

INSPECTION REPORT

Grange Valley Primary School

Haydock, St Helens

LEA area: St Helens

Unique reference number: 104774

Headteacher: Mrs D M Howarth

Reporting inspector: Mr D S Roberts
1743

Dates of inspection: 6 – 10 March 2000

Inspection number: 192913

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

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior school

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Heyes Avenue
Haydock
St. Helens
Merseyside

Postcode: WA11 0XQ

Telephone number: 01744 25543

Fax number: 01744 29132

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr W Wiswell

Date of previous inspection: February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
D S Roberts	Registered inspector	English	What sort of school is it?
		Science	School's results and achievements
		Information technology	How well are pupils taught?
			How well is the school led and managed?
			What should the school do to improve further?
F Kennedy	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitude, values & personal development
			How well does the school care for its' pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
B Frost	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Under Fives	
S Williams	Team inspector	Art Geography	How well does the school care for its pupils?
		History	
		Equal opportunities	
A Watson	Team inspector	Music Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Special educational needs	
		English as an additional language	

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services
Strathblane House
Ashfield Road
Cheadle
Stockport
SK8 1BB

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	16
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	20
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	22
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	23
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	25
OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES	26
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	27
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	31

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is an average size primary school for boys and girls from three to eleven years old. The number on roll has grown significantly since the last inspection. The school now provides full-time education for 215 pupils, and part-time education for a further 35 children in the nursery. The proportion of pupils entitled to receive free school meals is above the national average and more than at the time of the last inspection. The pupils' attainment on entry to the nursery is generally below that found nationally, and this represents a change since the last inspection. Currently, over 20 per cent of the pupils are on the register for special educational needs, which is close to the national average. There are 13 pupils at stages 3 to 5, most of whom have moderate learning difficulties, and there are individual needs for dyslexia, emotional and behavioural problems, speech and communication difficulties and hearing impairment. Under one per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority families where English is an additional language, and this proportion is less than that found nationally.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school which provides a good level of care and support for its pupils. The teaching is generally of good quality, and the large majority of pupils achieve standards which are at least appropriate for their age in most subjects. However, a significant number of higher ability pupils are capable of achieving better standards in science. The headteacher, governors and staff work together successfully to create a positive ethos for learning. The school is managed efficiently and provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Children are given a very good start to their school education in the nursery, where provision is of high quality.
- Throughout the school, the majority of teaching is of good quality, and the national strategies for literacy and numeracy are being implemented successfully.
- Standards are above the national average in writing at Key Stage 1 and in some aspects of information technology at Key Stage 2.
- Pupils demonstrate very good attitudes towards their work, and their behaviour is consistently of a high standard.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development is promoted very successfully.
- Levels of attendance are good and pupils enjoy school.

What could be improved

- The standards achieved by a significant number of higher attaining pupils in science at both key stages.
- The provision of regular opportunities for pupils in all classes to engage in experimental and investigative work in science.
- The targets in some individual education plans need to be more specific to allow pupils' progress to be measured accurately.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress in addressing the key issues identified in the last inspection report. During the three years up to 1999, the overall rate of improvement in standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 2 was in line with that found nationally. Compared to figures published in the last inspection report, the proportion reaching national standards at the end of Key Stage 1 has increased from 73 per cent to 88 per cent in reading, from 73 per cent to 94 per cent in writing, and from 85 per cent to 88 per cent in mathematics. At Key Stage 2, the proportion reaching level 4, the national standard, has increased from 56 per cent to 66 per cent in English, from 44 per cent to 71 per cent in mathematics, and from 53 per cent to 71 per cent in science. The quality of teaching has continued to improve. The proportion of lessons judged to be at least satisfactory has increased from 82 per cent to over 98 per cent, and the proportion judged to be very good or better from 22 per cent to 33 per cent. Standards have improved significantly in religious education. Procedures for planning and assessment are much more effective. The governing body is more purposefully involved in planning provision and monitoring school performance. In addition, information technology is now used effectively to support school administration. Plans to improve standards and quality in some of the non-core subjects remain as priorities to be addressed, having been delayed to accommodate the implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. The school is well placed to continue improving by building on existing strengths and addressing weaknesses.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	All schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	A	E	D	B	well above average A above average B Average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	B	C	D	C	
Science	A	A	E	E	

The table shows that in 1999 the school's test results for English were below the average for all schools, but above average compared to schools with similar characteristics. In mathematics, results were below the average for all schools but in line with those for similar schools. Results in science were well below the average for all and similar schools. The school's overall performance was in line with that of schools with similar characteristics.

Inspection findings indicate that children make good progress in the nursery and reception classes and achieve what is normally expected for their age in all areas of learning by the time they reach the age of five. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards are at least in line with the national average in all subjects, and above the national average in writing. By the age of eleven, standards in English and mathematics are broadly in line with those found nationally. The successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is an important factor in the improving picture in mathematics. In science, although standards are generally in line with those found nationally, a significant number of higher ability pupils underachieve in relation to their prior attainment. At both key stages, standards in religious education and information technology meet fully the expectations set by the National Curriculum and St Helens Agreed Syllabus.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Throughout the school, pupils show very good attitudes towards their work. They show interest and enthusiasm, are eager to learn and generally give of their best at all times.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is consistently of a very high standard in classrooms, about the school and in the swimming baths.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is very good throughout the school. Pupils show initiative and are willing to take responsibility. Older pupils carry out a wide range of activities with commitment and enthusiasm. Relationships are positive and pupils co-operate very effectively in pairs and groups when required to do so.
Attendance	Good; slightly better than the national average.

