

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. LUKE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Frodsham.

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111379

Headteacher: Mrs M Coleman

Reporting inspector: Mr S M O'Toole
20891

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 6th July 2000

Inspection number: 192890

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	The Willows Frodsham Cheshire
Postcode:	WA6 7QP
Telephone number:	01928 731721
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J M Mann
Date of previous inspection:	8/07/1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Sean O'Toole	Registered inspector	Areas of learning for children under five Mathematics French Geography History Physical education	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught How well is the school led and managed What should the school do to improve further
Patricia Willman	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
Stella Derrick	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Art Music	
Brian Munden	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Science Information technology Design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils

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Inspection Quality Division
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Luke's Catholic Primary School is located in Frodsham. The school admits boys and girls aged 4 to 11 from the Roman Catholic community in Frodsham and the surrounding area. About 10 per cent of pupils come from other religious traditions. Almost all of the pupils are from white heritage backgrounds. With 155 pupils, the school is smaller than most other primary schools. The school has 17 pupils on the register of special educational needs (about average) and none has a statement of special educational needs (below average). Four pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is low when compared with other schools. The children benefit from pre-school educational provision. Attainment on admission to the school varies annually but the current group of under fives has average levels of attainment. This is a popular school which is oversubscribed. The number of pupils has almost doubled since the previous inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school where standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are consistently well above the national average. The headteacher provides strong and incisive leadership and, together with the staff and governors, manages the school well. The teaching is very good and the pupils are encouraged to do their best. As a result they make good progress, achieve well and develop excellent attitudes to learning. The school makes effective use of the resources available and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average at the end of the infants and juniors.
- Children under five improve their knowledge, skills and understanding rapidly and become effective learners.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and achieve average standards by the time they leave the school.
- The teaching is very good overall with a quarter of lessons being excellent.
- This is a caring school which makes very good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result the pupils have outstanding attitudes and excellent relationships, and their behaviour is very good.
- The school is led and managed by a headteacher with clear vision and a charismatic style who inspires her colleagues and provides a strong focus on school improvement.

What could be improved

- The provision made for information technology has not improved sufficiently since the previous inspection and standards are not high enough in the juniors.
- There are some gaps in the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in art, music and design and technology.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the previous inspection in July 1996 the school has made good improvement. Most of the issues raised have been successfully remedied. Standards in English, mathematics and science have risen significantly and are now well above average. There is much challenge for the more able and the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The quality of teaching has improved. The teachers have a more effective knowledge of most subjects and planning is well focused so that it meets the needs of pupils of all abilities. Teachers use the results of tests to plan work. The school has very clear plans for the future and links the budget to educational priorities. The headteacher is rigorous in monitoring and evaluating the teaching and learning. Some headway has been made in developing computer skills, although more remains to be done. The school is well placed to build upon its success.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A	A*	A	A
mathematics	A	A*	A	A
science	A*	A	A*	A

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

Children under five make good, and sometimes very good progress and attain levels which are above those expected by the end of the reception year. There is rapid progress in the infants so that by the age of seven the results in the 1999 national tests in reading, writing and mathematics are well above average. In comparison with similar schools standards are well above average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. Skills are consolidated in Years 3 and 4 and then in Years 5 and 6 the rate of progress accelerates. By the time they leave the school, pupils' standards in English and mathematics are well above the national average. Standards in science are among the top five per cent of schools nationally. In comparison with schools with similar intakes, standards are well above average. The school has consistently achieved impressive results in national tests for three years and the rate of improvement has exceeded the nationally upward trend. Inspection evidence shows that standards are at least as high as in previous years at the end of Years 2 and 6. Particularly good work was seen in history and geography. The pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills very well. Standards in information technology are about average by the end of Year 2 but below those expected at the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and almost all attain the national standards by the time they leave the school. The school has met the challenging targets it set for raising achievement in English and mathematics.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils take learning seriously. They are enthusiastic and effective learners who enjoy challenge.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour are very rare. There is no evidence of bullying. There have been no exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. The pupils get on together very well. Older pupils take responsibility for those younger than themselves.
Attendance	Good. The pupils enjoy school and attendance is above average.

The pupils' behaviour, attitudes and personal development underpin the success of the school and help to create an atmosphere where the achievement of all is valued and appreciated. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, have well-developed social skills; they are independent and also show sensitivity to the needs of others. They enjoy their own and others' success. Children under five quickly and effectively develop positive attitudes to school life.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching has a very beneficial impact on standards. There is particularly effective teaching in reception and Years 2, 5 and 6. Good teaching was seen in all classes. Teachers are very competent in English and mathematics and teaching and learning are at their best in these subjects. Literacy and numeracy are taught very well, lessons follow national guidelines and are brought to life by rigorous questioning, challenging and interesting tasks and effective resources. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and the gifted and talented, are taught well as lesson planning includes a strong focus on matching work to the pupils' abilities. Pupils are productive learners who respond well to the demands made on them. They have a clear understanding of what is expected and apply themselves conscientiously. In the 40 lessons seen, all teaching was satisfactory or better with 25 per cent excellent, 23 per cent very good, 38 per cent good and the remainder satisfactory.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school has very effective ways of teaching literacy and numeracy. More work needs to be done in providing guidance for teachers in developing skills and techniques in art, music and design and technology. There are gaps in the development of computer skills and the subject does not meet statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The pupils make very good progress in meeting their targets. Additional support is effective and contributes to good success.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school successfully promotes Christian ethics through the Roman Catholic tradition. The staff are justifiably proud of the way that pupils develop into mature and responsible people who have sensitive and caring attitudes. Adults encourage pupils to collaborate, use their initiative and value others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a caring school where individual needs receive high priority. The staff carefully track the pupils' progress and use test results and their assessments to plan work which is matched well to the pupils' abilities.

The school ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities. The wide-ranging extra-curricular activities are supported enthusiastically by the pupils and contribute to the school's success in music and sport. The pupils' health and welfare are at the heart of the school's work. There is an effective programme of personal and social education. Very good links with the community, including the parish, contribute much to the school's work. Parents speak well of the school and work hard to support their children. They make a good contribution through their financial and practical support.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The outstanding headteacher has led the school successfully through a period of change and has a strong commitment to raising standards. The hard-working teachers and other staff are an effective team. Subject leaders have insufficient influence in ensuring that skills in some

	subjects are developed consistently.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Effectively. Governors take a keen interest in the work of the school and keep a check on how well it is doing.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The headteacher pursues high standards rigorously, making effective use of test results to pinpoint areas for development. The upward trend in performance in national tests is the result of setting challenging targets for all staff and pupils.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of its resources ensuring that the budget is linked to priorities which benefit the pupils, for example, in providing additional support for those with special educational needs. The school has built up a large surplus to be used to extend the building. However, since the previous inspection, insufficient funds have been allocated for information technology, the school is short of computers and standards are not high enough.

The school has sufficient, suitably qualified staff. Teachers extend their knowledge through in-service training. New staff are supported very well. The good accommodation is well maintained. The school has adequate resources for most subjects although there is a shortage of equipment for outdoor play for the under fives. The governors appropriately seek best value when purchasing supplies and services.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children's good progress. • The good standards achieved. • High standards of behaviour. • The headteacher's commitment and enthusiasm. • The good quality of teaching. • The way in which the school develops positive attitudes. • The level of homework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information about their children's progress. • A better balance in the demands made on their children. • A wider range of activities in physical education. • The development of computer skills.

The inspection team agrees with the positive views expressed by the parents. The school provides some good information to parents but written reports on progress and attainment vary in quality between classes. The school provides much challenge for all pupils and they respond very well. Individual needs are provided for very effectively. Physical education lessons provide opportunities for all pupils to experience the whole range of activities appropriate for pupils of this age. There are weaknesses in information technology, although the school has plans to extend its provision.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The school takes its responsibility to maintain high standards very seriously. Rigorous analysis of the results of national tests, well focused teaching and the setting of challenging targets help to ensure consistency in driving up standards. The school sets targets which include raising the proportion of pupils attaining above average standards at the end of the infants and juniors. It is a mark of the school's success that these targets are met or exceeded each year. Since the previous inspection standards in English, mathematics and science have risen significantly. The school adds much value to the quality of education of its pupils and, as a result of high quality teaching at the end of the infants and juniors, the pupils attain standards which are well above those of schools with similar intakes. The school's performance in national tests has exceeded the national improving trend and it is on course to maintain high standards in English, mathematics and science. There is some variation in the pupils' achievement in the subjects with practical subjects such as art, information technology, music and design and technology being at a lower level than English, mathematics and science.
2. On admission to the school at age four, the children have levels of skill, knowledge and understanding which are appropriate for their age. They make good and often very good progress in their first year at school and by the age of five attain the standards which are above those expected of five-year-olds. Progress is very good in developing early reading and writing skills. The children have good mathematical knowledge and a thorough knowledge of the world around them. Their creative and physical skills are about the level expected for their age, although they are very confident in singing. The children make very good gains in their personal and social development showing commitment and enthusiasm for work and interest in their lessons.
3. The results of national tests in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 have been consistently above average for three years. Inspection evidence shows that the pupils are very successful and competent readers, showing skill in reading from a wide range of texts, reading with expression and fluency. Speaking and listening skills are good. Pupils are confident in holding a conversation and have very good listening skills. They write well using a good range of vocabulary. Mathematically, the pupils have very good skills in counting and addition and subtraction. They have a good knowledge of shape, space and measures and a secure grasp of how to present work in graphs and charts. Their mathematical vocabulary is well developed and they show a good understanding of signs and symbols. When compared with schools with similar intakes, standards in reading are well above average and in writing and mathematics standards are above average. There are no significant variations between the subjects.
4. At the end of Year 6, the school has achieved impressive results in the national tests in English, mathematics and science for the last three years and its performance is improving at a rate in advance of the national trend. Standards in the three core subjects are well above the national average and those of schools with similar intakes. The performance in science is among the top five per cent of schools. Inspection evidence shows that there is very effective teaching in Years 5 and 6 and that pupils are encouraged to work hard and to achieve their best. As a result, standards are at least as high as they should be. Pupils' reading skills are very advanced. They are able to extract information from a wide range of texts, predict the outcome of stories and read with expression and fluency which engages the listener's attention. When speaking in public they are clear, audible and well organised in presenting ideas. They listen very well and are able to synthesise opinion from a variety of sources. The very good quality of their writing includes effective use of argument, description and narrative. Their handwriting, spelling and punctuation are of a high standard. Pupils have very good mental arithmetic skills and a thorough understanding of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. They use this knowledge well in solving complex problems. They have a thorough understanding of measurement and estimate accurately. They are able to read graphs and extract information from charts and diagrams. However, their skills in using computers to handle data are underdeveloped. The pupils have a very good scientific knowledge of all aspects of the subject. They understand scientific processes and are well

organised in presenting their work and have a secure understanding of using their knowledge in designing experiments.

