has undertaken an evaluation of its assessment results and this has enabled it to identify aspects of the curriculum which require improvement. Writing has received focused attention in order to improve standards at both key stages and work seen during the inspection showed indications of rising standards in written work across the curriculum. In mathematics, the quality of teaching and learning impacts on standards which are good and sometimes very good, with significant improvements made in mental arithmetic. The two national strategies have been appropriately adapted to the needs of the school and are having a positive impact on the raising of standards.

7. The current group of 7 year olds achieve standards that are well above average in reading and speaking and listening. Pupils make good progress as a result of very good teaching and the support of parents. Pupils listen very well to their teachers and speak confidently, asking as well as answering questions. Virtually all read fluently for their age. Most of the group read, comment and answer questions about their books well; they recognise key words and the sounds of letters well for their age. Individuals who find learning to read harder than usual receive good support which helps them to do as well as they can. Most 7 year olds write simple sentences independently and many are able to use commas to separate items in a list. Pupils lack sufficient opportunities to develop their written work across all areas of the curriculum.

8. Standards achieved by the small number of 11 year olds in English are higher in speaking and listening and reading than they are in writing. Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening and in reading. They join in class discussions and express their ideas and opinions clearly. They read and understand increasingly difficult books as they move through Key Stage 2. Progress in writing is less good and some pupils do not achieve as well as they might in the technical aspects. This is because there are not enough well planned opportunities for them to write at length and there is sometimes not enough encouragement, through marking and target setting, for them to learn from their mistakes.

9. Sometimes, opportunities for individual development are lessened when pupils are given a written task to do in pairs. Pupils are taught spelling and punctuation rules but do not always apply them consistently in their own work. Standards of presentation and handwriting are variable across the school. The school is aware that the main area for raising standards is in written work at both key stages. A positive start is being made and evidence indicates that standards are beginning to rise. The school needs to continue to raise the profile of writing and provide challenging targets for the pupils.

10. Standards achieved in mathematics by 7 year olds are well above average in all aspects of the subject due to the high expectations as part of the good and very good teaching. This year group includes a good proportion of higher attainers who are likely to reach the higher level 3 in mathematics. By the end of Year 2, pupils have developed good numeracy skills. They can describe flat shapes, measure carefully and present information in simple graphs. They become confident in mental calculations, using their knowledge of number bonds to solve problems. By Year 6, most pupils can use a range of mental strategies well and can calculate quickly and accurately. They have a good understanding of shapes, including symmetry, and the higher attainers understand about different types of angles; these pupils have good problem solving skills.

11. Standards achieved by 7 year olds in science are good. Year 2 pupils have a good knowledge of plants and animals. They observe well, sort and classify appropriately for their age and record their work in a variety of ways. Pupils throughout the school show enthusiasm especially for practical tasks. Amongst the small group of Year 6 pupils, most

understand how to conduct a scientific experiment, taking care to ensure that tests are fair and recording their results well. Higher attainers have good problem solving skills and are able to make, to test and to prove or disprove a hypothesis.

12. Improving the information and communication technology curriculum and standards are a priority in the school and are reflected in the school improvement plan. Standards are broadly in line with those expected nationally with scope for improvement with the imminent provision of better resources as the school becomes part of the National Grid for Learning. Standards in religious education are good across the school and meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

13. Inspection findings indicate that attainment is good in most of the foundation subjects at both key stages; this was the case in art and design, design and technology, geography and history. Standards in singing are good but there is insufficient evidence to make judgements on other aspects of music as there is to make judgements in physical education.

14. Pupils' achievements are slightly better at Key Stage 1 than at Key Stage 2. This is related to the differences in the quality of teaching between the two key stages, with more very good teaching and learning occurring at Key Stage 1 than at Key Stage 2. This higher quality teaching promotes greater progress in learning for the younger pupils, especially in English and mathematics. Support staff and volunteers give teachers additional support and this makes a good contribution to improving pupils' achievements.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. The school has successfully improved upon the good standards of pupils' behaviour, attitudes and personal development identified in the previous report; these are now very good throughout the school. Pupils' very good attitudes to their work, their very good behaviour and relationships are significant strengths of the school. The school's ethos fosters the development of both high standards of behaviour and responsible, thoughtful attitudes in all pupils. This has a positive impact in creating a calm, purposeful atmosphere in which pupils learn and achieve well. Pupils are proud of their school.

16. Children in the Reception class are very well behaved and enjoy their time at school. They have very good relationships with their teacher and each other. They arrive at school in good time and settle quickly and happily into the day. They set about their tasks with enthusiasm and show very good levels of persistence in their activities, for example, when writing a sentence to describe a mini-beast they tried very hard to spell the words correctly and made their work neat and tidy by remembering to use appropriate 'finger spaces'. They respond well to instructions and listen carefully to each other and their teacher. At the end of lessons, they know that things have to be put away and they work well together to achieve this.

17. At both key stages, the vast majority of pupils have very positive attitudes to their work. Although they have a will to do well, many pupils do not take sufficient care in the presentation of their work particularly their handwriting. They are keen to learn and most are well motivated. Pupils ask and answer questions eagerly showing a keen interest, whatever the focus of the lesson. Year 1 and 2 pupils showed a great deal of interest in finding out what their school was like in the past; they enjoyed finding information from old photographs and the school register dating back to 1921. They were particularly interested in the punishment book. Pupils are confident and very able in expressing their views and giving

their own opinions; for example, in a literacy lesson, older pupils were very well engaged in sharing their ideas and considering aspects of the different culture and customs found in reading 'The Banana Tree'.

18. Pupils' behaviour in lessons, around school and when at play is very good. Pupils relate well to one another and bullying is not an issue. In many lessons the very good behaviour contributes well to their learning. Pupils are clear about the way they should behave and were fully involved in drawing up the school rules and were consulted about the rewards and sanctions currently in use. Every opportunity is taken to celebrate success and to share it with others. Movement to and from lessons is quiet, considerate and orderly. The school has a caring, Christian ethos. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and play a full part in school life.

19. The pupils' personal development is very good and arises from the many varied opportunities provided by the school. Relationships throughout the school are of a high standard helping achieve a positive work ethos in which pupils collaborate and learn well. Pupils give good support and encouragement to each other and show good levels of co-operation in group and class activities. For example, through collaborative play the Reception children developed their mathematical ideas well by talking to each other about bigger and smaller sandcastles. Older pupils with a good knowledge of computer procedures are more than happy to share their skills with others. Pupils of different ages mix well together in class and around the school.

20. Older pupils usually set good role models in their behaviour and attitudes to work and they are very tolerant and supportive of the younger children. Pupils are friendly and polite and hold doors open for adults. Pupils like to be helpful and enjoy carrying out duties around the school, such as tidying the classrooms and library, acting as librarians and taking out play equipment at playtimes. All pupils work very well independently during lessons when the teacher is working with a group of children.

21. Attendance is good and above national figures. Parents inform the school when their child is absent, thus eliminating unauthorised absences. The number of pupils taken on holiday during term time is increasing although the school strongly advises against doing so. Most pupils arrive punctually and there is a brisk start to the day. As soon as the pupils enter school they are keen to learn and readily become involved in the activities prepared for them. The few incidents of lateness are appropriately dealt with and discussed with both parents and pupils.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. During the inspection a total of 28 lessons and activities were observed. The quality of teaching was good and often very good, especially at Key Stage 1 where the quality of learning was often very good. Of the lessons seen, 36 per cent were very good, 50 per cent were good and the rest were satisfactory. This represents an improvement on the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. All teachers, except the headteacher, are part time and they work well together as a team in order to provide a consistent approach towards their teaching. The quality of teaching has a positive impact on the pupils' learning and enables pupils across the school to achieve well relative to their abilities.

23. The quality of teaching for children at the Foundation Stage is good and sometimes very good. The children are taught alongside older pupils who are successfully encouraged

to be role models for the younger ones. There is strong emphasis placed on the development of early reading and writing skills. The work is disadvantaged by the small infant classroom with too little space for play based activities for the youngest children. The teaching of the Reception children provides a good base for moving into Key Stage 1 and the good quality of the teaching has a direct impact on the quality of the learning taking place.

24. In both classes teachers work hard to match the work to the wide range of age and ability within the group and to ensure that all pupils are given the same opportunities to achieve well and make progress. In most lessons there are good opportunities for the pupils to discuss their work and improve their speaking and listening skills; for example, in a Key Stage 2 art and design lesson when pupils talked about their use of acrylic paint to create 'sea effects' in the style of Van Gogh. Effective use is made of staff and voluntary helpers so that they can focus on the needs of an individual or a group. Staff use a variety of approaches to interest the pupils, adapting their approach so that the pupils are given suitable opportunities to express themselves. Teachers intervene effectively and show sensitivity in asking questions and in guiding the pupils. In both classes there is a positive learning atmosphere where each child is valued; this enhances the pupils' self-esteem.