Throughout the school pupils' very positive attitudes towards their work and high standard of behaviour make a positive contribution towards their progress.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

In all the areas of learning, the teaching of children under five is very good and it is often outstanding in the nursery. At Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, teaching of English and mathematics is generally good and sometimes of high quality. Science teaching is generally satisfactory but insufficient emphasis is placed on experimental and investigative work, and this contributes towards underachievement by some higher attaining pupils. Teaching of information technology is of good quality throughout the school. In other subjects, teaching is generally good and sometimes of high quality, particularly in dance at Key Stage 1. The valuable and effective work of support staff has a very positive impact on pupils' progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a high quality and stimulating curriculum for children under five. At both key stages, the curriculum is generally broad and relevant. The development of literacy and numeracy skills is strongly emphasised, but has led to a narrowing in the range of work in some of the non-core subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision throughout the school. Work is generally pitched at an appropriate level and close attention is provided by support staff. The targets in some individual education plans are not sufficiently specific to enable progress to be measured accurately.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school makes good provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language. Class teachers provide work which is appropriately challenging. External support is available when necessary.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	All dimensions are promoted very successfully through assemblies and across the curriculum. Good adult role models, the effective use of displays, and opportunities for pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities, contribute significantly towards pupils' development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development, providing educational guidance and support, and promoting good behaviour. Good procedures in place for monitoring welfare and safety, for child protection, and for promoting good attendance.

An effective partnership has been developed with parents, most of whom would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. A substantial proportion would like the school to work more closely with them.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Headteacher provides effective leadership and is well supported by co-ordinators for subjects and aspects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governing body works effectively with the head to provide clear direction for the work of the school and ensure that statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Appropriate use is made of national and local comparative information to evaluate and set targets for improvement in English and mathematics. Insufficient attention is given to analysing performance in order to identify areas for improvement in science.
The strategic use of resources	Effective school development planning enables money to be spent wisely on educational priorities. All resources are managed efficiently.

The overall quality of leadership and management is good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The children like school. The children make good progress. Behaviour is good. The teaching is good. They would feel comfortable in approaching the school with questions or problems. The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A significant minority of parents would like more information about their children's progress and would like the school to work more closely with parents. A significant number feel that their children do not get the right amount of homework. A substantial minority feel that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside the classroom.

The inspectors agree with parents' positive views about the school. They find the end of year written reports on pupils' progress to be of good quality. However the arrangements for parents to meet with teachers to discuss their children's progress, following receipt of the report, should be strengthened by providing a formal parents' evening for this purpose. The arrangements for working together with parents are similar to those in most schools and are judged to be appropriate. However, the headteacher and governing body are anxious to continue to strengthen the partnership with parents and will take the views expressed by parents into account when reviewing current arrangements. Inspectors found the range of extra-curricular opportunities offered to pupils to be good. However, the school acknowledges that the emphasis placed on implementing the national strategies for literacy and numeracy has resulted in a narrowing of the curriculum, and this is reflected in the more limited range of topics which pupils are expected to study at home. At the parents' meeting with the inspectors, many expressed concern about the current arrangements at the beginning and end of the school day, when children arrive at and are dismissed from school. The inspectors share these concerns, but acknowledge that options for making improvements are limited. However, the governors should explore ways of improving current arrangements.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 The attainment levels of children on entry to the nursery are generally below those found nationally. They make very good progress in the nursery and good progress in reception classes. By the time they enter Key Stage 1, the majority of children meet the standards set out in the nationally agreed desirable outcomes for their learning in all areas of the curriculum.
- 2 Comparative information, based on the 1999 National Curriculum test results, indicates that the performance of pupils reaching the end of Key Stage 1 in reading is broadly in line with the average for all schools, but above average in comparison with pupils in schools with similar characteristics. In writing, the pupils' performance is above the national average and well above the performance of pupils in similar schools. In mathematics pupils' performance is in line with those in all schools, but well above the average for similar schools. The same test results show that the proportion of pupils exceeding the level set by the National Curriculum is in line with national average in reading, but well above average in writing and above average in mathematics.
- 3 Comparative information for pupils reaching the end of Key Stage 2 based on the 1999 national tests, indicates that the school's overall performance is broadly in line with that of similar schools. In English, the pupils' performance is below the average for all schools, but above average in comparison with pupils in similar schools. In mathematics, the pupils' performance is below the average for all schools, but in line with that of similar schools. The pupils' performance in science is well below average compared to all and similar schools. The same test results show that the proportion of pupils exceeding the level set by the National Curriculum and reaching Level 5 is close to the national average in English, but below average in mathematics and science.
- 4 Key Stage 2 national test results for the three years up to 1999, indicate a rate of improvement in the core subjects which is in line with that found nationally. During the same period, the girls outperformed the boys in all three subjects. The school has recognised this as an issue which needs to be monitored carefully in order to ensure that boys are not disadvantaged in any way.
- 5 Inspection findings indicate that standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are at least in line with those found nationally in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics and science. Standards in writing are above the national average. The majority of pupils are on course to reach national standards in all of these subjects, and a significant proportion to exceed the levels set by the National Curriculum in writing and mathematics. Pupils' achievements in relation to prior attainment are good in all aspects of English and mathematics. In science, although the achievement of lower and average ability pupils is satisfactory, a significant number of high ability pupils underachieve in relation to prior attainment.
- 6 Inspection findings for the end of Key Stage 2 indicate that standards are broadly in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. Although pupils' achievement in relation to prior attainment is broadly satisfactory in English and mathematics, a significant number of higher ability pupils are capable of reaching higher standards in science.