5. Pupils are given much encouragement to use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Reading and writing skills are used very well in history. Younger pupils use reference books well to find different viewpoints and older pupils make notes on their findings before producing effective historical writing. In science they use technical vocabulary very well and in geography they are able to compare and contrast locations using effective argument. In geography, the pupils use their mathematical skills effectively in their map work and in design and technology they measure accurately.
6. The teachers plan work effectively and pupils with different levels of ability are challenged and make as much progress as they should. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and meet the targets in their individual education plans due to effective teaching which takes account of their needs. There is consistency in the teaching throughout the school, although teaching is most effective in Years 2 and 6, and this ensures that from year to year pupils make significant gains in their learning. As a result, there are no significant variations in the pupils' performance in the core subjects. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels 3 and 5 at the end of Years 2 and 6 respectively is well above average. The most able pupils make very good progress. They are given demanding work involving independent research and private study. There are no significant differences in the standards achieved by boys and girls.
7. Since the previous inspection there has been some improvement in the standards in information technology, particularly at the end of the infants where standards are now about average. However, skills are developed inconsistently in the juniors and there are gaps in pupils' knowledge by the time they leave the school. As a result, standards are below national expectations. There are particular strengths in some subjects. In the infants and juniors pupils have a thorough understanding of historical personalities, change over time and the value of historical evidence. Pupils' geographical skills are above those expected for their age and pupils are particularly good at reading maps and in explaining why settlements develop. The school is very successful in swimming and athletics. Pupils have a good knowledge of the work of famous artists, although skills and techniques in art are developed inconsistently. Singing is of good quality and pupils enjoy performing, although they lack confidence in composing. Pupils make a good start to learning French. Design and technology skills are below those expected for pupils aged 11.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils' attitudes to school, the relationships they have with each other and with their teachers and their personal development are excellent. Their behaviour is very good. The quality of pupils' response to the values promoted by the school has improved since the last inspection. During their time in school the pupils develop a very good awareness of the purpose and value of education and become increasingly mature with much to offer the school community. They want to succeed and are prepared to work hard to do so which is a very significant factor in the very good standards they achieve. A large majority of parents agree that the school encourages their children to work hard and to become confident and mature individuals. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are very significant strengths of the school.
9. The children who are under five enjoy their time at school and have excellent relationships with their teacher, with each other and with other adults who work with them. They arrive at school in good time and settle happily into the day. They take part in the many varied and interesting activities with enthusiasm, excitement and imagination. For example, in a music lesson listening to a short extract from "The Carnival of Animals", the children were inspired by the teacher's enthusiasm. They responded with great excitement and joy to the challenge of drawing a picture of what they had visualised and felt when listening to the music. They respond well to instructions and listen carefully to each other and to their teacher. They are well motivated, understand the routines of the classroom and tidy up carefully and sensibly. They help each other and clearly understand how they are expected to behave. They are confident and articulate, often describing what they are doing in some depth and at great length.

10. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, take part in all aspects of school life with great enthusiasm and interest. The large majority of parents who returned the questionnaire prior to the inspection agree that their children like school and the pupils confirmed this. They respond with high levels of interest and enthusiasm to most of their lessons, working hard and becoming involved in and often excited by what they are learning. Throughout the school, pupils' response to the structure and challenge of the literacy and numeracy sessions is very positive and this has a significant impact on the high standards they achieve in these subjects. They enjoy the challenge of mental arithmetic and pupils in Years 5 and 6 particularly relish solving mathematical problems. Pupils contribute well to group discussion sessions in all subjects offering a range of interesting ideas and suggestions. History lessons are often inspirational, particularly in Years 2 and 6, and this engenders a high level of enthusiasm for this subject. In Year 2, for example, the depth of knowledge that pupils have of life 100 years ago enabled them to compare aspects of seaside holidays then and now. They can draw logical conclusions from the evidence, deciding that because of the discomfort of scratchy swimsuits and the strange bathing machines they would much prefer to visit the seaside today rather than in the year 1900. Pupils have an innate curiosity and thirst for knowledge. Junior pupils particularly enjoy the good range of extra-curricular clubs and take pride in the sporting success of the school teams.
11. Pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school and in the playground is very good. In many lessons, when the level of interest and challenge is high, their behaviour is excellent. They respond positively to the school's high expectations of their behaviour and have a clear understanding of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour within the school community. The majority of parents who expressed an opinion prior to the inspection consider that behaviour is very good. In a very small number of lessons in Years 3 and 4 when pupils' interest was not fully engaged, a small number of pupils became inattentive and progress in these lessons was not as good as it should have been. Pupils are well motivated by praise and try hard to earn the class awards for good work and behaviour. They move about the school purposefully and sensibly and, although playtimes are boisterous and exuberant, no unkindness was observed. Pupils and parents talk of infrequent instances of bullying, and pupils clearly understand the need to tell someone if they are unhappy. There have been no exclusions.
12. The pupils' personal development is excellent. The friendly, good humoured and supportive relationships they have with each other and with their teachers creates a happy and purposeful family atmosphere in the school in which each individual feels safe and valued. Pupils carry out their classroom responsibilities sensibly, and older pupils perform a number of important whole school jobs conscientiously, showing good levels of initiative and increasing maturity. The kindness exhibited by Year 6 pupils towards their infant "buddies" exemplifies the supportive community spirit within the school. They care about each other and generously celebrate each other's achievements. For example, the pupils in Class 6 eagerly point out the story books they have written and illustrated on the computer and pick out the ones they like the best. Pupils are confident, polite, articulate and friendly with adults. They can express their opinions logically about aspects of school life and talk with enthusiasm about the survey of opinion about the school undertaken recently, the results of which are displayed in the classrooms. They listen quietly to each other and take differing viewpoints into account in their discussions. They work constructively in pairs and groups in lessons and learn the value of teamwork and loyalty when taking part in competitive sport. Pupils successfully and conscientiously organise their own work and make independent choices. They take part in fund raising activities and have a good awareness of those less fortunate than themselves.
13. Attendance has been maintained consistently at a level above the national average since the last inspection. Parents take their responsibility to advise the school of reasons for absence seriously and there has been no unauthorised absence in the current year. Pupils enjoy coming to school; they arrive punctually and settle quickly to their lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. Teaching is very good and enables the pupils to make successful progress. In the 40 lessons seen all teaching was satisfactory or better; 25 per cent was excellent, 23 per cent was very good, 38 per cent was good and the remainder was satisfactory. The most effective teaching is in reception and Years 2, 5 and 6, where a high proportion of lessons are very good or excellent. In all classes there was good teaching and this was supported through the effective use of homework. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection, due partly to effective monitoring by the

headteacher, successful appointments of new staff and improved subject knowledge. In addition the teachers have taken on board the suggestions in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies with enthusiasm.

15. Children under five are taught very well. Particular strengths in the teaching are in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and music. The teachers in both the reception class and the mixed reception and Year 1 class have a good understanding of how young children learn. Much emphasis is given to developing the children's independent skills and as a result they become proficient, confident and well motivated learners. The teachers inspire and enthuse the children, making very good use of praise and encouragement. There is a good balance of activities which include free choice, tasks directed by the teacher and opportunities to work in groups of a variety of sizes. The children respond well to this variety of methods and make significant gains in working independently and learning how to share ideas and equipment. Literacy skills are taught very well; sometimes the lessons are excellent as the teachers prepare work which is matched to the individual's needs and provide guidance and challenge at just the right level. The children are keen to read and the effective teaching of letter sounds and names ensures that the children are able to read from a range of texts. In writing, the teachers allow the children opportunities to experiment but also encourage correct letter formation and accurate spelling of simple words. The teachers have a good understanding of mathematics and make effective use of apparatus to aid the children's understanding. Regular practice in counting and addition, which includes learning number rhymes and games, keeps the children interested. The excellent teaching seen in a music lesson captured the children's interest and enabled them to make good gains in singing and playing together. The teachers keep careful track of how well the children are doing and guide them effectively through supportive questions and reviewing what has been learned. Much is expected of the children, who respond with enthusiasm, work hard and at a good pace. Support staff are very skilled in asking questions and joining in lessons at the right time. They make a good contribution to learning.
16. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. The teachers clearly understand the needs and difficulties that the pupils experience and plan lessons which include matching work to the targets in the pupils' individual education plans. In most lessons and particularly in English and mathematics the teachers set tasks which are challenging but within the abilities of the pupils. Teachers spend time with the pupils guiding them and encouraging them to do their best. In a history lesson in Year 3, the teacher successfully extended the pupils' knowledge of the Vikings through the use of reference books and by providing opportunities for drawing and writing. The activities held the pupils' attention and they made very good progress. Pupils with special educational needs work hard and it is a tribute to their commitment and that of their teachers that by the time they leave the school almost all attain average standards in national tests.
17. In both the infants and juniors English is taught well and the teachers often plan inspiring literacy lessons which enthuse the pupils. In the Year 5/6 class the teacher makes excellent use of poetry to promote creative thinking. There is excellent guidance to the Year 2 pupils on how to develop story-writing skills and the teacher's use of a wide and interesting vocabulary inspires the pupils to produce written work of a high standard. Teachers are very good at improving the pupils' reading and writing skills. They make very effective use of a wide range of books and, through regular practice of spelling and insistence on correct use of grammar and punctuation, equip the pupils to write successfully in a variety of styles. Handwriting is taught very well and most pupils apply these skills in other subjects. However, handwriting in Year 4 is not as good as in other classes as there is insufficient emphasis given to presentation. Literacy lessons in Years 2 and 6 are brought to life through the flair and imagination of the teachers who successfully combine the teaching of basic skills with a lively and effective delivery.
18. Throughout the school the teaching of mathematics is very good and the teachers have a thorough understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy. Regular tests and practice of number facts combined with the effective use of homework ensure that pupils become proficient in mental arithmetic. The teachers keep the lessons moving along a brisk pace and because they have high expectations the pupils respond by working productively and accurately. Teachers use a variety of methods including practical demonstrations, opportunities to explore numbers and well-focused questions which keep the pupils on task. In Year 2 the teacher uses her knowledge of the pupils and the subject to identify the pupils' mistakes and use them as teaching points. Not a moment is wasted and every opportunity is seized to