25. There are a number of strengths in the teaching. Where teaching is most effective, pupils are given opportunities to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding in lessons which cater for the learning of pupils of different ages and abilities and which ensure the full participation of all pupils; the higher attainers are given challenging work and pupils with special educational needs are given effective support. This was the case in most of the literacy and numeracy lessons seen where there were high expectations with regular feedback which helped pupils to make progress; relationships were very positive and promoted the pupils' motivation.

26. These characteristics featured in a very good design and technology lesson seen at Key Stage 1. Pupils worked closely together to use shoe boxes to create rooms which will ultimately make a house. The lesson was well resourced with carpet samples and a software program to enable pupils to design and print 'wallpaper' and 'curtains'. The pupils were well engaged in their tasks with very good supervision and intervention by the teacher, classroom assistant and a parent volunteer. This very effective teaching promoted co-operative learning. Focused questioning such as 'What would be the best material for that?' and 'What will you do next?' helped to move the pupils' learning forward. The clear aims of enabling pupils to produce ideas, to understand that their designs have to meet a variety of needs and to make realistic plans for achieving their intentions, are well met. As the teacher sums up in the very effective plenary discussion, "technology throws up problems and we have to sort them."

27. In the small number of lessons that were not as effective, the expectations of what pupils could achieve were insufficiently high and so pupils were less on task and produced less work. There were a number of occasions during the inspection when pupils were encouraged to work on tasks with a partner. Whilst this worked well in some instances, a very good example being in the design and technology lesson already referred to, in other instances it worked less well. For example, pupils were sometimes given written work to do in pairs where it was possible that one partner contributed much more than the other; a personal response in written work may better serve the school's main priority to raise standards in writing. There were times when expectations were insufficiently high regarding standards of presentation and handwriting, which are variable across the school.

28. Teachers show good subject knowledge, although confidence is less secure in information and communication technology. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught

well. The teaching of reading, which has a high priority in the school, includes appropriate opportunities for pupils to build words from letter sounds. The staff make good use of the approaches in the National Literacy Strategy and use resources well to develop pupils' interest. The staff make good teaching points about the style and mechanics of language and link this well to the sharing of texts as a group; for example, when making effective use of the books of the 'writer of the month' Jenny Nimmo. Teachers give clear guidance on spelling, although sometimes, insufficient emphasis is placed on handwriting.

29. The National Numeracy Strategy is helping to raise standards, especially in mental skills. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good and sometimes very good and directly contributes to the good standards. There is particularly good teaching in mental arithmetic, with teachers placing a strong emphasis on the quick and accurate recall of number facts. Teachers make good use of skilful questioning towards the end of the lesson to ensure that pupils have understood what has been taught. The homework activities provided offer additional opportunities to practise and reinforce skills in numeracy and literacy.

30. Although the planning for literacy and numeracy is well organised and coherent, there are some inconsistencies in the planning across the two classes and some of it needs to be clearer and better organised. The medium term planning is inconsistent and needs to be more closely monitored. Teachers make good use of assessment in English and mathematics to track the progress of individual pupils, with some useful elements in science, information and communication technology and other subjects. Teachers mark work regularly and the quality of marking is usually good, helping the pupils to understand what they are doing, how well they have done and how they can improve.

31. In the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1 very good use is made of the home-school reading records. Parents are supportive of the homework arrangements and most take an active part in their child's learning at home. The teaching needs to continue to target the development of writing across the curriculum and to further raise standards in written work. Some interesting writing tasks were observed during the inspection; this is helping to raise the profile of writing but more remains to be done. During the inspection, very little use was made of computer software to reinforce and practise skills; greater use of the resources available can enable pupils to achieve more and make better progress.

32. The school improvement plan identifies the need to develop structured monitoring of teaching and learning. This process can be problematical in a small school with so little non-teaching time. The school has clear aspirations to benefit all of its pupils from the best teaching possible. The focused monitoring of teaching, linked with self-evaluation and performance management can provide targets for improvement; it can support and guide effective practice which enhances teacher performance, which in turn impacts on pupil attainment and progress. In this way this effective school can be made even more effective.

33. The effective use of praise develops pupils' self-esteem, which contributes to the pupils' positive attitudes to learning and their will to succeed. Teachers show a good knowledge of the pupils as individuals. The needs of the pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are higher attainers, are generally met through the good quality teaching. Pupils are challenged and engaged in their learning, with very good relationships as an integral part of the process. The quality of teaching and learning is good and often very good and this is one of the school's strengths.

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

34. The curriculum and resources provided for the Reception children have been improved since the previous inspection. They are appropriately geared towards the Early Learning Goals and provide a solid foundation for Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum; for example, in the way the literacy and numeracy hours are introduced.

35. The curriculum for pupils of statutory age at Key Stages 1 and 2 is broad and balanced overall, although the school plans to review the time given to the various subjects. The school is considering implementing a three period morning instead of the current two periods, to further broaden the curricular provision and opportunities for pupils. The school's development of information and communication technology should be enhanced when it becomes part of the National Grid for Learning. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met and religious education meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Health education, including sex education and drugs awareness, is appropriately provided.

36. Planning has improved since the previous inspection but there is still further scope for development. An appropriate long term plan is in place. The four teachers plan the curriculum for the two classes with great care and in considerable detail. Broadly, consistent use is made of the weekly planning formats for the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. That apart, much of the medium term planning is done on an individual basis and a review is needed to ensure clear and consistent practices.

37. The school has effective strategies for teaching both literacy and numeracy and these are beginning to have a positive impact on attainment in English and mathematics. Booster teaching to individuals or small groups in literacy and numeracy is helping raise standards across both key stages. The school has undertaken an evaluation of its assessment results and this has enabled it to identify aspects of the curriculum which require improvement. Writing has received focused attention in order to improve standards at both key stages and work seen during the inspection showed indications of rising standards in written work across the curriculum.

38. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good; it meets the requirements of the national Code of Practice and ensures pupils make good progress, guided by helpful individual education plans. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, receive equal access to the curriculum provided. Class teachers are aware of literacy and numeracy needs through good, regular assessments and the school provides differentiated activities and good levels of support. Pupils who have unavoidably missed much schooling are supported with 'catch up' teaching to fill the gaps in their learning. At Key Stage 2, the younger, higher attainers access work from the higher year group for numeracy and literacy.

39. The statutory curriculum is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular and other activities that are supported by all members of staff. A recorder club is provided for pupils from Year 2 onwards. Performance opportunities are also provided for the pupils. A musical based on the story of 'Bugsy Malone' was having final rehearsals during the inspection week; the pupils showed obvious enthusiasm and enjoyment in preparing for this forthcoming production, with good social interaction between them. Pupils are proud of their achievements in the technology club and talk enthusiastically about the wire sculptures and wooden picture frames they have completed. The sports club provides opportunities

to further pupils' physical and social activities. Touch-typing is established as an extra-curricular activity and many pupils are becoming very proficient and improving their keyboard skills.

40. The school enriches the curriculum further by the many educational visits to complement the topics being studied by the pupils. Visits to places such as Castleton, the Sealife Centre in Rhyl and the Jewish Museum in Manchester broaden the pupils' experiences. Pupils also benefit from visitors to the school such as the puppet theatre group who performed Rumpelstiltskin and a book illustrator. A local artist worked alongside the pupils supporting designing, modelling and painting. The school organises an annual residential visit for Key Stage 2 pupils. Year 6 pupils are enthusiastic about their additional residential visit which is shared with the nine other primary schools which feed the secondary school. Opportunities to meet new classmates and the Year 7 tutors, provide a very valuable contribution to the induction process. Overall these worthwhile extra-curricular activities enrich the school's curriculum by promoting social and moral values.

41. The community makes a very good contribution to the pupils' learning. The school is integral to most village activities. Recently, older people from the community have talked to pupils about the history of the school. Rose Queen celebrations were recently held in the village and the school's harvest festival is an annual community event. The school's work is enriched by the links it has with the community, in which its church school status renders it a focal point. Relationships with the school's partner institutions are very good. Most of the children have attended a local nursery prior to their very effective induction into the school. Sports tournaments with the other primary schools are organised and held at the local secondary school. Links with the secondary school are very effective; Year 6 pupils enjoy the opportunity to visit their new school, which provides 'taster' days before they transfer.

42. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Collective worship and personal and social development lessons make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development by helping pupils to both think about important aspects of life and to value both their own achievements and those of others. The ethos of the school, based on Christian principles, is very strong and makes a significant contribution to pupils' progress. Arrangements for collective worship in the chancel area of the school provide good opportunities for pupils to gain further insights into the Christian faith and offer daily opportunities for prayer and thought. Candles used at this time contribute to a calm atmosphere and are conducive to prayer and reflection. Good interaction between the staff and the pupils was evident at both the collective worship times observed. A very effective collective worship session was observed about coming together in friendship, as God wants us to, when a local Methodist minister used a web of string to illustrate a web of relationships in a practical way.

43. The school's provision for moral and social development is very good. The pupils' moral and social development is part of every aspect of the school's life. Through assemblies the school seeks to both reinforce positive attitudes and values and to praise good behaviour, attitudes and progress. Pupils respond well when staff consistently explain and reinforce their high moral and social expectations. The principles of right and wrong are clearly taught, as parents are happy to confirm. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to discuss school rules at regular intervals; other issues are discussed in formal school meetings with both key stages taking part separately. Pupils learn to work together well in groups when they share equipment and help one another develop ideas. One example from many in Year 2 illustrates this well. A child was completing some work using a programmable floor robot and had difficulty in counting the number of steps that the robot

moved; two children helped him and then ensured everything was cleared away in time for break. A number of charities are supported by the pupils, for example, the British Legion and the local hospital, where the pupils distribute flowers to patients after the harvest festival celebrations.

44. Aspects of pupils' cultural development are good and often very good. Assemblies and subjects such as history and geography make a positive contribution to celebrating and understanding customs and traditions. For example, opportunities are taken to celebrate pupils' birthdays, and pupils learn to compare their education with that of the 1960s. Lessons are provided in which pupils can develop an awareness of multicultural aspects of society through, for example, their study of Ghana in geography. Watching a display of Ghanaian dancers, making millet porridge and learning about fair trade policies all enhance their experiences of other cultures. All the staff have recently attended a course at the local Education Centre to find out more about other faiths and cultures. The number of resources available to promote pupils' awareness of other major world religions is limited.

45. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. It impacts positively on all aspects of school life and is one of the school's many strengths.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

46. The school has a caring, Christian ethos and gives good support and guidance to all its pupils. There is evidence of a family atmosphere where teachers have a very close knowledge of individual pupils and their particular needs. Parents feel that the way the staff help pupils whatever their ability is a true strength of the school.

47. The safety and welfare of all pupils is fundamental to the work of the school. The very good relationships at all levels ensure that any worries that pupils have are picked up early and dealt with. Staff and pupils have a good awareness of the difficulties new pupils may encounter on joining the school and provide good support to help them settle into school life. Excellent arrangements are made to support children and their parents prior to induction into the Reception class. The very effective induction procedures help children to settle quickly and happily into the routines of the school.

48. The procedures for health and safety are good. The governors and staff are aware of making sure the school is a safe environment. They have been particularly vigilant in ensuring pupils' safety during the recent building work at the school. The lunchtime supervisor has kindly volunteered to work extra time to supervise the pupils as they arrive at school in the morning. Staff are alert to the pupils with special medical conditions and respond to their needs very effectively. Child protection procedures are securely in place.

49. The school has very good procedures for promoting good behaviour. The school's behaviour policy is straightforward, recognising that most pupils behave very well and that parents and the school have a common understanding about acceptable standards. The teachers are very good role models and expect high standards of behaviour in and out of the classrooms. Pupils duly respond and have a good understanding of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour within the school community. In the case of unacceptable behaviour, the school imposes appropriate sanctions.

50. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good. The school promptly telephones parents whose children make their own way to school and are absent without prior notice. This procedure is particularly beneficial because pupils' absence is fully explained and it serves as a safety check for parents. Parents understand their responsibility to inform school of reasons for absence and, with their co-operation, almost all absences are accounted for.

51. Procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic performance in English and mathematics are good. The school maintains the good standards identified in the previous report. Within the first few weeks of starting school, children are assessed and the information is used well to plan for their future learning. There is good analysis of pupils' performance in national tests at the end of each key stage; the information is evaluated and used to inform the school of general trends. Pupils' progress is checked through the good use of optional national assessment materials. The records provide a useful tracking system of pupils' test performances so as to form an overall picture as they move through the school. Teachers set realistic targets for the future using the information from these analyses. The small size of year groups makes comparisons difficult because the test results of individual pupils make a considerable difference to percentage points. The school concentrates, therefore, on setting targets for individual pupils.

52. In subjects other than English and mathematics, the school is beginning to develop consistent systems to assess and record the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Teachers keep full and useful records but the absence of a common format for collating information makes it difficult to check what pupils know, understand and can do in all subjects. The school is able to detect very quickly where a pupil may need help or additional support. The very good knowledge that teachers have of pupils and their families helps them to keep parents well informed of potential problems.

53. Pupils' personal development thrives through the individual attention they receive. This is a big advantage in such a small school because teachers know their pupils very well and quickly recognise any change in behaviour or attitude. Aspects of pupils' personal development are recorded in detail in the annual progress reports. There are very clear procedures for the early identification of pupils with special educational needs. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is good and the learning targets are reasonable and achievable and are regularly reviewed. Pupils are given very good support and they achieve well.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

54. The school's partnership with parents is strong. It provides enrichment to the pupils' learning experiences and makes a very good contribution to the standards attained.

55. Parents think very highly of the school. Overwhelmingly, parents are appreciative of the work of the school in providing high standards of education for their children. A high proportion of parents answered the questionnaire and gave opinions at the pre-inspection meeting. The vast majority are extremely pleased with all aspects of school life. Parents have a clear view that the school is well led, staff are approachable and teaching is good. They see their children liking school, making good progress and working hard to achieve their best. Inspectors share parents' very positive views of the school and of the education it is providing for their children. Parents feel a particular strength of the school is the way individual needs are catered for and pupils are helped whatever their ability. Although this is

a similar picture to the findings of the previous inspection, parents feel that the school has continued to improve.

56. The quality of information provided to parents is very good and informative. The school prospectus is very detailed and attractively presented. Parents receive regular information about the school and its activities from interesting newsletters. They feel that the homework diary provides a useful two-way communication between home and school. The annual reports on pupils' progress are of good quality. They tell parents what their children have been doing, identify particular strengths and state what needs to be done to improve. Parents have regular formal opportunities to find out how their child is getting on and know that they can come into school to speak to teachers and look at children's work whenever they like. Good information booklets are issued to parents when their children start school. They contain important information about the school and the curriculum and suggest activities for parents to support their child's learning at home.

57. The relationships between the school and parents are very good. Regular day-to-day contact with parents and a willingness to listen and quickly take effective action in response to areas of concern, are outstanding features. The school enjoys the active support of the vast majority of parents. Parents are full partners in the education of their children. They want their children to do well and are consulted frequently through questionnaires about decisions affecting the school and their children's education.

58. The school welcomes and relies on the involvement of parents in the life of the school. Parents respond positively to requests for help with the children. They accompany children on visits, listen to them read and assist the teachers with various curriculum areas. Recently, the school held a Science and Technology in the Workplace week and many parents offered valuable support by sharing an appropriate aspect of their work with the children. Parents support the school strongly through the parents' association, which is, as one parent commented 'like one big club', and open to the whole of the school community. The school has benefited from fund-raising which has partly funded the very good developments in the school grounds. Parents are happy to support their child when work is sent home and, when asked, provide a good range of resources and artefacts to support topic work. Their involvement at home has a positive influence on the children's education.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. The quality of leadership and management is very good. The enthusiastic headteacher provides very clear educational direction to the work of the school and has a very good grasp of the school's needs. She has successfully led a hard working staff in a number of worthwhile developments since the previous report. All the staff work together effectively and are strongly committed to very good relationships and equal opportunities for all the pupils in their care. There is a clear focus on raising standards and this has supported significant improvements since the previous report. The school is meeting its aims and parents are pleased with the way these aims are reflected in pupils' achievements and personal development.

60. The governing body is very effective in fulfilling its responsibilities and statutory duties. Governors share the staff's aspirations for the school and are keen and very supportive of the school; most have undertaken appropriate training. A sound committee structure has been devised to help governors manage their work and they are gaining a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors voice

every confidence in the headteacher's leadership. They are well informed through the school improvement plan and are taking an active part in shaping the direction of the school. The compilation of the governing body is appropriate and governors regularly visit the school. The governing body benefits from the enthusiasm and very close involvement of its chair of governors, although relatively new to the post, he is making a significant contribution to the success of the school.