- 7 In English, standards in speaking and listening are good at the end of both key stages. This represents an improvement on the previous inspection when pupils' speaking and listening skills were judged to be unsatisfactory at both key stages. Standards in reading are in line with the national average, and a substantial proportion of pupils exceed the levels set by the National Curriculum at the end of both key stages. At Key Stage 1, the great majority of pupils at all levels of attainment make good progress in the core reading programme and benefit greatly from the valuable support of parents in reading with their children at home. At Key Stage 2, pupils at all levels of ability build successfully on their early skills, and many pupils read widely and demonstrate good levels of fluency and accuracy. Higher attainers read challenging novels of their own choice. They talk enthusiastically about their reading and are able to discuss confidently the plot, characters and style of the books.
- 8 In writing, standards are above those found nationally at the end of Key Stage 1 and broadly in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. The pupils benefit greatly from the daily literacy hour and from additional opportunities to engage in extended writing for a variety of purposes. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils are able to develop their ideas in a sequence of sentences, making appropriate use of full stops and capital letters. Higher attainers have a good feel for story language and their writing is well organised, imaginative and clear. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils use an appropriate range of punctuation with accuracy and understand how to write paragraphs. Many show good skills in producing well-structured narrative writing, and extend their skills effectively through the use of information technology. Most pupils develop a fluent and legible style of handwriting, and reach an acceptable standard in the presentation of their work. Their writing skills are considerably enhanced through extended writing across other subjects, for example, in history and religious education.
- 9 In mathematics, pupils at all levels of attainment make consistent progress in developing their numeracy skills. The great majority of pupils reaching the end of Key Stage 1 have a good recall of addition and subtraction facts to ten. They demonstrate an increasing understanding of place value and are confident in ordering numbers to 100. Most understand the relationships between halves, quarters and eights and can recognise number sequences in counting activities. By the end of Key Stage 2, the great majority are competent in using accurately the four rules of number, and make satisfactory progress in developing a range of strategies for solving problems. At both key stages, pupils benefit greatly from opportunities to practise and develop their numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, in a Year 5 class, the pupils studied population growth in urban and rural areas. They were able to calculate accurately the percentage increase in urban population between 1901 and 1981.
- 10 In science, standards at the end of both key stages are broadly in line with the levels set by the National Curriculum. The great majority of pupils are on course to reach these levels, but few are likely to exceed them. Most pupils, at all levels of attainment make satisfactory progress in extending their scientific knowledge. However, the lack of emphasis placed on experimental and investigative work in some classes restricts the progress of pupils in these important aspects of science and contributes towards underachievement by a significant proportion of higher ability pupils at both key stages.