extend knowledge. The teachers focus very well on developing pupils' mathematical vocabulary and insist on pupils explaining their answers and what strategies they have used.

19. Science is taught well in both the infants and juniors. Pupils are encouraged to apply themselves to solving problems and to explain how they have arrived at an answer. The rigorous questions asked and the opportunities to experiment and make predictions lie at the heart of the successful teaching in Years 2 and 6. The teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons which include opportunities for investigating. Pupils are often grouped according to ability and this works effectively as discussions are well focused. The grouping also allows time for the teacher to provide additional support or to intervene with pertinent questions to move learning along at a good pace.
20. There are other strengths in the teaching. Marking of pupils' work is regular and effective. The pupils respond well by correcting mistakes and learning from them. They apply themselves well and older pupils are good at assessing their own performance as the teacher guides them very clearly. Resources are used well in several subjects. In history and geography lessons, good use is made of a range of books, maps, artefacts and visits to capture the pupils' attention. The teachers have excellent relationships with their pupils. They exercise discipline firmly and fairly and the pupils clearly understand and respond to the reward system in the school. Effective work habits are established from the start and even young pupils in Year 1 understand the need to give of their best. In some classes the objectives for the lesson are clearly explained to the pupils and there is a review of what has been learned. This enables pupils to assess their own performance and to improve. In some subjects specialist teaching is used effectively. Physical education lessons for older pupils are taught well and the work of peripatetic teachers of music helps the pupils to make good progress in learning instruments. In the few satisfactory lessons, the work was not challenging enough and the pace was rather slow.

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

21. There is a satisfactory curriculum and recommendations in the previous report have been remedied. Although planning has been improved and is very good for literacy and numeracy, there is still need for further planning for the progression of work in a number of subjects including science, art, design technology, music and information technology. The curriculum provision provides a good basis for the high standards of personal and social education, and spiritual, social, moral and cultural education of pupils. The curriculum for Year 6 is enhanced by the addition of lessons in French and these are successfully taught by a visiting teacher. However, there is underdevelopment of skills and techniques in art, music and design technology and there are gaps in the development of computer skills. Although guidelines are not in place for all subjects, teachers liaise well and as a result the curriculum provides well for pupils' academic, social and physical development. The school is very effective in raising pupils' awareness of a healthy lifestyle, including sex education and the harmful effects of drugs. There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop their social and study skills. An excellent working atmosphere is developed in and around the school that enables pupils to act responsibly, show respect for others and a desire to do their best in their work.
22. Throughout the school, the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced very effectively and are having a very good impact on standards in English and mathematics. These strategies are also having a significant effect on the work of other subjects. The amount of time given to information technology has now improved but not all aspects of the information technology curriculum are covered sufficiently and therefore this subject does not at present meet statutory requirements. An appropriate amount of time is given to each subject although the provision for music is limited. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to use a range of materials in their design and technology lessons. More needs to be done in providing guidance for teachers in the development of skills and techniques in art, music and design and technology. The school uses good long term planning methods that help to ensure coverage of subjects and good liaison takes place between teachers which enables some consistency in developing skills, knowledge and understanding but there is a lack of sufficiently structured schemes of work.

23. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Individual education plans are well focused and the teachers and support staff use them well to plan work. It is a mark of the school's achievement that, by the end of Year 6, almost all pupils with special educational needs attain the average levels in English, mathematics and science. There are regular reviews of the pupils' progress and good communication with parents.
24. Teachers give freely of their time to provide a good range of extra curricular activities that have a successful impact on pupils' personal, social and academic development. Boys and girls are involved in a variety of sports such as soccer, netball, badminton, cross-country, tennis and athletics. Musical opportunities include a recorder group and choir and the chance to learn a musical instrument. Older pupils have a residential visit to the Lake District for adventurous activities and younger pupils get similar experiences from a more local visit. The school's programme is enhanced by the addition of additional optional clubs for French, gymnastics and soccer for which a fee is paid.
25. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. Throughout the school there is a good emphasis on teaching pupils about healthy living. The visit of the Life Education Caravan provides a focus each year for pupils to learn about sex, drugs and how to maintain a healthy body at levels appropriate to their age. This is supplemented in Years 5 and 6 with more specific and factual information which equips pupils well for the move to secondary education. The school's programme for aspects of health education is supported very well by a number of visiting speakers. The good practice which reflects the school's whole approach and ethos, and which is encouraged by all teachers, provides a very positive contribution to the development of pupils' excellent attitudes and their general respect for others.
26. The school provides a very good atmosphere for the development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural values. The spiritual aspect of school life is very good and reflects the whole caring ethos of the school. Spiritual development also benefits from the work carried out in poetry. Pupils are clearly taught right from wrong and acceptable behaviour. There are excellent relationships between all staff and pupils and these enable teachers to reinforce mature social and moral attitudes through good practice both within and outside of lessons. Pupils are encouraged to consider the needs of others less fortunate than themselves. The choir visits a local residential home and pupils raise money for a number of charities including the Catholic children's appeal. Children are encouraged to play an active part in supporting others through the school's "buddy" system where older pupils support younger pupils. Some take on responsibilities such as being recycling officers and help with road safety training. Pupils' cultural development is extended through their studies of a variety of religious and traditional themes. They are taught effectively about humankind's achievement through history and geography, the work of famous artists and a range of literature. French language and culture is included as part of the Year 6 programme and this is extended in an after school activity for a small group of children. Elements of multicultural work are also included and pupils improve their understanding of life in different parts of the world through geographical studies. Pupils are in contact with children from other countries such as Ghana via pen friend links.
27. The school has maintained very good links with the local community since the last inspection. There are very close ties with the local church and the parish which support the strong Christian ethos in the school. Several parishioners help voluntarily in classes and many talk to the pupils about their life experiences. The school provides facilities once a week for mothers and toddlers to meet in the hall informally. This social gathering is open to all members of the community. The school competes with other schools in sporting competitions and members of the community are invited into school to enjoy the pupils' performances. Visits are organised to amenities in the local area and a good range of visitors come to school to talk to the pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding. Useful links exist with local industry and these have recently been extended, resulting in an interesting visit for Years 5 and 6 pupils to a power plant. The school has very close links with the playgroup which helps the youngest children to settle quickly into school life. Liaison procedures with the principal secondary schools to which the majority of pupils transfer are good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

28. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are well cared for during their time at school. The good quality of this care has been maintained well since the last inspection and parents appreciate the measures the school takes to safeguard the welfare of their children. Throughout the school, pupils' academic performance and personal development are monitored and supported well and pupils develop into increasingly confident and mature individuals, secure in the knowledge of their own potential. They receive a very good level of educational and personal support and guidance which instils high expectations of themselves and motivates them to do their very best.
29. The children who are under five are very well cared for in a happy and well-ordered atmosphere. They are given a secure and caring introduction to school life and settle quickly and happily into the routines of the classroom. They quickly learn what is expected of them and staff consistently reinforce good work and behaviour with praise. Parents have very good opportunities at the beginning and end of the day to speak informally to staff about any small matters of concern. The teacher goes out of her way, not only to address any concerns, but also to show parents some of the delightful work their children are doing.
30. Class teachers monitor attendance on a day-to-day basis and notify the headteacher if there are any concerns about individual attendance. Parents are discouraged from taking their children on holiday during term time and any absence during the national tests is recorded as unauthorised. However, procedures to monitor whole school attendance levels at regular intervals during the year are not secure and the annual collation of data is an unnecessarily cumbersome task. Registration procedures are quick and efficient and fully comply with legal requirements. The excellent relationships between the staff and the pupils ensure that the monitoring and support of their personal development is of a very high quality. The school has good procedures for recording and monitoring any instances of persistent poor behaviour and, in such cases, parents are always involved at an early stage. Pupils are well motivated by rewards and praise for good work and behaviour and try hard to live up to the school's expectations. Bullying is not tolerated and all staff react swiftly to eliminate any such behaviour. Although the remedy is not always instant, pupils know that such behaviour is unacceptable and have a clear understanding of the need to tell someone if they are unhappy.
31. The safety and welfare of all the pupils has a high priority in the school. Pupils say that they would feel comfortable talking to their teacher about any concerns they may have and are confident that they would be helped. All adults in the school know the pupils very well and this ensures a continuity of care throughout the school day. The procedures the school has to govern health and safety are good. Regular risk assessments are carried out and fire drill takes place once a term. Provision for first aid is good with an appropriate number of trained members of staff. Elements of personal safety are covered during the personal, social and health education sessions and pupils learn strategies to keep themselves safe. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson on electricity, the teacher made a specific point of emphasising the dangers of the proximity of water to electrical switches. The headteacher is the designated member of staff for child protection and all staff are vigilant in their approach to this aspect of care. The school follows locally recognised guidelines for child protection. The quality of supervision during the mid-day break is good. The mid-day supervisors are well organised and the pupils respect and like them.
32. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by staff and take part in all aspects of school life. Appropriate external agencies are used regularly and pupils receive a very good level of support, both personal and academic.
33. The school has good procedures to assess the performance of pupils. The results of national and other tests are used effectively to keep a check on pupils' progress and to plan work. Teachers in Years 2 and 6 make accurate assessments of their pupils. Teacher assessments match national test results. The headteacher analyses trends in performance effectively and the results are used to ensure that pupils are performing at least as well as they should be. The school analyses results to check on differences between boys and girls. The pupils with special educational needs are assessed regularly and parents are kept well informed of the results of assessment. The information is used to plan individual work and teachers are well aware of the pupils' needs. They match work well providing just the right amount of challenge so that these pupils make very good progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