61. The headteacher has started to make good use of available data to evaluate the work of the school. She compares the work of the school to standards attained by other schools locally and nationally and analyses the school's results to find areas which require improvement. For example, work has begun on improving provision and standards in information and communication technology and the need to target the raising of standards in written work is clearly recognised.

62. There is a good blend of experienced staff and all have at least two areas of subject responsibility. Co-ordinators are appropriately matched to their roles, either by qualification or by training and expertise. Given that the teachers are part time, their co-ordinator roles are being well developed. Staff have undertaken training in their areas and worked with local education authority staff. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have had a major impact on teaching techniques and have extended boundaries in each subject. All staff have undertaken training in information and communication technology.

63. The school is aware that no formal induction policy for new staff is in place; this will be needed, given future staffing developments. Support staff are effectively deployed and teachers ensure that that high expectations of behaviour and attainment are shared and that these staff are well informed about both the aims of the work which they undertake and the pupils with whom they work. Support staff provide good support for pupils with special educational needs and make a significant contribution to the standards attained and the quality of the education within the school.

64. The school improvement plan outlines developments to be made over the next two years. Budget implications are identified and appropriate financial plans are made. The headteacher is involved in making changes through review based on a published school improvement programme, which is being adapted to the school's needs. The school is committed to the process of performance management and the headteacher's performance target setting and review is in its second cycle. From September, the headteacher will be released from teaching for a full day each week and she intends to give time to the development of school self-evaluation with a more systematic approach to this work. There is a regular schedule for policy review and most policies have been updated to reflect current practice.

65. Overall, the school has made a very positive start in monitoring its performance. The headteacher and co-ordinators, as part of the school's performance management work, have monitored the teaching of literacy, numeracy and science. The monitoring and development of teaching and learning should be further developed to both include other subjects and to become a regular part of the school's self-evaluation procedures. Monitoring needs to be more rigorous, involving the setting and review of targets. The chair of governors has monitored the ethos of the school.

66. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and reflects the caring, Christian ethos. The special educational needs co-ordinator, the headteacher and the special educational needs assistants work together as a team to

promote the interests of this group of pupils. Local education authority provision is supplemented from the school's own resources. There are close working relationships between the school and outside support, the local cluster of small primary schools and special interest groups within the area. The documentation relating to these pupils is carefully maintained and accessible to all staff. Support assistants are well trained, competent and supportive in their approach to the pupils they assist. A governor with responsibility for liaising about the special educational needs aspect of the school is kept well informed about provision. All governors feel fully informed and involved.

67. The two administrative staff efficiently run the school's financial and daily administration. The financial assistant very effectively uses the new technology, which is linked to the local education authority's computerised system. Governors are fully informed about budget monitoring by both the headteacher and the local education authority. Governors receive regular reports about the school's finances and are appropriately involved in the monitoring of finances. The school's budget shows a significant surplus which is being reduced through spending on the new extension and the creation of a third full time class, in anticipation of the increased numbers. Specific grants, for example, the Standards Fund are used well for designated purposes. The school is due for a local authority audit as the previous one, the recommendations of which were acted upon, was over three years ago. The principles of best value are effectively applied in the school's work.

68. The accommodation, although well cared for and attractive, is cramped with no proper hall for physical education and too little space for play based activities for the young children. The chancel area is used well for whole school assemblies, reflection time and quiet study. Facilities will improve with the extra space provided by the new extension. One small room serves as an office, headteacher's room and staff room which disadvantages the school. Outside facilities are now very good with the excellent field opposite the school together with the newly developed imaginative outdoor play area. Resources are good and due to improve soon for information and communication technology.

69. The headteacher, staff and governors hold shared values for the school and its work. These are evident in much of the work of the school and the consistency of approach contributes significantly to the effectiveness of the work that is done.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The governors' action plan will set out how the areas for improvement identified during the inspection are to be addressed.

In order to build on the school's many strengths and the quality of education provided and to further raise standards, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- ◆ Develop and improve written work by:
 - *raising the profile of writing in the school;*
 - *raising expectations of what the higher attainers can achieve;*
 - *giving pupils more opportunities for extended writing, including the development of detail;*
 - *reviewing the use made of pair work;*

- *creating more opportunities for pupils to write for a variety of purposes and audiences;*
- *giving pupils more opportunities to write and make a personal response in foundation subjects;*
- *developing target setting based on National Curriculum level descriptors;*
- *improving and making more consistent standards of presentation and handwriting.*

(paragraphs 6, 7, 8, 9, 27, 29, 31, 37, 79, 81, 85, 86, 87 and 129)

In addition to the above areas, the following less critical area should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. This is indicated in paragraphs 30, 36, 108, 115, 120, 129, 134 and 141:

- ◆ Medium term planning.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	28
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	55

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	36	50	14	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR –Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	46
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR –Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4

English as an additional language	Number of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	Number of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.4
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	3	3	6

In accordance with statutory requirements, the results of the National Curriculum assessments are not reported as the number of pupils in Year 2 was less than 10.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	1	3	4

In accordance with statutory requirements, the results of the National Curriculum assessments are not reported as the number of pupils in Year 6 was less than 10.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	39
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17 : 1
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25

Financial information

Financial year	1999/00
	£
Total income	156,484
Total expenditure	154,234
Expenditure per pupil	3,353
Balance brought forward from previous year	29,082

Balance carried forward to next year	31,332
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Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	53
Number of questionnaires returned	37

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75	22	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	35	0	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	70	30	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	49	5	0	3
The teaching is good.	65	32	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	40	3	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	22	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	38	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	65	32	0	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	81	19	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	27	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51	43	3	0	3

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

70. There are seven children in the Reception year. The very good induction arrangements have helped to ensure that they have all settled happily into the school and are making good progress. They are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning by the end of the year and most of the children will exceed them. Children attain well across the areas of learning, especially in communication, language and literacy, in mathematical development and in personal, social and emotional development. In most areas the work is well resourced. The lack of resources was an issue in the previous report; this has now been addressed. The work provides a very good basis for Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum.

Personal, social and emotional development

71. The combined Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 class provides a warm and secure environment in which the children's personal, social and emotional development is well catered for. The two teachers are very sensitive to the needs of the youngest children and make sure that they feel part of the class, whilst also providing for them as a separate group; the teaching in this area is very good. These young children listen and respond very well. It is sometimes hard to pick them out from the older pupils when they are all seated together, when listening to a story for example. They enthusiastically talk about their feelings and their experiences. Children become confident, independent and capable of making sensible choices. They work together as a group, working alongside one another happily. Their enthusiasm is clear to see. The approachability of the school ensures that parents gain clear insights into how their children are doing.

Communication, language and literacy

72. Children's skills of communication, language and literacy are developed well. Children listen and join in with simple language and number rhymes. They talk confidently to adults, asking questions and making comments. They enthusiastically describe what they found on their 'Worm Hunt'; they explain that by watering the soil, the worms would think that it was raining. They listen attentively and show good understanding; for example, when listening to the text of 'Minibeast Alphabet'. The children enjoy a phonic game when the teacher's use of a frog puppet encourages them to listen attentively. They like books and enjoy sharing them with adults. They are very enthusiastic to read to visitors. They are beginning to read simple books and to write independently. They write recognisable letters and words and most have developed good pencil control. Teaching of these early skills is good. Work is planned carefully, so that children spend part of the literacy hour with the whole class, before moving into a group to work at their own level. This area of learning is very well resourced and good levels of attainment impact on the quality of learning across all the areas.

Mathematical development

73. The children's mathematical skills develop well because of the good teaching. The teachers are skilled at using situations that arise in the classroom to promote counting, addition and subtraction; for example, children are encouraged to count their scoops when experimenting in sand play. They can count reliably up to 10 and beyond using everyday

objects, can recognise numerals 1 to 9 and higher and can find one more or less than a number from 1 to 10. They understand concepts such as heavier and lighter than; they enjoy sorting, balancing and weighing activities.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

74. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is promoted through many activities and the good quality of teaching. Opportunities for the children to learn about their own school and locality, including its history, are used well; good use is made of maps and photographs. Children are encouraged to learn about village life and visit the shop, the pond and the local farm. They learn of the wider world through visits to Delamere Forest and to Rhyl, where they visit the Sealife centre. They plant bulbs and seeds, including ones for the school garden. Scientific understanding is enhanced through valuable practical work, including that on the minibeasts topic. Technological understanding is enhanced by regular access to the computer where most show good mouse skills. Children use construction materials and kits to build things, often related to the topics. Work is planned to meet their particular needs and is well supervised by staff.