- 11 Standards in information technology are broadly in line with the levels set by the National Curriculum at both key stages, and pupils at Key Stage 2 exceed these levels in the communicating information element of the work. They produce a wide range of work that demonstrates an ability to refine and present information in different forms and styles appropriate for specific purposes. The very good use made of the computer suite to facilitate whole-group teaching and effective demonstration, contributes greatly towards the good achievement by pupils at all levels of ability in relation to their prior attainment.
- 12 In religious education, standards at the end of both key stages meet those set by the St Helens Agreed Syllabus.
- 13 Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. Those for whom English is an additional language also make good progress. The introduction of additional "booster classes" to help borderline pupils at Key Stage 2 reach the national standard is having a positive effect on their progress and attainment. There are no formal arrangements to provide additional support for gifted pupils.
- 14 Pupils at both key stages, work at appropriate levels in all other subjects. High quality performance is achieved in dance during physical education lessons at Key Stage 1. In swimming, the great majority of pupils are able to swim 25 metres or more unaided before leaving the school at the end of Year 6.
- 15 Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. The successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy at both key stages is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. This is particularly reflected in the achievement of pupils in Year 2, who have enjoyed the benefits of the literacy strategy during the whole of their time at Key Stage 1.
- 16 The governors have set appropriately challenging targets for improvements in English and mathematics for future years which take account of the varying ability levels of different cohorts of pupils. The school is well on course to achieve the targets set for the end of the current academic year.
- 17 The overall improvement in standards since the last inspection is good. At Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils reaching national standards has increased from 73 per cent to 88 per cent in reading, from 73 per cent to 94 per cent in writing, and from 85 per cent to 88 per cent in mathematics. In addition, the proportion of pupils exceeding the national standard has increased significantly in writing and mathematics. At Key Stage 2, the proportion reaching Level 4 by the end of the key stage, has increased from 56 per cent to 66 per cent in English, from 44 per cent to 71 per cent in mathematics, and from 53 per cent to 71 per cent in Science. In information technology, better resources are contributing towards continuing improvement in standards. Standards in religious education, which were described as below expectations at both key stages in the last inspection report, are now at least in line with the requirements of the St Helens Agreed Syllabus at the end of both key stages.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 18 The pupils' very good attitudes to learning are a strength of the school. In lessons, in the playground, in assembly and in the dining room the pupils' behaviour is of a high order and contributes very positively to the standards which they achieve and the happy atmosphere which exists in all areas of the school. The pupils enjoy school. They arrive punctually in the mornings and their attendance is consistently good, being slightly above the national average for primary schools. Weekly attendance figures for individual classes, including reception, are often in the high nineties. The incidence of unauthorised absence is very low, and is below the national average.
- 19 Pupils are polite to their teachers and to the other adults who work with them. During lessons they sustain good levels of concentration. They contribute confidently to class discussion, for example in literacy and numeracy lessons, asking perceptive questions and listening attentively to what others have to say. In science lessons they demonstrate high levels of curiosity and draw well on prior learning when answering questions or considering new concepts. Pupils take a pride in the presentation of their written work and are eager to show visitors what they have achieved.
- 20 Throughout the school the pupils demonstrate a good capacity for independent learning. They think for themselves, for example they use their word books or dictionaries when they cannot spell a word, rather than looking to their teachers for help. From a very early age they take responsibility for filing their own work and they gladly assist with putting away books and other equipment at the end of the lesson. Relationships at all levels are very good. The pupils are always ready to help one another. They work with good co-operation in group activities and show a real appreciation for others' successes. The school has never found it necessary to exclude any pupil.
- 21 Pupils take due care of their own and other people's property. The large and attractive school grounds are entirely free of litter. Inside the building, the many colourful displays of pupils' work are treated with respect and not damaged in any way. Classrooms and cloakrooms are clean and tidy and everywhere there is a sense of order and purpose.
- 22 The Year 6 pupils set a very good example to the rest of the school and contribute a great deal to this sense of purpose. They carry out a wide range of duties with commitment and enthusiasm. These include setting up the hall for assemblies and operating the overhead projector, assisting in the library and helping in the school office at lunchtime. Pupils also assist in the nursery and in the reception and Year 1 classes by helping with filing and organising the toys and other resources. Their overall contribution to the school community is excellent.
- 23 Caring for others is emphasised in all aspects of school life. This is extended to the wider community by fund raising efforts for local and national charities such as the Mayor's Appeal and the Children in Need charity. The Year 6 pupils support an animal sanctuary in Norfolk. They have adopted a donkey and give money towards his food and care throughout the year. More recently, older pupils initiated an appeal to parents and the community to provide support for the victims of the flood disaster in Mozambique. Such activities make an important contribution to the school's very good provision for the pupils' personal and social development, and their awareness of national and world issues.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 24 The quality of teaching is generally good. During the inspection, 84 per cent of lessons observed were judged to be at least good, 34 per cent were very good or excellent. Just under 2 per cent of lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory.
- 25 The quality of teaching for children under five is very good. Over fifty per cent of lessons observed were judged to be very good or better and 17 per cent were excellent. Teaching in the nursery is consistently of high quality. This enables children to make an excellent start to their education. All of the areas of learning are taught very effectively and children make significant progress. Teaching in the reception class is of good quality, and is successful in helping the majority of children to reach appropriate standards by the time they are five.
- 26 Throughout the early years, the teaching of the under fives is successful in promoting good progress by most children. The majority of them make significant progress in extending their early literacy and numeracy skills and in their creative and physical development. They make good progress in extending their knowledge and understanding of the world, showing interest in all aspects of the work and an increasing capacity to sustain concentration. Many show growing independence when working at computer workstations. Teaching is particularly successful in promoting the children's personal and social development, preparing them well for the next stage of learning. Very effective team-work between teaching and support staff is a very strong feature at this stage. Planning and assessment of work are completed efficiently in all classes, and the teaching of children with special educational needs is of good quality throughout the early years.
- 27 The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is generally good and sometimes very good. Over 90 per cent of lessons observed were judged to be good or better and 36 per cent were in the very good to excellent category. The teaching of English and mathematics is particularly good. Teaching is generally satisfactory in science but insufficient opportunities are created for pupils to engage in experimental and investigative work in some classes.
- 28 The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is generally good. Over 80 per cent of lessons observed were judged to be good or better and 34 per cent were in the very good to excellent category. The teaching of English is effective in most classes and of high quality in some. Mathematics teaching is never less than satisfactory and often good. In science, the teaching is generally satisfactory and often good but insufficient emphasis is placed on experimental and investigative work.
- 29 The teaching of English is generally good and often of high quality at both key stages. Most teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and a good understanding of how pupils learn. This enables pupils to make consistent progress in developing their literacy skills. Nearly all lessons follow closely the structure of the National Literacy Strategy, and teachers' planning is detailed and sets appropriate expectations of the pupils. Teachers at Key Stage 1 are very skilful in teaching the basic skills of reading and writing, and this helps pupils to develop an appropriate range of strategies for reading unfamiliar words, and a structured approach to written tasks. High expectations and excellent class management are strong features in the best lessons at both key stages. This helps to capture pupils' interest and results in high levels of productivity. In a small minority of Key Stage 2 lessons, insufficient time is allowed for the whole-class elements of literacy lessons and pupils are given too long to work independently with limited teacher intervention. This results in a loss of pace and reduces the quality of work produced by the pupils.
- 30 Teaching of mathematics is good at Key Stage 1 where all elements of the National

Numeracy Strategy are being implemented very successfully. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is never less than satisfactory and often good.

- 31 The teaching of science is generally satisfactory at both key stages and often good at Key Stage 2. The planning of most lessons is clear with precise learning objectives. This helps pupils to extend their scientific knowledge and understanding. Some lessons create very good opportunities for pupils to engage in worthwhile experimental and investigative work. These help them to develop good skills in scientific enquiry. However, this is not a consistent feature, and too often insufficient opportunities are created for pupils to engage in such activities. This is a contributory factor in the underachievement of some higher ability pupils
- 32 Teaching of information technology is of good quality at both key stages. Timetabled lessons for all classes in the computer suite, and the effective deployment of a support teacher, employed specifically for teaching information technology, together with the good work of the subject co-ordinator, have a very positive impact on the achievement of pupils at both key stages. The great majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress, particularly in extending their skills in communicating and handling information. Teaching also fosters a capacity to work independently and to overcome difficulties through perseverance. Although there are some good examples of teachers creating opportunities for pupils to extend their information technology skills through work in other subjects, this is not yet a consistent feature in the teaching.
- 33 In religious education, the teaching is of good quality. It is successful in promoting good achievement by pupils at all levels of attainment.
- 34 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. Very effective co-operation between teachers and support staff is a strong feature which helps to promote good progress by pupils in this category. Their work helps to overcome the lack of detail in some individual education plans.
- 35 In other subjects, tasks are pitched at an appropriate level to challenge pupils, and opportunities are taken effectively to extend literacy and numeracy skills. This is apparent, for example, in science where investigations often require accurate measurements. In history, geography and religious education, teachers create worthwhile opportunities for pupils to engage in extended writing activities, arising from their studies, and incorporating some of the new skills acquired during the literacy lessons. Through work in art, music, and physical education, the teaching promotes successfully the pupil's creative and physical development.
- 36 Since the last inspection, the proportion of lessons judged to be satisfactory or better has increased from 82 per cent to over 98 per cent, and the proportion judged to be very good or better has increased from 22 per cent to 34 per cent. Significant improvements in lesson planning and assessment procedures, and the successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, have contributed greatly towards this improvement.