34. The school successfully promotes an effective partnership with parents and this has a positive impact on the work of the school and on the children's attainment. There are many opportunities for parents to become involved in school life and in their children's learning. Parents have high expectations of the school and, because the school appreciates the value of parental involvement in school life, their views about specific aspects were recently canvassed. A positive outcome of this exercise has gone some way towards addressing one of the concerns parents expressed prior to the inspection about the level of information about their children's progress. The large majority of parents support the work of the school and value the good educational opportunities provided. This is reflected in the positive views about the school expressed by parents prior to the inspection. This very good partnership with parents has been maintained well since the last inspection.
35. The information provided for parents about the school is of satisfactory quality overall. Both the prospectus and the governors' annual report for parents contain useful information about the school and its achievements. However, the quality of the children's annual reports is inconsistent and the progress of children under five is reported by National Curriculum subjects rather than by the areas of learning for under fives and this is unsatisfactory. The text for English, mathematics and science does not give a sufficiently clear indication of a level of attainment and rarely identifies any weaknesses. There is insufficient emphasis on setting targets for improvement. The school offers two formal consultation opportunities for parents, one at the beginning and one at the end of the school year. As a result of the recent survey, a third consultation in the middle term is to be introduced. Parents are also regularly reminded that they can always arrange to talk to teachers or the headteacher if they have any concerns about their child's progress. Regular letters are sent to keep parents up-to-date with activities taking place, and information about what their children will be learning is sent out each term. Parents were invited to a briefing on the literacy strategy last October, but this was not well attended. A similar evening is to take place next term about the numeracy strategy.
36. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in the decision making process at a very early stage and are kept well informed about the needs of their children. The co-ordinator for special educational needs has regular contact with most parents and is readily available to discuss any problems. Concerns expressed by parents at the meeting and in writing prior to the inspection regarding the identification of special needs are not substantiated by inspection evidence.
37. The school is committed to involving parents in their children's learning and in the life of the school. At the beginning of each year parents receive a homework timetable and, although there are some inconsistencies, the majority of parents are happy with the content and amount of work their children bring home. Parents are keen to help with homework and this has a positive impact on individual attainment. The recent initiative to canvass parents' views on school life has resulted in change and the results of the survey have been communicated to parents. The school values the commitment of the parents who regularly help in class. Their contribution is of particular benefit to the infants' reading skills. Many parents willingly volunteer to accompany the children on visits. The staff and headteacher successfully endeavour to make parents feel welcome in the school and are always available to help resolve any concerns they may have. Parents responded positively to the introduction of the home school agreement. Successful fund raising activities are organised by individual parents, with the funds targeted at a specific project, currently to increase the resources for information technology.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

38. The school has been through much change since the previous inspection. There are many new staff and the number of pupils has almost doubled. The excellent headteacher has taken a firm lead and guided the school through this period of change and shows a strong commitment to raising standards. Her leadership skills are very effective and she has built a strong team who work hard for the benefit of the pupils. As a result, there has been good improvement since the previous inspection with most of the issues identified having been remedied. Standards in English, mathematics and science have been raised from average to well above average. History and geography are better than before. The teaching is much improved and there is more effective evaluation of how well the school is doing. Some

improvement has taken place in information technology but standards are not high enough and the subject does not meet statutory requirements in some aspects. The school shows a good commitment to improvement and is well placed to build upon its strengths. Each year, challenging targets are set for performance in the national tests and the school achieves them. The effective way that individual's progress is checked ensures that the staff are very focused on raising achievement. This has resulted in a consistent rise in the percentage of pupils attaining higher levels in national tests.

39. The school's aims reflect its religious status excellently. There is a strong commitment to developing effective relationships and equal opportunities are provided for all. This commitment is reflected in the way in which teachers provide demanding work and have high expectations of the pupils. All staff show a determination to raise standards and have a clear understanding of how to go about it.
40. There are sufficient, suitably qualified staff and they work together well. The blend of expertise and experience works effectively, and newly qualified staff are supported very well. The school is an effective provider of placements for initial teacher training. There is some specialist teaching for physical education, music and English and this works well. Support staff have a clear understanding of their role and provide very good support for children under five and pupils with special educational needs. The teachers take responsibility for the subjects and have begun in some subjects such as English and mathematics to monitor teaching and learning effectively. However, subject leaders have not been rigorous enough in ensuring that skills, knowledge and understanding in art, music and design and technology are developed consistently between year groups. Effective teamwork in checking on pupils' work by the whole staff has been successful in pinpointing areas for development in literacy and numeracy. This approach provides a good model for the other subjects. The staff are keen to develop their professional skills and attend courses regularly. The good system of appraisal and the school's future plans are used as an effective way of deciding priorities. Information gained on training is shared effectively with colleagues. The headteacher sets targets for the teachers and reviews performance regularly.
41. The governors take a keen interest in the work of the school and keep a check on how well it is doing. A few are regular visitors and most are parents. The governors work well with the headteacher to shape the direction of the school. The rigorous way they have sought to increase the number of pupils attending the school has been very successful. They understand the school's strengths and have successfully introduced initiatives to promote the school in the community. The provision of a toddler group and pre-school provision has been instrumental in attracting new pupils and provides good educational opportunities. Governors meet regularly and have a good overview of the school's strengths and areas for development. However, they have not been sufficiently focused on remedying the weaknesses in information technology identified in the previous inspection report. There are governors with responsibility for literacy, numeracy and the provision for special educational needs. They keep their colleagues well informed of these aspects of school life.
42. The school makes good use of its resources ensuring that the budget is linked to priorities which benefit the pupils. The school exercises effective financial control and governors seek best value when buying supplies and services. They have tendered for the current building work and keep a careful check on the builders' progress. Funds have been allocated from the school's budget to provide additional support for pupils with special educational needs. The parents contribute generously to the school's work and the funds are used to provide suitable resources. The school's audit showed few concerns about financial control and minor recommendations have been met. The school has built up a large surplus to be used to extend the building. However, since the previous inspection, insufficient funds have been allocated for information technology and the school is short of computers. The school has adequate resources for the other subjects and since the previous inspection the quantity and quality of books has been improved. There is a shortage of outdoor play equipment for the under fives. The small library is used for reference and in each class there is a good range of fiction. However, there is no classification system for library books. The school makes effective use of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum. The good accommodation is well maintained and kept spotlessly clean by the caretaker and cleaner. There is a large playing field and suitably sized hall which are used well to support physical education. One classroom is used to provide space for a pre-school group.

43. Taking into account;
- The costs of educating the pupils are above average;
 - Pupils make good and sometimes very good progress;
 - Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average;
 - The teaching is very good;

The school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

44. In order to build upon its success and to raise attainment further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

Raise standards in information technology in the juniors by:

- Providing a sufficient number of computers and software;
- Developing a scheme of work which guides teachers on the consistent development of skills in the subject;
- Ensuring that sufficient time is spent on all appropriate aspects of information technology;
- Ensuring that all statutory requirements are met.

(The school has identified this as an area for improvement)

(Paragraphs 7, 21, 23, 38, 41, 56, 62, 65, 79, 92 – 95 and 100)

Improve the consistency in developing skills, knowledge and understanding in art, music and design and technology by:

- Providing effective guidelines for teachers so that all aspects of the subjects are given sufficient attention;
- Ensuring that subject leaders monitor more rigorously what the pupils are taught;
- Providing in-service training for staff so that their knowledge of the subjects is improved;
- Ensuring that sufficient time is given to the teaching of the subjects in each class.

(Paragraphs 7, 21, 23, 40. Art 75 – 80. Design and technology 81 – 84. Music 97 – 100)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL.