Physical development

75. Children enjoy a good range of tasks to help develop their manual skills, for example, cutting, gluing, drawing and painting; they learn to handle tools, objects and materials safely. Opportunities for physical development are limited, partly because of the lack of a suitable hall for physical activities, although the children are beginning to benefit from opportunities for climbing and swinging using the new outdoor apparatus in the new play area. There is need to develop a secure area for play with opportunities for better resourced outside play. The use of a wider range of small and large equipment can enhance learning in this area which is relatively underdeveloped.

Creative development

76. Children's creative development is promoted well through a good range of work, including art, music and imaginative play. Children enjoy drawing and painting and become competent at modelling using a good range of media. Children sing a good range of songs and begin to develop good mathematical skills using a good range of percussion instruments; they sing nursery rhymes and number songs. They enjoy playing imaginatively in the role-play area. The children enjoy this area which is well taught, making a good contribution to the good quality of education provided.

ENGLISH

77. Judgements in English are in part based on lesson observations, mainly those made of the literacy hour in each of the classes, talking with pupils and hearing readers. They are also based on a close and detailed examination of pupils' work, including booklets and topic work, on work on display and on data and information collected from the school's records and assessments and those of individual pupils.

78. On the basis of the evidence seen during the inspection, standards for the larger than usual cohort at the end of Key Stage 1 are very good and well above the national average in reading. In writing, standards are good and above the national average. These judgements endorse those made in the previous report. Caution is needed in comparing these results with those of 2000 which were not published due to the very small number of pupils

assessed. Using national performance data to consider results over three years gives a better indication of performance compared with the national average but still needs caution. The 7 year olds' performance in reading and writing over the last three years has exceeded the national average, most significantly in reading.

79. The current Year 2 group is the largest in the school, with a good proportion of higher attainers, and current assessments indicate that this pattern of attainment will continue. In writing over recent years a very good number have reached the appropriate level 2 for 7 year olds, no pupils in recent years have reached the higher level 3. Although this picture will be slightly better in the 2001 results, this pattern of attainment informs the school's priority to raise standards.

80. There are too few pupils in Year 6 to make meaningful overall evaluations for the end of Key Stage 2. Taking the three years from 1998 to 2000 together the 11 year olds exceeded the national average in English. Results for Year 6 pupils in 2001 will reflect the individual abilities of the very small number of pupils involved who achieve well relative to their abilities. In the standards at both key stages there are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls.

81. At both key stages standards are higher in reading and speaking and listening than they are in writing. Staff have identified writing as the key area for improvement throughout the school and inspection findings endorse this. Strategies are beginning to be put in place to enhance pupils' skills and increase the opportunities for writing, with higher expectations of what the pupils can achieve.

82. Throughout the school, pupils' skills in speaking and listening are well above average. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils speak clearly and reply confidently to teachers' questions. They express ideas and thoughts effectively; for example, in a Key Stage 1 music lesson taken in the new outside play area, having shown good listening and concentration, pupils gave clear descriptions of all the sounds they had heard. Pupils listen attentively to stories and in assembly and take turns to contribute to discussions. They listen very well to their teachers and speak confidently, asking as well as answering questions. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils join in discussions confidently and answer teachers' questions with increasing clarity. They discuss their favourite writers and give good reasons for their choices. Older pupils reflect on their time at the school, reminiscing and articulating about highlights such as residential visits to Haworth, Ambleside and Castleton. They reflect on their new school and the opportunities ahead to use the Astroturf, the science laboratories and the gymnasium.

83. Reading is given a high priority and pupils make good progress as a result of the very good teaching together with good support from parents through the home-school reading arrangements. They recognise key words and the sounds of letters well for their age. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading is very good. Most develop a love of reading and enjoy practising their skills. The younger pupils were very enthusiastic to read to their visitor during inspection week. Good teaching of letter sounds and patterns gives pupils confidence to build up words and gain meaning from texts. Pupils also use a variety of clues such as context, understanding of character and story titles. Higher attaining pupils read simple storybooks confidently and discuss the characters and stories. As they read together in the literacy hour, pupils look for specific features such as rhyming words or punctuation. The National Literacy Strategy is having a good impact on the standards being achieved.

84. Pupils at Key Stage 1 achieve very well as they work on patterns of letters to make sounds to begin or end words. Higher attainers are able to use the contents and index pages of non-fiction books to locate information on minibests, making good use of alphabetical order. Pupils read and understand increasingly difficult books as they move through Key Stage 2. By the end of the key stage, most pupils read well and standards are well above average. Most are becoming reflective readers who can read a range of texts fluently and accurately, making knowledgeable reference to their favourite writers and stories. They use context cues well and recount significant ideas, events and characters in stories.

85. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in writing is good in terms of the proportion of pupils who attain the expected level 2, but standards could be higher. There are indications that standards are improving because of the school's focus on writing. Pupils achieve soundly relative to their abilities at the end of Key Stage 2, where standards in written work are also beginning to improve. Compared with reading and speaking and listening, progress in writing is less good and some pupils do not achieve as well as they might in the technical aspects. They can benefit from more well planned opportunities to write at length; there is sometimes not enough encouragement, through marking and target setting for them to learn from their mistakes. Sometimes opportunities for individual development are lessened when pupils are given a written task to do in pairs. Pupils are taught spelling and punctuation rules but do not always apply them consistently in their own work. Standards of presentation and handwriting are variable across the school and pupils' work is rarely, if ever, dated.

86. During the inspection some evidence of personal and creative writing in exercise books and in work on display was seen but there is still a need for more to be done. There were some good examples, such as the ones in history, of tasks being set where pupils were able to develop their writing skills. A good proportion of the written work in English and in some foundation subjects is based on the completion of worksheets. These are not always matched to the needs of the pupils and can prevent them from having regular opportunities to make a personal response in writing. The school needs to continue to raise the profile of writing, including the promotion of extended writing and the development of detail. Writing tasks need to be more often built into work in subjects such as science, history and geography. Pupils' writing skills will benefit from more regular opportunities to write for a wider variety of purposes and audiences and for more opportunities for extended writing including the development of detail. More focused target setting can help the pupils to reach higher levels in their written work.

87. The staff have worked hard to adapt the literacy hour to the needs of the two classes, given the wide range of age and abilities in each of them. The effective introduction of the literacy hour has had a positive impact on standards and also on the quality of teaching. The quality of teaching and learning is very good at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. The good and very good teaching has a positive impact on how well the pupils achieve. Pupils across the school, including those with special educational needs, make good progress, although progress needs to be more marked in writing. The best lessons were characterised by well chosen and effectively planned activities for each group and a brisk pace which stimulated pupils and encouraged them to learn at a good rate. Teachers are beginning to effectively address the school's target to improve pupils' writing. Teachers' enthusiasm enhances the literacy hour and good use is being made of the time to make links with, and use materials from, other subjects.

88. The level of resourcing is good with a good range of big books and sets of books. The reference library is a valuable resource. Pupils could benefit from more frequent opportunities to develop word processing skills and access information from computer software; during the inspection little or no work was seen on computers during English lessons. A number of pupils benefit significantly from the extra-curricular touch-typing provision. Good use is made of informal teacher assessment, standardised tests and the optional national tests. These strategies enable the school to monitor the attainment and progress of pupils in English. There has been informal monitoring and evaluation of teaching in the literacy hour; this now needs to be more rigorous, providing feedback and targets for development as part of the school's aim of raising standards of teaching and learning, especially in writing. Visits from a puppet theatre workshop, together with annual visits to the theatre enhance pupils' learning. The co-ordinator leads the development of the subject well and this has had a positive impact.

MATHEMATICS

89. On the basis of the evidence seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are very good and above the national average. This represents an improvement on the judgement made in the previous report. Caution is needed in comparing these with the results of 2000 which were not published due to the very small number of pupils assessed. Taking the three years 1998 to 2000 together, national performance data shows that the performance in mathematics exceeded the national average by a significant margin. There are too few pupils in Year 6 to make overall evaluations at the end of the key stage, although the pupils, like those at Key Stage 1, achieve well relative to their abilities.

90. Standards have risen since the previous report; standards continue to rise due to the good implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and the priority given to this subject. The school has set targets for improvement in pupils' attainment especially at Key Stage 2, and is developing strategies to help achieve these targets. A tracking system has been implemented to help underachievers improve.

91. At Key Stage 1, pupils are helped to gain a secure foundation of skills and understanding in all mathematical areas. Year 1 pupils understand and use correct vocabulary for capacity as a unit of measure. They enjoy estimating, guessing and checking their estimations. Some pupils are surprised by the amounts the containers hold. Year 2 pupils begin to solve simple problems and are developing confidence and competence in the recall of number facts and in explaining how they achieve answers. Pupils are very good at programming instructions for moving along a route using a programmable floor robot. Pupils have been well taught to think out and make a written program for the robot using letters and numbers only. A good computer program complemented this activity. By the end of the key stage, pupils are able to handle data and interpret graphs at a good level.