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

- 37 The school is successful in providing a high quality, stimulating curriculum for the children under five. The very good provision for indoor and outdoor activities in the nursery is a particularly strong feature. At both key stages, the curriculum is of good quality and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education.
- 38 The school has adopted effective strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy through the successful implementation of the respective national strategies.
- 39 Although the curriculum is generally broad, balanced and relevant in most classes, the emphasis on literacy and numeracy has had the effect of restricting the breadth of the curriculum in some classes.
- 40 The school provides a well balanced programme of extra-curricular activities and offers a good mixture of sporting, aesthetic, creative and intellectual experiences. In addition, the school provides the Year 6 pupils with the opportunity to take part in a residential visit during which the pupils engage in supervised outdoor adventurous activities within a programme which includes information technology studies.
- 41 The school makes good provision for the pupils with special educational needs. An early diagnosis is made of the pupils' specific needs. Effective use is made of baseline assessment of children, begun in the nursery and implemented throughout the school, to support early identification procedures. Two parents meetings for the new intake provide a valuable source of information concerning the pupils who are at Stage 2 and above of the Code of Practice.
- 42 There is some inconsistency in the quality of individual education plans. Some are well written, with precise and measurable targets that are reviewed at regular intervals. However, too many contain targets which are too general and insufficiently specific. The best individual education plans contain an appropriate time scale and focus effectively on aspects of English and mathematics. Group activities in literacy and numeracy, and the close involvement of classroom assistants, make an important contribution towards provision for the pupils with special educational needs.
- 43 The school ensures that all pupils have equality of access and opportunity to all subjects of the curriculum and the life of the school. Good provision is made for pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, to benefit from what the school provides. Care is taken to ensure both girls and boys have equal access to all activities and their attainments and progress are carefully monitored. Pupils with English as an additional language are monitored and additional help provided, if this is deemed necessary, to ensure equal access to the curriculum.
- 44 The school has a draft anti-racist policy which aims to provide a curriculum which reflects the achievement of people from all cultures and a caring environment in which all children and adults are encouraged to show respect for other people's feelings and values.

- 45 The school makes very good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The requirements for collective worship are met fully. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils' spiritual development in religious education and these extend throughout the school in assemblies and other subject areas. For example, the children in the nursery demonstrated their feelings of joy and wonder when a parent brought her new baby into school and bathed it, with a nursery child helping. In their study of the disciples of Jesus, the pupils in Year 3 were given opportunities to reflect on the positive qualities of friendship.
- 46 The pupils make good progress in their moral development and the code of conduct upholds good standards of respect and care. Many pupils are given special responsibilities and placed in positions of trust. For example, the pupils organise the audio and visual aids which are used in assemblies and are given responsibility for answering the telephone at lunchtime. The pupils are provided with many opportunities which enable them to tolerate each other's point of view and to respect opinions which are different from their own. They are helped in many ways, particularly through school assemblies, stories and by the manner which all the adults in the school provide good role models, to understand the principles which distinguish right from wrong.
- 47 Pupils' social development is very good. Pupils mix and collaborate effectively together. For example, a large number of pupils were involved in the production of, "The Bossy Christmas Fairy" and the carol service at Christmas. In lessons, they work effectively as a class, in small groups and individually. All age groups play together at playtime, and the pupils form very good relationships. They relate well to the adults working in and visiting the school. The pupils are encouraged to take responsibility as monitors. Social development is encouraged beyond the school confines. For example, the school choir sings at a neighbouring home for senior citizens at Christmas.
- 48 The curriculum makes an important contribution to the pupils' own cultural traditions and to the diversity and richness of other cultures. This is particularly so in religious education and music. For example, there are stimulating wall displays of the Chinese New Year and the celebration of religious festivals. In music, the pupils are introduced to the style of music and instruments from countries such as China and India. In religious education, they are introduced to Jewish, Islamic and Hindu cultures. The school places great value upon the daily act of collective worship. Such occasions are well planned, mainly of Christian character and provide a very important platform for the pupils to explore questions about meaning and purpose, values and beliefs. Visits to such places as Liverpool Museum, Martin Mere and Chester Zoo make an important contribution to the pupils' cultural development.
- 49 The school makes very good provision for the development of the pupils' personal and social education. Appropriate attention is given to health education which is taught in all classes and includes drug misuse and sex education. The pupils are provided with essential facts and the necessary knowledge and skills to enable them to make informed choices now and in the future. The school is well supported, in this respect, by the Life Education Centre from which personnel visit the school regularly to assist the teaching in this area of the curriculum.