- Improve the annual written progress reports to parents. (Paragraph 35)
- Improve the consistency in developing research skills in history and the presentation of work and handwriting in Year 4. (Paragraphs 17, 55, 63, 90 and 91)
- Introduce a classification system in the library. (Paragraphs 42 and 54)
- Provide a separate outdoor play area for children under five and a good range of large play equipment. (Paragraphs 42 and 51)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	40
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
25	23	38	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

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	155
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	17

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	14	8	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	13
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	20	20	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91(100)	91 (88)	91 (94)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	13
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	20	20	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91(100)	91 (100)	91 (95)
	National	82 (80)	86 (84)	87 (85)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	8	8	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	8	7	8
	Total	16	15	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (100)	94 (100)	100 (100)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	8	7	8
	Total	16	15	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (100)	94 (94)	100 (100)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	123
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.6
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	21

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	290,619
Total expenditure	302,728
Expenditure per pupil	1,960
Balance brought forward from previous year	41,726
Balance carried forward to next year	29,788

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	156
Number of questionnaires returned	76

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	20	7	1	4
My child is making good progress in school.	53	39	1	1	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	42	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	57	8	1	1
The teaching is good.	59	36	5	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	38	14	8	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	24	4	3	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	26	3	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	30	50	12	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	66	28	4	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	32	5	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	49	37	8	4	3

Other issues raised by parents

- Parents were pleased with the standards achieved and their children's behaviour.
- Reception children get off to a good start and make rapid progress
- Some parents felt that the more able were not challenged sufficiently but others felt that there were too many demands on them.
- There was some concern about the size of the classes.
- A few felt that physical education is not given sufficient emphasis.
- Any incidents of bullying are dealt with very well.
- The headteacher received much praise for her work.
- Parents would like to see more emphasis given to information technology.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

45. Children under five are taught in the reception and mixed reception and Year 1 classes. The children start school in the September of the school year in which they are five. At the time of the inspection seven children were still four. Before starting school, almost all have benefited from pre-school educational provision. Their attainment on admission when compared with other children in Cheshire is about average. The children make good progress in all aspects of their work and, by the time they are five, most attain levels which are above those expected for their age. They are particularly successful in their personal and social development and in improving their reading, writing and mathematical skills. There are no children in the reception year identified as having special educational needs. The provision, teaching and standards attained by the children have improved since the previous inspection.
46. By the age of five, children have very good personal and social skills. They are keen learners and take a great interest in all the activities provided. The teacher focuses very well on developing confidence by providing a secure and caring environment. The children show care for one another and have begun to establish firm friendships. They look after resources and take great care when handling books and equipment. Their behaviour is very good and they are very mature for their age. When working in groups, they co-operate successfully. They are also able to work independently because the teacher matches tasks to their levels of ability. The teacher monitors how well the children are doing, not only academically, but also in developing socially.
47. The children make very rapid progress in learning to read and, by the time they are five, almost all read simple texts accurately. They are very good at building words from the sounds that letters make and have a thorough knowledge of the alphabet. Standards are higher than those normally found in reception classes. Very good progress is made in writing due to the wide range of opportunities provided by the teacher to practise forming letters and to writing simple words. Most children write their own names independently and a high proportion write simple sentences using a good range of vocabulary. The most able sometimes use capital letters and full stops in their sentences. The children speak clearly and audibly and listen attentively. The teaching is excellent with a strong focus given to regular practice of reading and writing skills. Planning is thorough and includes opportunities for children of differing abilities to work at their own levels. Careful track is kept on progress and work is planned to build consistently on the skills that have been learnt.
48. By the age of five, children have mathematical skills which are above those expected of five-year-olds. They count up to 100 and are able to count in tens from different numbers. Many add the numbers to 20 and some are able to subtract small numbers. All the children understand some mathematical signs. They enjoy practical work involving measuring and the teacher skilfully promotes the use of mathematical vocabulary in water play by encouraging children to discuss “full” and “empty”. The very effective teaching is due to thorough planning and accurate knowledge of the children’s levels of attainment. The teacher inspires and enthuses the children by teaching rhymes and poems involving number and by providing practical activities such as shopping.
49. The children have a good knowledge and understanding of the world by the age of five. They talk confidently about where they live and identify key features of the neighbourhood. The teacher uses local visits well to promote geographical understanding. The children confidently describe the differences between the town and country. They make very good gains in history, comparing old and new toys and improving their knowledge of historical vocabulary. They know that they have changed since they were babies and understand that in families there are often people of differing ages. Their science work is based on practical activities which help to develop a secure understanding of life and living things. Through their study of farms they learn how animals are cared for. The children have sufficient opportunity to make models using a variety of materials. The teaching is good and a wide range of opportunities is provided for the children to develop skills, knowledge and understanding. They are prepared well for the National Curriculum. The teacher uses praise and encouragement very effectively and the excellent relationship with the children ensures that all are given tasks which are sufficiently

challenging. Lively discussions are used well to stimulate the children's ideas and to check on their understanding. Suitable records of their progress are kept and the information is used to plan the next stage in learning.

50. The children make satisfactory progress in their creative development and attain the expected levels for their age by the time they are five. They make very good progress in the use of creative and imaginative language in role-play and when writing stories. They enjoy pretending and take delight in acting parts. They sing with enthusiasm, keep together and show appreciation of a variety of music such as "The Carnival of the Animals". The children use a variety of media to create pictures. Their self-portraits are reasonably accurate and show good use of paint. They know about the work of some famous artists, but there are insufficient opportunities to work with a wide range of materials when modelling. The teaching is satisfactory with some excellent teaching of music. The relationship between the teacher and children and the high expectation of performance in singing and playing musical instruments enable the children to make very good gains in music making. Appropriate skills are developed consistently, although more opportunities are needed for the children to explore media.
51. The children's physical development is at about the level expected of five-year-olds by the end of reception. Much of the physical activity takes place in the school hall and the children become confident in running, skipping and jumping. They are aware that they need to move safely to avoid collisions. However, there is no separate outdoor play area for the children and insufficient opportunity for them to use large wheeled vehicles and to climb and balance. The teaching is satisfactory, although more emphasis needs to be placed on creative opportunities in outdoor play.

ENGLISH

52. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in English, the pupils attained standards which were well above average in comparison to all schools and those with similar intakes. At the higher level 5, standards were well above the national average and well above those of similar schools. The tests at the end of Year 2 in reading and writing showed standards that were well above the national average. At the higher level 3, standards were well above the national average. When compared to similar schools, standards were well above average in reading and above average in writing. The results show little difference between the attainment of girls and boys. Trends over time indicate improvement in standards with some variation between results depending upon the groups of pupils. End of Year 2 and Year 6, results have exceeded the national rate of improvement. Preliminary results for the latest national tests show that standards are at least as high as in previous years at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 with some improvement in performance at the higher levels. Pupils in Year 6 are well challenged to attain standards that reflect their learning potential. There has been very good improvement in standards in English since the last inspection.
53. Attainment in speaking and listening is above average at the end of Year 2. Pupils listen attentively in lessons and there are good opportunities in assemblies for listening to stories, other pupils' experiences and to music. For example, older pupils play string and woodwind instruments and a Year 6 pupil spoke of her success in a painting competition. Listening skills are extended well during the literacy hour when pupils identify rhyming words in poetry and stories and letter sounds in reading. The school's very successful management of behaviour and pupils' excellent attitudes to learning create a quiet working atmosphere that is beneficial to the development of listening skills. Pupils talk confidently; they have a good range of vocabulary and speak in grammatically correct sentences. They are confident and welcome visitors to the school, adapting to an appropriately formal language. Throughout the school, pupils make very good progress in the development of scientific language; pupils in Year 2 discuss filaments and circuits and Year 6 report investigations in clear scientific language. At the end of Year 6, pupils' listening and speaking skills are very good. They concentrate for long periods of time, identifying important areas for note taking. They discuss their work thoughtfully and logically in complex sentences and express their ideas clearly as in a literacy hour when analysing a familiar poem. They speak with clear diction showing awareness of the impact on the listener of volume and expression in speech. They benefit from opportunities to use these skills in school dramatic performances.
54. At the end of Year 2, reading is very good. Pupils are confident, reading fluently and accurately. They read with good understanding, with expression and awareness of the listener. The literacy strategy has

been successfully implemented and this, combined with the school's commitment to individual teaching of reading, has a beneficial effect on reading standards. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support during the literacy hour through teaching focused on their specific learning targets. They know and understand the role of the author and illustrator and use the content list effectively in making choices for reading from a wide range of books. Higher attaining pupils read fluently and accurately. They recall the plot, identify characters and discuss their role. They make realistic predictions of the outcome of the story. They make good use of non-fiction books in the classroom. However, infant pupils have insufficient opportunities to use the library and library skills are underdeveloped. By the end of Year 6, attainment in reading is very high. Pupils read enthusiastically and with enjoyment, for pleasure and to find information. Class libraries have a good range of popular books and classics. Pupils know and can explain the styles of writing of their favourite authors. The school library is used appropriately for independent research. However, there is no library classification system. Pupils skim and scan text and can analyse and annotate effectively. They recognise the character traits that contribute to the plot and successfully predict the outcome of stories.