92. Written calculation is usually accurate at both key stages but pupils' presentation, especially across Key Stage 2, is generally untidy. Work is not dated and rulers are not used by the majority of pupils to guide drawing straight lines. Year 3 and 4 pupils are developing an understanding of the 24-hour clock and some are confident with problem solving about lifetime situations. The majority need much input from the teacher in solving these investigative type problems. Year 5 and 6 pupils, by investigating multiplication and division using whole numbers and decimals, are developing a good understanding of place value. They know how to work out percentages and understand the correlation between

decimals, percentages and fractions. Pupils know the difference between line and bar graphs and the importance of using line graphs for precise information. Information and communication technology complemented this at Year 5 and 6 where pupils used the computer to draw and interpret a line graph about their pulse rate before and after exercise. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good awareness of number patterns and use these in their own working.

93. Pupils communicate well across both key stages and show a good understanding of mathematical vocabulary. Pupils who have special educational needs attain standards appropriate to their abilities and targets and make good progress. Progress in mathematics, including mental calculations, is good. The majority of pupils enjoy mathematics and they invariably work hard and sustain keen interest. This positive approach contributes to a good atmosphere for learning. Pupils work well individually, in pairs and in larger groups but sometimes the paired working limits progress where one pupil leads too much and the partner remains passive.

94. The teaching is good overall, with some very good teaching at Key Stage 1. All teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of the subject. A fun element is evident throughout the teaching at Key Stage 1, which pupils enjoy and participate in enthusiastically. Where the quality of teaching is very good, there is evidence of previous very good teaching: for example, Year 2 pupils work on angles, including right angles, to prepare them well for giving commands to the programmable floor robot. Daily mental mathematics is used across the school, which contributes to the good practice achieved by most pupils. Most lessons are well planned with clear objectives and activities. At Key Stage 2 there is a need to have sharper differentiation so that appropriate challenge is always provided especially for those capable of completing more written work.

95. A numeracy policy was approved by the governing body recently. The work covered is based on the National Numeracy Strategy with some adaptations from two other commercial schemes. The subject is effectively co-ordinated with teachers' weekly planning monitored. The headteacher has monitored teaching and learning standards well and has successfully promoted ideas for development and change. Formal assessment procedures are being developed. Information and communication technology is being used by some teachers to support the subject and the school recognises this is an area for development so that all pupils receive cross-curricular mathematics teaching with information and communication technology input when appropriate.

96. The school is well resourced to teach the requirements of the National Curriculum. Teachers use the opportunities that many subjects offer to extend pupils' number skills well. For example, in practical subjects such as science and design and technology, pupils practise and develop their measuring skills; in history they work out the ages of past pupils by looking at their date of birth from past school registers and in geography they learn about co-ordinates. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the progress the school is making in raising standards and what needs to be done in the future to continue improvements.

SCIENCE

97. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are good and above the national average. There are too few pupils in Year 6 to make overall evaluation of attainment, although the pupils in this group achieve well relative to their abilities. Most pupils including those with

special educational needs make good progress. This represents a continuing positive picture of attainment and progress since the previous inspection.

98. At Key Stage 1, pupils relate life processes to animals and plants found in the local environment. They know how to treat animals with care and sensitivity. At the end of a practical session of collecting and investigating 'mini beasts', Year 1 pupils are able to answer questions posed by the teacher about habitats and reasons why mini beasts live there. Pupils know that worms like cold, damp soil. They know that by watering the soil worms appear above it. One pupil says without any prompting from the teacher 'They come out because they think it's raining.' Year 2 pupils show good knowledge of electricity and experiment to discover how a circuit works. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can explain

terms such as prediction. They predict which materials float or sink when using egg boxes, foil and plastic. They have a good understanding of how to carry out an investigation and draw conclusions.

99. At Key Stage 2, pupils are similarly good at undertaking investigations and have progressed sufficiently to conduct fair testing. Year 5 and 6 pupils look at factors which help solids dissolve; from fair testing, they write down their predictions from three tests to dissolve sugar cubes. By the end of the key stage, pupils are developing skills in drawing conclusions from observations. Pupils' general knowledge of the technical and scientific world around them is secure. They enjoy carrying out investigations, where they encourage and support each other effectively. There is sometimes insufficient differentiation between the two groups at Key Stage 2. Most pupils are given the same work across the key stage with very little differentiation appropriate to their needs and abilities. More differentiation at Key Stage 1 was in place with both groups having different work.

100. Across the school the quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are planned clearly. Work from previous lessons is reviewed and teachers use this information well to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding. Data handling, to record and present findings, using computer programs is underdeveloped. Pupils respond well to their work. Most behave well and happily share their findings with others. They show good levels of concentration, listen to the teaching and participate enthusiastically in the practical activities. The sinks were unusable for the Year 5 and 6 lesson due to building work; in spite of this, pupils coped well getting water from a jug without causing any disruption.

101. The recent science and technology week helped to raise the profile of these subjects in school. Visitors with scientific background or expertise willingly gave talks to the pupils. These included a local veterinary nurse, a speech therapist, a nurse, a doctor and a retired worker from the water board who told the pupils about water purification. The week culminated with a quiz, parents versus children, on the last evening. The quiz was a very good way of showing the parents some of the work being done in school. The older pupils enjoyed the science elements during the Castleton residential visit. They observed limestone and fossils as part of their topic about materials. They enjoyed their pond dipping experiences at Castleton, gaining insight into the environment.

102. The school has made good progress since the previous inspection to provide a useful scheme of work. National Curriculum requirements for this subject are met. Teachers' yearly planning ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, receive specific work to match the required programme of study. Pupils' attainment and progress are formally recorded satisfactorily to provide some targets for improvement. A

work sample is levelled at the end of each year. Investigative type work is set for homework. The subject is effectively co-ordinated and well resourced.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

103. At the end of both key stages, attainment is broadly in line with what is expected. Pupils leave at the age of 11 with the expected skills and knowledge in most aspects of information and communication technology. This is a similar judgement to that made at the time of the previous inspection.

104. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils know how to open a new file and save their work. They use programs competently; for example, a commercial colouring program. The higher attaining pupils know how to access information using a CD-ROM, for example, one pupil was able to research information about a bee. There is some evidence that control technology is being effectively introduced using a programmable floor robot.

105. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils have satisfactory word processing skills which they use to produce work combining text and graphics. Year 3 and 4 pupils design a poster about electricity making effective use of text and graphics. Year 5 and 6 pupils use a commercial program and a digital camera to create a newsletter. By the end of the key stage, most pupils are becoming competent with simple data handling, the use of art packages and accessing information through CD-ROMs. Year 5 and 6 pupils are able to write simple procedures to control more than one output on a motoring device. They use simple control language such as sensor edit. They are beginning to recognise the need for precision when writing a sequence of instructions.

106. Very good support is being provided by a technician who comes in for an information and communication technology lesson at Key Stage 2 for one afternoon every three weeks. His expertise is appreciated and there is very good partnership between the class teacher and the technician in helping the pupils to both make decisions with the aid of information and communication technology programs and to improve their skills in control technology. The pupils could benefit from more opportunities to use the computer across the various curricular areas. During the time of the inspection insufficient use was made of the computers.

107. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress across both key stages. During the inspection, the computers were often switched on but not always used effectively to complement the other subjects. Following a structured programme of staff in-service training, the teachers' expertise has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Teachers give clear instructions and explanations, so that pupils know what they have to do and how to do it. Pupils listen well and when they have heard the instructions they are able to practise on the machines independently or with a partner. The lack of machines, with only one computer per class, limits the pupils' working capacity. The school is in the final phase of National Grid for Learning funding and plans to have two computers per class with Internet input in the autumn. The parents' association is helping with the funding.

108. Good teaching across both key stages ensures that tasks are relevant and interesting. Evidence shows that teachers' confidence for planning pupils' tasks is improving. Very good teaching in cross-curricular music and information and communication technology was seen in Year 2. Pupils are good at listening to tunes shown on the 'icons'.

When told to count rhythm one pupil said, "It's like syllables." Pupils competently 'dragged' and 'dropped' the icons using the mouse. Some formal assessment is in place where pupils see for themselves the progress they are making by using a tick list. The school needs to ensure that pupils routinely have enough time to become independent users and that planning for the work is undertaken in a consistent way.