- 50 Good links with the local community are well established and are used well to contribute to the pupils' learning. For example, the older pupils visit the local senior citizens' home and hear first hand accounts of life before and during the Second World War. In addition, many visitors come to the school to talk to pupils about their own lives and experiences, which often relate to pupils work in history. The school also makes arrangements for visits by local clergy. One such visit occurred during the inspection and brought an added spiritual dimension to the school assembly.
- 51 The school maintains good links with the local high school to which most of the Year 6 pupils transfer. A series of well structured visits are arranged and good procedures enable relevant records and attainment data to be passed on. In addition, the Year 5 pupils have the opportunity to take part in an after school club at the local high school where they experience science, drama and technology activities once a week.
- 52 Since the last inspection, the curriculum for the under fives has improved significantly. The deficiencies in the creative area of learning have been eradicated and the curriculum is now strong. Although the school has improved the curriculum in mathematics to include more appropriate opportunities for the pupils to use and apply their learning, this is not the case in science with regard to the experimenting and investigating elements which still remain a weakness within the curriculum. The match of work to pupils' individual needs is now much more effective than at the time of the last inspection. However, the individual education plans criticised in the last report still need attention. Some of the plans are too general and the specific learning objectives are much too broad, making it very difficult to assess the pupils' progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 53 The school takes good care of its pupils and makes good provision for child protection by following guidelines provided by the local Area Child Protection Committee. The designated teacher has a thorough knowledge of local procedures and all staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to child protection.
- 54 Regular attendance and punctuality are strongly encouraged and form part of the home-school contract which was drawn up, in consultation with parents, last September. Arrangements for monitoring and improving attendance are good. Registers are marked consistently and accurately at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session and a clear distinction is made between authorised and unauthorised absence. A shield is awarded weekly to the class with the highest attendance and certificates are given to those pupils who achieve 100% attendance during the term. The local authority's home-school liaison officer works closely with the school in the prompt and effective follow-up of any unexplained absence.
- 55 Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are of a high order. The school has a very positive and successful approach to behaviour management. Hard work and positive attitudes are rewarded consistently and parents are consulted at an early stage when an individual's behaviour is giving cause for concern. The pupils themselves helped to draw up the code of conduct which is displayed prominently in all areas of the school. It provides a very good framework for encouraging kindness, consideration for others and good manners.

- 56 Personal and social education is given high priority throughout the school, with emphasis on developing the pupils' awareness of themselves as individuals. The carefully planned programme of study, which is based on the 'Health for Life' project, covers relationships, the principles of a healthy life style, numerous aspects of personal safety and the importance of caring for the environment. 'Circle Time' is used effectively as a means of supporting the pupils, promoting their self esteem and helping them build good relationships with one another. The teachers' very thorough record keeping arrangements play an important part in monitoring the pupils' personal development.
- 57 Since the previous inspection, the school has made enormous strides in establishing effective arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. The action grid devised following the previous inspection sets out a comprehensive plan of action which has largely been implemented or is in the process of being implemented. A clear policy statement has been agreed by the governing body and all staff and regular formal assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is taking place. There is a school portfolio for core subjects containing samples of work to illustrate the various levels of achievement, and a manageable system of record keeping has been introduced. Specific learning objectives have been identified for the core subjects and these provide key elements for the planning of work to ensure the work is more appropriately matched to pupils' levels of achievement and improve the standards attained. Work on the identification of learning objectives in the foundation subjects is currently being undertaken. These improvements are enabling teachers to use assessment information to guide the planning of work more accurately, and to build assessment arrangements into their planning so that pupils' progress can be routinely monitored.
- 58 As a result of these improved arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress, the reports for parents have been redesigned. The new format is excellent and the reports provide an accurate summary of each child's achievements and progress together with targets for future development.
- 59 The headteacher and the subject co-ordinators are responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the new systems, and an analysis of the results is presented annually to the governing body.
- 60 The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Such pupils are identified by their class teachers and given additional support either in class or in small groups withdrawn from lessons for specialist help. The pupils in the Language Unit, all of whom have expressive speech and language difficulties, are supported for two days each week by a speech therapist. These pupils integrate into mainstream classes on an individually planned basis and join in all school activities.
- 61 The school has a responsible attitude towards health and safety and follows guidelines provided by the local education authority. Pupils are carefully supervised throughout the school day. Accidents are recorded appropriately and fire drills are carried out at regular intervals. Standards of caretaking are very high. Consultation with parents, prior to the inspection, revealed some concern about congestion at the school gate at the beginning and end of the school day. These concerns are justified. Parked cars and vehicles entering and leaving the school grounds do pose a risk to pupils' safety. The school is monitoring the situation and reviewing arrangements for bringing pupils into the building in the morning and for parents collecting their children at the end of the day.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 62 The school has established an effective partnership with parents, most of whom would feel comfortable about approaching the school with problems or queries. Consultation with parents, prior to the inspection, revealed that almost all parents agree that their children like school and that behaviour in the school is good. The great majority of parents consider that the school helps their children to make good progress and to become mature and responsible. Most parents are of the opinion that teaching is good and that pupils are expected to work hard and achieve of their best. The inspection findings support all these views.
- 63 A significant minority of the parents express dissatisfaction with the amount of work their children are expected to do at home. Inspection evidence indicates that the school makes effective use of homework, particularly reading and spellings, but that there is scope for greater consistency in the setting of homework throughout the school. A substantial minority of parents are of the view that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside the classroom. The inspection finds that the range of extra-curricular activities offered to the pupils is good and similar to that provided in most other primary schools. However, the implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy has led to a narrowing in the curriculum in some classes, and this is reflected in the more limited range of topics which pupils are expected to study at home.
- 64 A substantial minority of the parents would like the school to work more closely with them and would appreciate a parents' evening in the summer term, following receipt of their children's end of term report. Pupils' annual reports are of good quality, but there is currently no fixed meeting for parents to discuss their children's progress with the relevant teacher.
- 65 The overall quality of the information provided for parents by the school is very good. Parents are kept very well informed of school policies and procedures through regular correspondence, the school prospectus and the governing body's annual report. Pupils' home-school reading records are a good means of communication, particularly at Key Stage 1. Staff in the language unit make very good use of the pupils' home-school diaries to communicate on a daily basis with the parents of those pupils who travel to and from school by bus. Communications with parents of children in the nursery are excellent. Parents bring their children into the nursery in the mornings and often remain with them until they have settled into the various activities. This is a strong feature of the school's excellent nursery provision.
- 66 A small number of parents help inside school and many give generously of their time to accompany the pupils on class visits to places of interest outside school. The home-school agreement, which was drawn up in consultation with parents at the beginning of the current school year, explains clearly what parents may expect of the school and what the school expects of parents and pupils. The parents' interest in their children's education and their confidence in the work of the school is reflected in way in which the completed agreement was received. All the home-school agreements were returned to school, duly signed by the pupils and the parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 67 The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher and governing body co-operate effectively to provide clear direction for the work of the school. Curriculum co-ordinators provide effective leadership in promoting and developing their areas, particularly in the core subjects. These factors have contributed strongly towards the generally good quality of teaching which now exists. In addition, new initiatives such as the national strategies for literacy and numeracy are addressed conscientiously. The school is well placed to continue to improve by building on existing strengths and addressing weaknesses.
- 68 The increasingly purposeful involvement of the governing body is an important factor in the good rate of improvement achieved by the school since the last inspection. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They work hard and effectively to ensure that statutory requirements are met. Appropriate governing body committees have been established and some governors are particularly generous with their time, and work hard in the interest of the pupils.
- 69 The school's main aims and mission statement are communicated effectively to parents through the prospectus. The school is committed to providing a caring, disciplined, stimulating environment in which all children feel happy and secure. These aims are reflected consistently in all of its work.
- 70 Governors successfully ensure that the school meets the need of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, and provides equality of access and opportunity for all of its pupils. The requirements of the Code of Practice for special educational needs are generally met effectively, but some individual education plans are not sufficiently specific. The headteacher and governors are committed to maintaining a good partnership with parents. Consideration is currently being given to the establishment of a parent-teacher association to improve communication between the school and the home as well as engaging in fund raising activities.
- 71 Good procedures have been introduced to monitor teaching and the curriculum. The headteacher visits classrooms regularly to evaluate teaching and the quality of provision. The implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy has been supported by regular monitoring of lessons, with feedback provided to help teachers improve performance. The standard and quality of work produced by pupils are monitored at regular intervals by senior staff and co-ordinators.
- 72 Responsibilities for co-ordinating subjects and aspects of the curriculum are appropriately shared and defined. Medium and short-term planning is scrutinised by the headteacher and relevant co-ordinators in order to check curricular balance and provision in their subjects. Although these procedures are currently implemented effectively in the core subjects and information technology, they are applied less consistently in some of the other subjects such as history and design and technology. This has contributed towards a narrowing range of opportunities in those areas of the curriculum. The school recognises this and proposes to extend its monitoring procedures to cover all subjects when the implementation period for the National Numeracy Strategy finishes at the end of the current academic year.