55. Attainment in writing for seven-year-olds is good, but it is not as high as the standards attained in reading. The school is successfully remedying the variation in standards between reading and writing. Handwriting is formed well, of regular size and presented very neatly. More able pupils join letters and increase the speed with which they write. Pupils write fluently and confidently. This benefits standards in writing ideas and recording learning in other subjects such as history, science and art. Pupils write grammatically correct sentences and sequence them with good understanding. They use full stops and capital letters appropriately, understand speech bubbles and higher attainers use question marks, exclamation marks and speech marks. Spelling is usually correct. Spelling homework has a beneficial effect on pupils' spelling of recognised and frequently used words. Pupils use their knowledge of letter sounds well to build words and make very good use of class dictionaries. They write imaginative stories and factual reports, as in history and in art where they write about the life of a famous artist. At age 11, attainment in writing is very good. The development of handwriting is inconsistent between year groups. Some pupils in Years 3 and 4 do not take sufficient pride in the presentation of their work. Most pupils write thoughtfully, for a good range of purposes and with careful awareness of the reader. Year 5 and 6 pupils are challenged well. They write grammatically correct complex sentences using interesting vocabulary and making excellent use of dictionaries and thesaurus. They draft their work and improve and extend it when writing for a range of purposes. Year 6 pupils write newsletters, letters of complaint and friendship letters and extend these skills in writing to pen friends in Ghana. Pupils in Year 5 write effective biographies of poets and authors, linking life style with the writer. Writing opportunities are well extended into other subjects. All junior classes make good use of literacy skills in other subjects, as in history where pupils' interest and excitement in the subject is well expressed in writing.
56. Pupils' progress is very good, overall, in the infants and juniors. In Year 2 and Years 5 and 6, progress is excellent due to inspirational teaching. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented well and ensures systematic teaching of grammar, punctuation and the writing conventions. More able pupils are very well challenged. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. Targets are set, pupils know what they are and work well to achieve them. As a result, they attain average standards by the time they leave the school. The additional literacy classes have given good support in the learning of basic skills and "booster classes", arranged through splitting the Year 5 and 6 class, enabled all Year 6 pupils to benefit from individual teacher attention. However, insufficient use is made of computers to benefit learning and to further motivate lower attainers.
57. Pupils' behaviour is very good and pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. Relationships between pupils and between teachers and pupils are excellent. Pupils concentrate on their work; they are polite and friendly and collaborate successfully. They enjoy their own successes, and those of other pupils. When given opportunities to discuss the work of others, they are considerate and constructive in their comments.
58. The quality of teaching is good overall and excellent in Years 2, 5 and 6. In the lessons seen the teaching varied between satisfactory and excellent. Lessons are organised well and appropriately planned to the literacy hour guidelines. Lesson introductions are good. Learning objectives are explained clearly and discussed purposefully with the pupils. Teachers move around the room, having a clear overview of pupils' progress and being supportive of the less able whilst providing additional challenge to the more able. Good use is made of questioning to involve pupils and assess their

understanding. Teachers show a good knowledge of pupils' levels of attainment and use this information to give pupils confidence in responding to questions. Extension work and alternative tasks are planned but these are not always satisfactorily explained to pupils in Years 3 and 4. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils know what is expected of them and as a result they make very good progress in learning independently showing high levels of confidence. Pupils' learning is best where they are given clear time limits to complete tasks as in Year 2 where pupils are given five-minute reminders of the stage they should reach. Marking is always completed and pupils are encouraged to correct their mistakes. Some good examples of marking were seen in Years 5 and 6 and included comments to help pupils to improve their work and to guide teachers' assessment. Reading records and reading homework books are completed regularly and form a record of the quantity of reading. In some classes, they do not contain comments to help pupils, or to guide parents in helping their children. The teachers' commitment to reading standards has made a significant contribution to the school's very high standards.

59. The subject leader has excellent knowledge and understanding of the subject. She provides very good support and leads by her own outstanding example. She has successfully led the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and teachers are now confident in teaching to the guidelines. Plans to improve consistency in planning have been very successfully introduced. Monitoring of pupils' work is undertaken through a whole staff approach and information is used to bring about improvement in standards. The curriculum is monitored effectively and teachers have received appropriate training opportunities. Procedures for assessment are good. Information is carefully analysed and used to plan for the learning needs of individual pupils. Target setting is challenging and results this year have exceeded the national trend for improvement. Homework is used effectively in most classes and helps parents to become involved in their children's learning.

MATHEMATICS

60. The results of national tests at the end of the juniors in 1999 show that pupils attain standards which are well above the national average. When compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds standards are also well above average. Almost half of the pupils attained the higher level 5 in the tests. At the end of Year 2, standards are well above average in the national tests with a quarter of pupils attaining the higher level 3. When compared with schools with similar intakes, standards are above average. Although there are minor fluctuations in performance between year groups in the national tests, the school's rate of improvement is better than the national improving trend. Preliminary results of the national tests in 2000 and inspection evidence show that standards are well above average for 7 and 11 year olds. Boys and girls make consistently good gains in their mathematical skills and understanding and there is little difference in their overall performance. Progress is very good in Years 2 and 6 and for pupils with special educational needs. Gifted and talented pupils are given good opportunities to extend their learning through challenging activities such as problem solving. Since the previous inspection, standards have risen significantly and the school is on course to maintain this high level of performance. It has exceeded its targets for this year.
61. By the end of Year 2, all pupils attain the nationally expected levels and about half attain the higher level 3. They are particularly strong in using number facts and in responding quickly and accurately to mental arithmetic questions. Their understanding of mathematical vocabulary, signs and symbols is much better than that expected for pupils of this age. They add and subtract numbers up to 100 and the more able have a secure understanding of simple multiplication and division. Pupils with special educational needs count confidently forwards and backwards numbers to 100 and recognise the patterns made when counting in two's and ten's. All pupils have a good understanding and knowledge of shape and space, and begin to measure using centimetres. They make simple graphs and charts presenting their work very well and showing a good understanding of the need to have titles and keys in charts.
62. By the end of Year 6, pupils' mathematical skills are very good. Pupils solve complex problems using several operations and explain the different strategies they have used clearly and succinctly. They have a detailed knowledge of two and three-dimensional shapes and understand their properties. Pupils can read graphs, collect and collate information and use it to solve problems, although their skills in using computers for these activities are underdeveloped. The more able pupils calculate area and perimeter

and have a good understanding of simple algebra. Pupils with special educational needs attain average levels and this represents a significant achievement.

63. The pupils throughout the school enjoy mathematics. They compete keenly to be the first to answer questions. They have very positive attitudes, enjoying the regular homework and working hard and at a good pace in most lessons. Their behaviour is often excellent. They remain on task for long periods of time, collaborate well with their peers and are careful with equipment and resources. In most classes, they show great pride in presenting their work well, although in Year 4 presentation is often untidy. Pupils use their initiative well. Lower attainers often select appropriate resources to help them when doing calculations. Numeracy skills are used well in some subjects. In geography, pupils use their knowledge of co-ordinates to find their places on maps. In history they have a secure understanding of change over time and understand the sequence of events. Not enough use is made of graphs in science.
64. The quality of teaching is much better than reported at the previous inspection and is very good overall. It ranges from good to excellent and is at its best in Years 2 and 6 where the teaching is usually excellent. The teachers have a good knowledge of mathematics, the programmes of study and the National Numeracy Strategy. They apply this knowledge well to their preparation of lessons which include effective use of resources, careful match of work to the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, and a wide variety of activities. As a result, pupils remain on task, work hard and produce a good quantity of work in each lesson. Much emphasis is given to promoting pupils' knowledge of mathematical vocabulary and signs and symbols. This is done extremely well in Year 2. In most lessons, pupils are left in no doubt as to what is expected of them and how much time they have to complete tasks. Pupils respond well to this, having a clear understanding of expectations for performance and behaviour. They apply themselves well, making considerable effort. In Years 2 and 6 the teaching is inspirational and the enthusiasm of the teachers is infectious. Pupils are given demanding work, but this is in the context of thorough assessment and the teachers' understanding of the ability of each individual. This results in excellent progress and significant gains in pupils' competence in mathematics.
65. Teachers make good use of the objectives in the numeracy strategy and use the school's published scheme alongside their own resources. Lessons are introduced with a time for recapping on previous learning and to test the pupils' mental agility. Introductions are clear, well paced and effective. Pupils often work in ability groups and the tasks set are matched to their needs. Teachers move around the room giving good support, checking on any difficulties and providing additional guidance. The teachers have very good relationships with the pupils and exercise discipline in a friendly and firm way. There are very few incidents of unsettled behaviour and these only occur when the pupils are given tasks which are too repetitive, as in Year 4. Much responsibility is given to the pupils and teachers frequently remind them of the importance of self-discipline and mature behaviour. Although computers are used in some lessons, the lack of resources hampers pupils' progress in this aspect of their mathematical development.
66. The subject leader has monitored each of the teachers and has reviewed the pupils' work. She has a good overview of the development of the subject. The school has sufficient resources for mathematics. There is a good range and quality of books to support the teaching. The teachers have completed training in the teaching of numeracy. Each term the staff review the work done by pupils in each class and this helps to sharpen up the teaching of skills in mathematics.

SCIENCE

67. The school has continued to maintain very high standards for both infants and juniors. In the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 1999, the percentage of pupils attaining average standards was well above that expected and the number attaining the higher level 5 was also very high. The school's results compare very well with similar schools. Teaching and current programmes of work are clearly very effective and test results have confirmed teacher assessments. Results for teacher assessments at the end of the infants in 1999 show that a higher proportion of pupils attains both expected and higher than expected levels. Inspection evidence shows attainment at ages seven and eleven to be well above the

national average. Over the key stages, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good and sometimes very good progress.