109. Teachers use the guidance from a commercial scheme of work and have adapted it to suit the needs of the school. The co-ordinator has good expertise in the subject and is aware of the school's shortcomings. She is playing a significant role in bringing about the subject's development with planned improvements for the next few years. A very effective touch-typing session is provided weekly for Key Stage 2 pupils. This is a very worthwhile extra-curricular activity, supporting the subject effectively.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

110. There is insufficient evidence to make firm judgements on the quality of teaching and learning as no lessons were seen in religious education during the inspection. The evidence collected, including a scrutiny of work displayed, pupils' work, teachers' planning and observations of acts of collective worship, indicates that pupils' levels of attainment are good and meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This concurs with the judgements made at the time of the previous inspection.

111. At Key Stage 1, pupils gain insights into the Bible and know that other faiths have sacred books. Pupils are introduced to Judaism through a visit to the Manchester Jewish Museum. Nearer to home, they visit both St. Helen's church at nearby Tarporley and the village Methodist church, looking for similarities and differences; they learn about the work of a minister. They consider aspects of friendship, partly by studying the stories from the Bible based on Jesus' friends. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have good insights into the significance of the major Christian festivals and they are beginning to learn about Judaism.

112. At Key Stage 2, pupils learn about monastic life as part of a 'pilgrim day' at Chester Cathedral. They show increasing understanding of festivals and celebrations in Christianity and other major faiths. Pupils further their knowledge of Judaism and gain an introduction to Sikhism. They are given opportunities to evaluate sacred books and to consider what is important in these books for individuals. In particular they study the Bible, its importance to Christians and what makes it special. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have gained a deeper understanding of the celebrations of the church year, with appropriate emphasis being given to harvest, Christmas, St. Paul's Day, Lent and Easter; these sometimes give opportunities to bake special celebration cakes. Both the syllabus and teachers' approach encourage pupils to reflect on people's experiences.

113. Pupils are making good progress in developing their knowledge of Christianity and other faiths and willingly express their ideas and opinions. They begin to understand that religion can teach people about respect, tolerance and understanding. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their ability.

114. Daily collective acts of worship are well organised and complement the work in class with appropriate use of shared themes, events and celebrations. A lighted candle is used as a focal point. Teachers use both their own and the pupils' experiences to teach about nature and Christianity and qualities such as caring, tolerance and responsibility for others; for example, a teacher leading an assembly used the poem 'Lord, what can you make of me?' to

promote reflection and spirituality. Regular collective acts of worship led by local clergy emphasise that the school is a focal part of the community with its own caring, Christian ethos. Religious education makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

115. The school has a small collection of artefacts, including ones related to Judaism. The school receives valuable support from the nearby parish church and the vicar. The subject co-ordinator gives good leadership and teaches the subject across the school. There is concern that more time should be given to the subject which informs a plan to review the balance of time given to each of the subjects. Medium term planning is underdeveloped. Simple assessments are undertaken. The chancel has been refurbished and made accessible since the previous inspection and this has had a very positive impact on spiritual development and opportunities for reflection.

ART AND DESIGN

116. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection and that was at Key Stage 2. The work benefits from an enthusiastic co-ordinator. Pupils' achievements and progress in art and design are good at the end of both key stages. This upholds the judgements made in the previous report. Pupils produce some good work, which is shown in the many good displays of artwork around the school and in sketchbooks.

117. At Key Stage 1, pupils like to mix colours carefully and see what effect colours have on each other; this is evident in their paintings. Pupils use shape, pattern and colour. They are given interesting tasks to do, including innovative ones, for example, during a visit to Rhyl, pupils spent time on the beach creating interesting sand sculptures. They study the work of other artists and use this to influence their own art; for example, they consider the work of Picasso and create pastel drawings in a similar style, together with ones based on 'Child with Dove'. Good use is also made of a software program to create computer generated Picasso type drawings. They do careful observational drawings, such as ones of nautical tools. They enjoy creating drawings and masks based on 'The Iron Man'. With the help of a local artist, using a scroll saw, they design and paint their own alien creatures. Pupils progress well and, by the end of Key Stage 1, they have imaginatively investigated and used a variety of materials and processes to communicate their ideas and meanings; many doing so at a good level.

118. At Key Stage 2, pupils develop their skills further. Pupils learn about the pointillist technique of painting and of artists such as Seurat and Signac who used the technique. They experiment with different types of pencils and do interesting observational drawings such as ones of wine bottles. They experiment in printing using fingers and card. They begin to learn the vocabulary of art. Inspired by a workshop led by a local artist, they produce very creditable watercolour paintings. Pupils study the work of Derain and do their own work in a similar style. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are able to explore ideas and communicate their ideas and meanings, they can make images and artefacts and a number do so to a sophisticated level.

119. The quality of teaching of the one lesson observed at Key Stage 2 was good. The pupils were helped to consider the use of colour and brush strokes in Van Gogh's 'Seascape', prior to creating their own versions using acrylic paints. The teaching promoted care and a good quality of work, aided by the enthusiasm and knowledge of the teacher. The quality of teaching has a clear impact on the quality of the work produced. No teaching

was seen at Key Stage 1, although the good quality of the work produced reflects very well on the quality of the teaching which the pupils receive.

120. The subject is well resourced and good use is made of the skills of local people. A scheme of work is being developed; the medium term planning is inconsistent and can benefit from a review. There is an appropriate balance between two and three-dimensional work. The work makes a good contribution to the pupils', cultural development, for example, through visits to the Hockney exhibition at Saltaire and the Lowry Centre at Manchester.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

121. All the available evidence indicates that, across the school, standards in design and technology are above those expected nationally as they were at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress in their learning. At Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress when designing wallpaper and curtains for their model houses and then printing the designs. Pupils work well practically, sharing resources and taking an interest and helping in the efforts of others. Year 1 pupils make baskets for 'Mr Grinling's lunch' and design felt bags. Year 2 pupils draw designs for cars adding detail about the finished product. One child tested his car for problems, checking that the wheels turned on the axles; another fixed his axle on the undercarriage with an added piece of card. Pupils also design and make effective moving pictures of a whale; they experience the skill of designing and making simple sliders. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have developed good manipulative skills in cutting, gluing and assembling a variety of materials. They identify problems and fold and join materials.

122. At Key Stage 2, pupils work with fabrics, investigate weaving and make weaving frames and then produce their own designs for weaving. They research Ghanaian weaving using the Internet and discover weaving used by the Navajo Indians. Pupils evaluate clay pottery made after their visit to Castleton. They design and make a science fiction robot mask with effective evaluation. Pupils can make, assemble and construct effectively using a range of materials, including card, textiles and food ingredients. By the end of the key stage, most pupils can evaluate what they have made and begin to realise that, through this process, improvements are brought about.

123. During the inspection, it was only possible to see one lesson and that was at Key Stage 1, where the teaching was very good and, judging from pupils' work from other classes, typical of the school as a whole. Pupils are provided with work which generates a high level of interest and encourages them to take a pride in what they are producing. In the one lesson observed, the teacher planned the lesson well so that the elements of designing, making and evaluating were all included; the lesson was well organised and allowed all pupils to participate. As a consequence, pupils' understanding of the processes they needed to go through from the original idea to the finished product was well developed. Pupils were given regular advice, encouragement and praise whilst they were working, thus helping to raise their self-esteem and enabling them to stay focused.

124. A very effective technology club is organised weekly as an extra-curricular activity by the co-ordinator; pupils were happy to discuss the wire sculptures which they had made using practised techniques. The co-ordinator has a secure understanding of the requirements of the subject and supports its development well. She has clear plans for future development based on a good understanding of the quality teaching and learning that

is taking place. The policy has been recently updated and a commercial scheme of work covers all the areas. The subject is well resourced.

GEOGRAPHY

125. Very little teaching was seen in geography, that seen being at Key Stage 2. A scrutiny of work in exercise books and on display indicates that standards in geography are above those expected nationally. This is an improvement since the last report where standards were average at Key Stage 1. Enthusiastic teaching and imaginative use of the environment for field study, is raising pupils' knowledge and understanding of the of pupils' knowledge at the end of the topic work. Across the school pupils make good progress in mapping skills. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can explain clearly the importance of a key to help identify important features on a map or plan.

126. Good use is made of illustrations and photographs to emphasise teaching points. Pupils at Key Stage 1 study Africa, concentrating on Ghana. They study a village map and link their findings with mathematics; for example, they use co-ordinates to locate the well in the village. Year 2 pupils make millet porridge and know about fair trading policies to help the Third World countries have a better deal. Links with literacy are sometimes made; for example, in their writing about the study of cocoa and chocolate. The local environment provides very good independent fieldwork study. Pupils can locate Utkinton on maps of different scales and understand its physical location and settlement pattern.