- 73 Strong emphasis is placed on helping teachers to improve their performance by attending in-service training. All of the requirements for staff appraisal are met, and the headteacher also conducts regular personal interviews with each member of staff. These meetings examine the individual's progress in carrying out their responsibilities, identify training needs, and agree personal targets. There are appropriate procedures for supporting the induction of newly qualified teachers and those who are new to the school.
- 74 The school development planning process is well conceived and ensures that the views of all staff and governors are considered when identifying priorities. Targets for improvements are listed clearly and detailed information is provided about action to be taken to support their implementation. Appropriate information is provided about deadlines for meeting targets, persons responsible, and criteria for evaluating the success of initiatives. The effective use of the plan to inform spending priorities ensures that money is spent appropriately on relevant educational priorities.
- 75 The school makes good use of its income. Grants for specific purposes are used appropriately, and good use is made of the element within the school's budget for making provision for pupils with special educational needs. The governors' finance committee co-operates effectively with the headteacher and efficient school administration to monitor spending and ensure efficient financial control. Administrative staff are appropriately trained and the school makes good use of information technology to support financial management.
- 76 The strategic management of all resources is good. The school has sufficient suitably qualified and experienced teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum for pupils at all stages of their education; they are deployed effectively.
- 77 Good use is made of the range of facilities provided by the accommodation. The accommodation for under fives and for pupils at both key stages is generally good, although the standard of provision in the mobile classroom is below that in the main school. The central library is a valuable resource, as is the computer suite. However, the current ventilation arrangements for the computer suite are not entirely effective, and the room becomes stuffy when the door is closed. The quality of the internal learning environment is considerably enhanced by displays of pupils' work which are of a high standard. All areas of the accommodation and grounds are well maintained. Resources are generally satisfactory and particularly good in information technology.
- 78 The governing body has established effective procedures for securing best value and quality when purchasing resources and equipment and arranging for work to be completed. Appropriate attention is also given to evaluating the effect of new resources and equipment on the quality of education provided and the standard achieved by pupils. In addition, the headteacher provides regular information about the school's performance in comparison with similar schools to enable governors to assess the school's progress.
- 79 Since the last inspection, the role of the governing body has become more purposeful, and the efficiency of school administration has been improved. Improvements in procedures for planning and assessment in the core subjects have had a positive effect on the quality of teaching. Good procedures have been established for co-ordinators' subject action plans to feed into the school development plan and priorities for staff support and in-service training are systematically identified. In addition, the quality of annual written reports to parents on children's progress has improved significantly and now meet all requirements.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

80 In order to raise standards and quality of work further, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- * improve the standards achieved by higher attaining pupils in science at both key stages by:

- a) raising teacher expectations; and

- b) providing more challenging work for pupils in this category;