68. Attainment and progress in experimental and investigative science are very good throughout the school. By the end of the infants and juniors, pupils have sufficient opportunities to make predictions, carry out investigations, draw conclusions and record results effectively. However, lower and middle juniors make less progress in these areas. In Years 3 and 4, pupils develop a good range of knowledge through engaging in appropriate activities such as testing for conductivity using an electrical circuit or the effects of forces on familiar objects. However, the methods used in experiments and subsequent recording of findings are not always sufficiently controlled or precise. Year 2 pupils are very good at creating electrical circuits and then using them effectively to determine whether a range of everyday items, made from different materials, conduct electricity. Older juniors collect and categorise small animals and are developing good understanding of what constitutes a fair test. The use of mathematical skills to create graphs and analyse data from them is underdeveloped.
69. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in developing understanding of life processes and living things. Year 6 pupils produce high quality notes on living things and their habitats and how plants make food. They develop good levels of knowledge about the human body and its needs including the function of eyes and ears. Infants know what affects the growth of plants. They produce good diagrams to show how they varied growing conditions in their experiments and recorded conclusions about the experiments conducted.
70. Materials and their properties are investigated well throughout the school. By the end of both the infants and juniors, pupils have developed very good knowledge of a variety of solids, liquids and gases. Infants classify materials under the headings such as bendy, rigid and waterproof and develop a good range of descriptive language. They know about magnets and carry out experiments to discover if materials are conductors of electricity. By the end of the Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of whether materials are organic or inorganic and know about metals and alloys.
71. Standards in physical processes are well above average by the age of seven and eleven. In the infants, pupils learn that materials decay, how sounds can be created and what natural or artificial objects give light. Juniors develop this work by studying shadows and reflections, and how images are changed through the use of convex and concave reflectors. Both infants and juniors investigate the use of electrical components. Year 2 pupils develop high levels of language. They know what function the filament of a bulb performs and can check to see whether it is complete by using a magnifying glass. Older pupils know the correct electrical symbols and draw the circuits they produce. Both infants and juniors make good progress in relating science to everyday situations as for example when Year 2 pupils consider the need for special light switches in the bathroom to avoid the safety implication of water conducting electricity. Pupils develop a good understanding of the moral and social responsibilities of science effectively through aspects such as pollution and recycling.
72. Overall progress is good for pupils, including those with special educational needs, in the infants and Years 5 and 6, and satisfactory for Year 3 and 4 pupils. Younger junior pupils do develop a good range of knowledge in all aspects of science but this is not always sufficiently reinforced by well planned experimental methods or structured written work which describes experimental procedures and consolidates accurate knowledge development.
73. Overall teaching is good with some excellent teaching seen in Year 2. Teachers manage their classes and resources very effectively. Pupils respond with enthusiasm to the subject. Teachers manage discipline well and as a result, the pupils' behaviour in lessons is very good and they are very careful with equipment and books. They enjoy science and in most classes present their work well. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject enable them to structure lessons well and in the best teaching high levels of language development are built in as a natural part of the development of science. Better lessons have clear objectives and plans and draw on pupils' prior knowledge. However, the lack of a detailed scheme for science means that some Year 3 and 4 lessons do not extend pupils' knowledge and understanding sufficiently. In the most successful lessons, infant and Year 6 teachers have very high expectations and pupils of all abilities respond to this by producing work of a very high

standard. They show high levels of interest and concentration, and working at such a high level is a natural part of their enjoyment of lessons.

74. The school is due to review its science policy in September 2000 in order to improve the consistent development of skills, knowledge and understanding between classes. The subject leader is aware of the need to monitor progress more rigorously and this is planned for the next academic year. Resources for science are adequate. They are enhanced by an attractive and safe 'secret garden', which includes a pond. This and the school grounds are used very effectively to study insects and other small creatures. The teaching of science makes a valuable contribution to the development of pupils' social and moral development and enables pupils to develop a better understanding of the world around them.

ART

75. The pupils' performance in art is at a similar level as reported in the previous inspection. Standards are in line with those expected for pupils aged seven and eleven. Learning is satisfactory overall with very good progress in appraisal and painting in the style of many famous artists. However, skills and techniques are not taught sufficiently and this hampers the pupils' creative development and competence in using a wide range of media. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, participate in the opportunities provided with interest and enjoyment.
76. In the infant classes, pupils' learning is satisfactory. Year 1 pupils use collage effectively to make jungle animals and use pastels purposefully to create a jungle disguise. Year 2 pupils demonstrate colour-mixing skills in their bold patterns and clearly demonstrate the use of complementary colours in pastel impressions of the work of Kandinsky. There is, however, insufficient opportunity for creative work. There is a lack of continuity in learning skills and techniques and this hampers progress.
77. In the juniors, pupils continue to study famous artists. Year 3 pupils draw satisfactory still life pictures in a variety of media which includes charcoal, watercolour, chalk and pastels. Year 5 and 6 pupils show good control in using a fine brush and a good awareness of perspective when they paint in the style of Lowry. They show a sensitive interpretation of the artist's work and paint thoughtfully and carefully. In Year 6 pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the range of paintbrushes and make wise choices for purpose, for instance for fine outlines when painting in the style of Clarice Cliff. They use artistic language appropriately in appraising their work.
78. Pupils are enthusiastic about art. They have excellent attitudes to learning and behaviour is good. They are interested and take pride in their work. They share resources willingly and are considerate of others' feelings when appraising their work. They prepare and clear away after lessons. They very happily shared the success of a pupil who won a local painting competition.
79. The teaching seen was overall good, and very good in Years 5 and 6. However, there are inconsistencies in teaching techniques and skills. Teachers manage their classes very effectively and organisation is good. This enables pupils to discuss their work, to work independently and to appraise the work of others in the light of their own work. There is no scheme of work that clearly shows the systematic development of art skills. Lessons have clear objectives and are planned appropriately but work is not always planned to build on pupils' prior attainment. Teachers display pupils' art effectively and make good use of these examples to stimulate discussion and develop pupils' appraisal skills. Information technology is used insufficiently.
80. The subject leader has been appointed recently. She is enthusiastic, has a love of art and a good working knowledge of the subject. She has analysed the school's provision for art and plans to develop the use of sketchbooks and to introduce a scheme of work that includes clear guidelines for teachers on how to develop art skills. The recently written policy covers the National Curriculum programmes of study. Resources are satisfactory, evenly distributed in classrooms and are readily accessible to teachers and pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

81. Design and technology lessons were observed in Years 2, 3 and 4 during the inspection. Discussions with pupils, scrutiny of work and observation of lessons indicate that standards are in line with expectations for pupils aged seven but below those expected for eleven-year-olds. Standards have not improved since the last inspection report.
82. Progress up to the age of seven is satisfactory overall with aspects of both designing and making being included in projects such as the development of design ideas for vehicles and in the making of model lighthouses. Recycled materials are used effectively in the construction of models and electrical components are added to produce lighting effects. Progress up to the age of eleven is inconsistent and unsatisfactory, as opportunities to engage in designing and making have varied from year to year. On the evidence of the work seen there is insufficient opportunity for pupils to develop designing and making skills and use a range of materials and tools.
83. When given the opportunity, pupils are enthusiastic about engaging in the designing and making process. They develop ideas and record these through drawing and written notes. They enjoy using tools to cut, shape and join materials and making models work. However, the school does not have sufficiently rigorous guidelines and a consistent approach to enable older pupils to develop their designing and making skills through the use of a range of materials.
84. In the lessons seen teaching was satisfactory overall with some excellent teaching in Year 2. However, the lack of a scheme of work and checking that the subject is taught through experiences, as outlined in the school's design and technology policy, result in lack of depth in pupils' understanding. In the class of reception and Year 1 pupils, the teacher encourages pupils to draw on prior knowledge about vehicles, develop their own ideas and communicate these through drawings. Year 2 pupils develop ideas through their topic on the sea. They work effectively in pairs to plan their models drawing on information from the book "The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch". They draw good plans, use recycled materials effectively to construct the main structure and use knowledge about electrical components well to model the light mechanism. The pupils take part in a very good evaluation exercise of their model in which they present their work and suggest ways in which it might be improved. Work experienced by pupils in older year groups varies in quality. In the past teachers have planned substantial projects such as the making of Tudor houses in Years 5 and 6 and this has resulted in well planned work and models made in appropriate resistant materials. However, current and more limited opportunities for designing and making are more concerned with making simple objects to support their work in other subjects. These opportunities are not sufficiently demanding. This is partly due to insufficient rigour in monitoring the consistent development of skills between classes.

GEOGRAPHY

85. The school's provision for geography has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Although few lessons were seen during the inspection, evidence from pupils' work and discussions with them show that standards are above those expected for seven and eleven-year-olds. Pupils show great interest in geography, enjoy map work and have a detailed knowledge of contrasting locations. Resources for the subject have been improved since the previous inspection and they are used well to promote interest which stimulates learning.
86. There is a good range of work done in geography. In most of the pupils' work there is evidence of effective use of literacy skills such as finding information from a variety of sources, taking notes and collating the information in effective writing. Older pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of rivers. They have a wide vocabulary and describe the formation of oxbow lakes. They comment knowledgeably about variations in localities and have a good understanding of the factors that govern the growth of settlements. The teacher makes good links between social responsibility and concern for the world when comparing underdeveloped countries with Western Europe. Pupils are confident about discussing environmental and ecological issues. In the infants, good links are made with the historical study of seaside towns. The pupils are able to identify key features which are similar in Frodsham and

Blackpool. They express preferences for living in different places. Throughout the school, the pupils have a good understanding of maps. In the infants, they identify where they live on a town plan. In Years 3 and 4, they recognise key features from aerial photographs and are able to locate a variety of countries on the world map. They use co-ordinates to pinpoint features and understand the importance of a key. Pupils in Year 4 make good progress in understanding how rivers influence the development of settlements and how industry uses them for transport and as a resource.

87. The pupils enjoy geography and talk confidently about what they have learnt. The quality of teaching in the lessons seen as judged through scrutiny of work is good. The teachers have a secure knowledge of the geography curriculum and provide interesting opportunities such as residential and local visits to promote pupils' interest in the subject. Good use is made of resources such as video footage. The teaching about maps and plans is good. Pupils are given access to a range of maps and aerial photographs and learn to compare different views of an area. They are taught how to use a key and there is a good emphasis on improving geographical vocabulary. Some good research work is promoted through homework and the pupils occasionally have access to computers at school for research. The subject is led successfully and pupils' work is monitored.