127. Pupils at Key Stage 2 make a detailed river study. They write about the water cycle and measure water flow fairly accurately, collecting sediments. Good cross-curricular links are made with information and communication technology when pupils access information about how rainfall comes from mountain sides and trees with interesting illustrations being provided by computer graphics. Pupils use correct vocabulary such as tributaries and settlements. Year 3 and 4 pupils enjoyed a practical experiment using a piece of guttering to illustrate how a river flows; the principles of erosion, transportation and deposition are effectively demonstrated by the teacher. Pupils from this class researched world rivers and their effects on landscape and people; this culminated in a very effective wall display. By the end of the key stage, pupils are confident about the meaning of some geographical terms, for example, meander and gradient.

128. In the limited classroom observations made, the quality of teaching and learning was good. Teachers enliven the subject well with trips to places of geographical interest, for example, the Sealife Centre in Rhyl, the local museum and a residential field trip to Castleton. Pupils compare Castleton with Utkinton and learn how the shops in Castleton are influenced by the type of settlement land use of the area, especially the tourist industry. Further opportunity can be given for pupils to develop their writing skills through the work in geography.

129. Overall, good progress is made by pupils, including those with special educational needs, across both key stages. The co-ordinator is managing the subject effectively and has a clear insight into the standards being attained; she monitors the work to ensure that these are maintained. The monitoring of planning can ensure its consistency. Overall presentation of work, especially at Key Stage 2, is an area for development as this could be higher. The school has an adequate range of resources and supplements these well with materials borrowed from educational sources and, in some instances, from parents.

HISTORY

130. It was only possible to observe one lesson during the inspection and that was at Key Stage 1. A scrutiny of work and resources indicates that provision for history is good and that standards across both key stages are good. All pupils are meeting the key elements of the National Curriculum for history. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. This is the same picture as at the time of the previous report.

131. Pupils have a good awareness of artefacts as shown through their drawings and descriptions. At Key Stage 1, pupils' sense of the past is secure. They look at past photographs of the school from the 1920s and the 1960s and state similarities and differences. Pupils are encouraged by the teacher to look closely at the evidence and research as much information as possible independently. By the end of the key stage, pupils are able to explain their awareness of change over a period of time.

132. At Key Stage 2, pupils develop a good sense of chronology. They have a good understanding of the lives, ideas and beliefs of people from the past. Their study of the Romans included the creation of a timeline from 100 AD to the present day. Pupils know how to research for information by gathering evidence from buildings, gravestones, roads and armour. They write what this evidence tells them; for example, one pupil wrote 'buildings tell us they used different materials and quite advanced technology'.

133. History is sometimes used well to improve literacy skills; for example, pupils write an eye witness account from a Roman soldier to his wife whilst encamped in Britain, detailing army life and his impressions of the Britons. A personal response is much more challenging for this age group than the many worksheets completed and fits in well with the school's target to raise standards in written work. Good links for all topics are made between history, literacy and art. Good examples of persuasive writing asking the British Museum to return the 'Elgin marbles' to Greece was seen. Pupils wrote as Greek citizens, 'The Elgin marbles are part of our heritage and should be in their rightful place'. There was evidence of pupils improving and developing their speaking and listening skills by debating this issue. This topic is cross-curricular with food technology and art as evidenced in both the photographs of pupils eating Greek food and in pupils' Greek pottery on display.

134. The quality of teaching in the one lesson observed was very good. An analysis of pupils' work shows that teaching has a positive effect on the quality of pupils' learning and achievement. Long term planning ensures that all pupils have the same access to key elements of the study units. Medium term planning needs to be consistent. Tasks planned for pupils are interesting and ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of changes over time. The imaginative provision in history ensures that pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. They are confident to give their opinions on people's first hand accounts, such as events in the 1960s.

135. The subject is well led and resourced. History makes a good contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development, particularly when pupils study the school's old logbook and interview the cook and a midday supervisor, who were themselves previous pupils of the school, about how the school was and how it has changed. There was very good preparation for this interviewing session by having pre-written questions discussed at the previous literacy lesson. The interviewees talked about games played, transport and where they lived. Pupils were very surprised that children as young as 7 walked to school unaccompanied.

136. Visits to places of historical interest, such as Peak and Speedwell mines in Castleton to research mining in the area and how people lived in the nineteenth century, contribute significantly to pupils' historical understanding. The community enriches the pupils' understanding of the past when people share their experiences; for example, one grandparent talked about how seaside holidays have changed and one parent discussed her life at boarding school, comparing it with life in Utkinton school. History as taught at the school, successfully enriches and develops the imagination of pupils.

MUSIC

137. Three music lessons were observed during the inspection and during these pupils, including those with special educational needs, made good progress in the activities. Attainment in singing is good at both key stages, as was seen during the collective acts of worship. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and undertakes most of the teaching which is well supported by the quality of the accompaniment she provides.

138. At Key Stage 1, pupils know a variety of songs; they sing well together with enthusiasm. They identify and sing high and low pitched notes. They are beginning to understand rhythm, can repeat patterns and change from fast to slow beats when clapping and singing. Pupils sing rhymes and songs with repetition; they can accompany themselves with percussion instruments. As part of their topic on 'Myself', they learn and sing a good range of songs, including 'Heads and Shoulders' and 'He Gave me Eyes'. They listen carefully to the sounds they can hear outdoors and they choose percussion instruments to represent these sounds. In this way they are able to explore, choose and organise sounds and musical ideas. In groups they practise fast and slow and loud and soft sounds, involving repeating the sounds they have made. They enjoy an introduction to composition, using a new software program; they listen to a sequence of notes, counting the number and evaluating their effectiveness. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are able to recognise and explore ways in which sounds can be used in combination expressively; they are able to make improvements to their work.

139. At Key Stage 2, pupils learn to create musical effects by using sounds. They further explore pitch using voices and tuned percussion. The teacher provides good opportunities for pupils to perform and evaluate the performance of others. During the time of the inspection, pupils were learning the songs and developing appropriate movements in preparation for the end of year performance of 'Bugsy Malone'. The rehearsals evidenced a lot of enthusiasm and good singing skills. Earlier on in the term, pupils learnt about a Gamelan orchestra (from Indonesia) and enjoyed a good percussion playing experience in a workshop held at a local high school. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are able to describe, compare and judge a range of music using a suitable musical vocabulary.

140. The very good teaching ensures that lessons are made interesting and are full of variety. In the outdoor lesson seen at Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching enabled the pupils to learn effectively, with a positive impact on the pupils' response, progress and behaviour. The lesson was well organised with pace, variety and good participation. The very good relationships make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching which impacts on the quality of pupils' performance. The teaching caters well for the pupils with special educational needs.

141. The subject is well resourced with a good range of percussion instruments. From Year 2, pupils have access to recorder teaching and a good number of pupils have peripatetic lessons in saxophone, clarinet, flute, keyboard and guitar. The curriculum is considerably enhanced by the good opportunities provided for all pupils to take part in performances at Christmas and at the end of the year, such as a 'Music Hall' and 'Bill's New Frock'. Although the school makes use of the local education authority planning materials, there are plans to develop a structured scheme of work which can help in the need to develop a medium term planning format. There are plans to review the time given to music and other subjects as this is an area of concern for the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

142. The work is disadvantaged by the lack of a school hall for gymnastics lessons. That said, the staff go to a great deal of trouble to enable the pupils to have a curriculum which covers the appropriate areas; for example, for one term per year in most years, all pupils make weekly visits to the local high school gymnasium for gymnastic lessons.

143. No lessons were observed during the inspection, except for an outdoor games lesson with the Key Stage 2 older pupils, which was curtailed due to rain. There is, therefore, insufficient evidence to make judgements on attainment (which was judged to be in line with what could be expected at the time of the previous inspection) and on teaching and learning.

144. At Key Stage 1, pupils develop and practise the skills of travelling with, and sending and receiving a ball. They learn to play simple games and follow rules. They jump, skip and jog around a circuit of objects. They use small and large body parts to travel on apparatus. They make movements like animals when they slide, slither and crawl. At Key Stage 2, pupils continue to develop their gymnastic, athletics and games skills and improve their ball skills. They are given good opportunities to develop their swimming skills.

145. The main classroom is cleared for dance lessons in the winter. Good use is beginning to be made of the flat play area of the new playground and the excellent playing field opposite the school and the work is well resourced with large and small apparatus. A scheme of work is being developed and the co-ordinator, who does all the teaching, is leading the work with enthusiasm. She also leads the popular after-school sports club which involves seasonal games. The good local links provide opportunities to play in competitive matches against other schools. During the week of the inspection, the pupils enjoyed taking part in a popular local inter-school sports tournament, where they achieved some success.