HISTORY

88. The pupils' understanding of history is well above that expected for those aged seven and eleven. Progress of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good overall and very good in Years 2 and 6 due to inspirational teaching. Standards are higher than those reported at the time of the previous inspection. Good headway has been made in ensuring that historical skills are developed consistently although more remains to be done to ensure that standards developed up to the end of Year 3 are extended sufficiently in Year 4. In this respect, the subject leader has done insufficient monitoring.
89. In Year 2, the pupils have a very good understanding of how holidays have changed over time through their study of the seaside. They use their literacy skills very effectively, writing extended passages and showing a thorough understanding of historical evidence. The teacher's very high expectations of both quality and quantity of work ensures that learning is exciting, interesting and rapid. Excellent use of resources and a charming and purposeful style of teaching, including discussion, direct questioning and setting tasks which are matched to the pupils' ability, ensures that standards are high. In Year 3, the teacher successfully builds on the children's previous learning and plans work which includes the use of a wide range of reference books to stimulate the pupils' interest. There are many visits linked to history and visitors to the school bring further insight into, for example, the Vikings. Year 3 have a good understanding of invaders and settlers and compare lifestyles with Romans, Saxons and today. Lessons are well structured and there are good time limits set so that pupils are kept on task. The pupils behave well and work quickly and productively. They make very good use of their literacy skills and the way in which the teacher gives advice on the structure of writing enables the pupils to record events in the correct sequence and to embellish their stories with imaginative vocabulary.
90. In Year 4, the history work is similar to that done in Year 3, as the pupils continue the theme of invaders and settlers. Although the standards are maintained, the curriculum is not broad enough to extend the pupils' skills in historical research. In Years 5 and 6 the pupils study Ancient Egypt. Their work is of a high standard due to imaginative and very effective teaching. The pupils have a very good understanding of how to use first hand and secondary sources of evidence, using their literacy skills well to take notes and to collect and collate information. The pupils have a well-developed understanding of change over time and of how historical personalities have been influential in shaping events. The quality of their biographical writing about their families is excellent.
91. Pupils are excited learners. They work productively and enthusiastically. They are particularly good at researching projects and enjoy homework and private study. Their behaviour in lessons is excellent as the teachers provide challenging tasks which engage the pupils. There are satisfactory resources for the subject. The use of visits and visitors is a strength. However, there is some inconsistency in developing historical skills in Year 4.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

92. Overall standards in information technology are in line with those expected for pupils aged seven but below those expected of eleven-year-olds. By the age of seven and eleven, pupils have appropriate skills in word processing through some class work and more extended work produced at home. However, this experience is not developed consistently between the infants and juniors. Some very good illustrated booklets are produced by older juniors using a programme called 'Story Teller Weaver', as part of their class work, and they have also produced some very good work using desk top publishing techniques through the use of computers at home. Year 2 pupils write illustrated stories to a good standard and this work provides very good reinforcement of their other language skills. Increasing use is made of computer research materials and subject specific software to reinforce pupils' learning in a variety of subjects including history, geography, English and mathematics, although this development is not consistent in each class. When learning about conduction, the pupils in Year 2 used their computer skills effectively. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, use these kinds of computer software effectively to reinforce their learning. Infants are introduced to aspects of computer control but this area of work is not sufficiently developed in the juniors. Pupils have insufficient knowledge of data handling and the creation of graphs.
93. Teaching of information technology in the few lessons seen was good and sometimes very good. Some teachers have good levels of expertise and use their skills well to teach skills consistently. They are confident and competent and this enabled good interaction to take place in demonstrations that drew on prior knowledge. As a result, pupils show enthusiasm and are very interested learners. They are keen to engage in the task when it is their turn, remember procedures very well and persevere in completing exercises successfully. However, other teachers lack confidence and spend insufficient time on developing pupils' competence. Planning for information technology in the lessons seen was good. There is insufficient planning in some classes to ensure that experiences are built on consistently. Consequently knowledge and skills are not sufficiently developed in all of the areas required by the National Curriculum and statutory requirements are not met.
94. All pupils, including those with special needs are keen to explore new programmes and extend their skills. Pupils develop a secure understanding of the computer, the terminology used and procedures that have to be followed. They are able to access the programmes well and are very conversant with choosing from given options to select and alter functions. This confidence is clearly enhanced by experiences gained at home. Behaviour is very good when pupils use computers and there is considerable respect shown for others when sharing the computer. The more able pupils effectively support those who are less confident.
95. Although there has been improvement in the use of information technology across the school and teacher expertise of those observed is good, the planning for and co-ordination of information technology is underdeveloped. The school does have plans to improve the provision for the subject but insufficient headway has been made since the previous inspection.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

96. French is taught in Years 5 and 6 for a short period each week. The teacher has good expertise and provides practical work which enables the pupils to make good gains in their learning. The pupils listen well and try hard to speak with an appropriate accent. There are suitable resources available to support the teaching. In addition, the school provides an extra-curricular club which several pupils attend. The pupils' behaviour throughout lessons is very good. They are keen and interested and listen attentively. They have a good knowledge of the French words for colours. The teacher has high expectations and makes good use of encouragement to spur on the pupils to have a go. Much fun was had in practising a tongue twister and pupils benefit from the teaching.

MUSIC

97. Standards in music are in line with those expected for pupils aged seven and eleven. They are at a similar level as reported at the time of the previous inspection. The pupils' level of attainment in

singing is good. The Year 6 teacher's enthusiasm and commitment to extra-curricular activities has a beneficial impact on the standards of singing. The subject benefits from specialist instrumental tuition from independent and local authority strings, woodwind and piano teachers. As a result, a significant proportion of pupils in the juniors have a good knowledge of notation.

98. In Year 1, pupils sing well in a group, keeping together and blending their voices to produce a pleasant effect. They have a developing awareness of beat and can demonstrate this satisfactorily with a percussion instrument. At the age of seven, pupils sing from memory, develop control of breathing and pitch their voices appropriately to the accompanying music. They perform well with others, rehearsing and sharing singing for the Leavers' Mass. They respond appropriately to the tempo, pitching their voices appropriately to the more experienced singing of the juniors. They recognise the structure of the music, accurately singing the repeated patterns with appropriate rhythm and harmony. There are, however, insufficient opportunities for pupils to make their own music, to experiment with the school's adequate range of percussion instruments or to create and appraise their own compositions.
99. By the end of the juniors, pupils perform well when singing. They have a large repertoire of songs and hymns that they sing with good control. They have a good knowledge and understanding of phrasing that develops awareness of the listener's involvement in the music. They sing in rounds and two parts and are competent performers for large and small audiences. The choir visits and performs to residents at a local residential home. Participation with other schools in concerts such as "The Last Night of the Proms" reflects the good quality of the singing in the school choir. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity to work with notation developing a satisfactory awareness of how notes indicate pitch and duration. They listen to music and form a mental picture, later using the medium of art to demonstrate their feelings. Where pupils have specialist instrumental teaching they make good progress.
100. Pupils enjoy music. They listen well to the performance of others and enjoy their success. The choir shows pride in performance and in representing the school. Behaviour is very good. Talking to pupils and reviewing pupils' work indicates that teaching is satisfactory overall. Where singing is taught to the whole school, with a live music accompaniment, the teaching is good and pupils experience an appropriate range of music skills. The school uses a published scheme of work to guide non-specialist teachers. The scheme is not used consistently and insufficient attention is given to the systematic acquisition of skills. The aims of the music policy are not fulfilled in the area of pupils' composition of music and there are insufficient opportunities for creativity. There is no method of assessment and no system for monitoring the taught curriculum. The subject leader has an appropriate knowledge of the subject but there is no time allowed for monitoring the outcome of planning in the classroom and no method of assessing pupils' progress through the published scheme of work that the school has adopted. There are insufficient opportunities for experimentation and creativity. Those pupils who have instrumental tuition make a good contribution to the learning of others in providing opportunities for listening to and appraising music. Resources for the subject are satisfactory and include an appropriate number of instruments to explore the music of other cultures. Resources are not stored in a prominent central position to encourage regular use and are insufficiently labelled to help non-specialist teachers to make choices. Information technology is used insufficiently to support the work in the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

101. Overall standards in physical education are in line with expectations for pupils aged seven and eleven and are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection. However, there are particular strengths in the school's provision. Pupils have good competence in swimming and athletics and achieve reasonable success against other schools in sporting competitions. The pupils achieve high standards in dance at the end of Year 2. The school's provision of residential visits for Years 2 and 6 enhances the pupils' physical skills and there are opportunities to take part in adventurous activities. Almost all of the lessons seen in both the infants and juniors were linked to games. However, in an excellent lesson in dance in Year 2, the pupils performed traditional country dancing showing poise and balance. Their response was enthusiastic throughout and they made significant gains in their learning due to the high expectations and inspirational approach taken by the teacher.
102. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy physical activities and consistently develop their skills in rolling, receiving, passing and shooting using a variety of balls. Most lessons begin with a suitable warm-up,

although sometimes these are not rigorous enough. Pupils are given a range of opportunities to develop their skills, and lessons have a good balance of activities which involve individual, small group and team work. The teachers promote sporting attitudes very well and the pupils show appreciation for one another's achievements. In a good lesson in Year 1, the teacher used pupils to demonstrate good skills and encouraged the pupils to comment on how they could improve. This was very effective in promoting good skills of throwing the ball accurately. The pace of lessons is generally good, although there are times when teachers' explanations take too long and pupils are inactive. Good discipline is maintained throughout lessons. Pupils respond immediately to requests of teachers. They take physical activity seriously, concentrating hard and paying due care and attention to safety. In Year 3, the pupils organise themselves well into teams and collaborate effectively. They improve their skills of throwing and catching. Year 5, pupils build on these skills and devise their own simple games. They make good gains in batting due to effective teaching by the specialist teacher.

103. The school covers all areas of the physical educational curriculum at different times during the year. Pupils say that they have enjoyed a variety of dance and gymnastics. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities to support physical education. They include netball, football, badminton, athletics and gymnastics. Pupils are keen to attend and the expert help given by teachers, parents and professional coaches contributes to the school's success in competition. There are satisfactory resources for the subject which include a large field and a suitably equipped hall. There is a good range of small apparatus and pupils take care of it. The subject leader has a clear view of standards and manages the subject effectively.