- * create regular opportunities for pupils in all classes to engage in experimental and investigative work in science by:

- a) ensuring that provision for these elements is included in lesson plans;

- b) providing appropriate resources and in-service training;

- c) monitoring the teaching regularly;

- (paragraph references: 10, 31, 117, 121 & 124)

- * improve the quality of individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs by:

- a) ensuring that targets in all plans are specific and measurable.
(paragraph references: 42)

In addition to the key issues above, the following recommendations should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- * improve the arrangements for parents to discuss their children's end of academic year report with the class teacher by introducing a formal parents' evening for this purpose; (paragraph references: 64)

- * explore ways of improving the current arrangements at the beginning and end of the school day, when pupils arrive at and are dismissed from school. (paragraph references: 61)

OTHER SPECIFIED ASPECTS

Language Unit

- 81 The Language Unit has nine pupils, seven of whom are drawn from other schools. Their ages range from four to seven years. The pupils have specific expressive speech and language difficulties. The curriculum, which is broad and balanced, is appropriately based on early learning goals and the National Curriculum programmes of study for Key Stage 1. All the pupils receive their curriculum entitlement and make good progress. They integrate into the main school effectively on an individually planned basis. The teacher in charge provides good leadership, and the liaison services give good support to the staff and pupils in the unit.
- 82 The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and have clear objectives. The work is carefully prepared and class management is generally good. In literacy lessons, the pupils develop good listening and speaking skills through poetry and other activities. Good questioning skills helps to sustain the pupils' interest. Classroom support staff, therapists and resources are deployed appropriately to support the pupils' learning. Visits to such venues as Martin Mere and Chester Zoo help to complement class lessons. Assessment procedures are detailed and used effectively for target setting and also to inform curriculum planning. Stimulating wall displays make an important contribution to the pupils' learning.
- 83 There is a welcoming atmosphere in the unit, and the pupils are well motivated and enjoy lessons. Attention spans are limited but pupils work hard and relate closely to the adults in the room. They collaborate effectively, particularly when using the computer. They show respect for the books and resources they use during lessons.
- 84 Since the last inspection, appropriate planned links between the unit and mainstream classes have been improved significantly

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	62
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	14

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
8%	26%	50%	15%	2%	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)	18	215
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	n/a	62

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	7	47

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	16	18	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	15	13
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	30	32	30
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	88	94	88
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	13	15
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	31	30	32
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	91	88	94
	National	82	86	87

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	13	22	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	10	10
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	23	25	25
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	66	71	71
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	9	12
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	23	24	27
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	66	69	77
	National	68	69	75

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	1
White	186
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.9
Average class size	26.9

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	92.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	35

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	69.4

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9
--------------------------------	---

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
----------------	---------

	£
Total income	381,900.00
Total expenditure	370,590.00
Expenditure per pupil	1,670.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	21,884.00
Balance carried forward to next year	33,194.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	250
Number of questionnaires returned	109

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	36	2	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	41	55	3	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	60	1	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	46	23	6	6
The teaching is good.	40	52	5	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	25	43	27	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	40	8	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	47	48	2	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	28	40	27	4	2
The school is well led and managed.	39	46	10	4	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	50	4	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	15	26	27	15	18

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

- 85 Children under five are taught in the nursery before transferring to the reception class. Attainment levels on entry to the nursery are generally below those found nationally, with a significant number of children having language skills which are lower than expected. However, the very good progress made in the nursery means that attainment levels are close to the average by the time children enter the reception class, this is confirmed by baseline assessment. Inspection evidence reveals that in language and literacy, mathematics, in their knowledge and understanding of the world and in the creative and physical areas of their learning, the children make good progress and reach the levels expected nationally for their age by the time they enter Key Stage 1. This is also the case in the personal and social area of their learning.
- 86 The nursery children make good progress in their personal and social education. They are helped to settle quickly into daily routines and are increasingly confident in choosing activities which interest them. They sustain appropriate levels of concentration and, by the time they are five, the reception class children can work with a good measure of independence and perseverance in their activities. The nursery children establish good relationships with each other and all of the adults who help them. By the reception class stage, they work effectively as part of a group and co-operate sensibly when taking turns or sharing materials and equipment.
- 87 In the language and literacy area of their learning, the children listen attentively and talk with increasing confidence about their experiences. Helped by their use of varied and interesting activities, the children use a growing vocabulary to express their thoughts and to convey meaning to each other and to the adults who work with them. The nursery children handle books carefully and understand how words and pictures carry meaning. They turn readily to books and, by the time they reach the reception class, many are able to read a growing number of words that they meet frequently. The reception class children can read and write their own names and can use a growing range of symbols, familiar words and letters to communicate meaning.
- 88 In the mathematical area of their learning, through relevant and well planned nursery activities, the children are helped to use basic mathematical language and to recognise and use numbers to five in appropriate situations. For example, a group of nursery children with their teacher were able to sort felt ducks into groups and to match each group with the correct number. They were also able to recall a range of basic counting songs and rhymes. The reception class children build successfully on these early experiences and almost all can count reliably and read, write and order numbers to 10 and beyond. The pupils use mathematics as an integral part of their classroom activities, using objects and pictures to represent groups or sets. Some are able to use simple patterns and relationships, recognising repeating patterns and sorting and classifying objects according to basic criteria such as colours or size. Some of the higher attainers can count reliably to 20 and more and can relate addition to combining groups.

- 89 The nursery children make good progress in the area of their learning related to their knowledge and understanding of the world. They talk with increasing confidence about their experiences, their environment, their families and past and present events in their own lives. For example, one mother brought in her baby to bath it in front of the children. This provoked much genuine interest and led to the use of a growing vocabulary through the verbal interaction which arose naturally. From an early stage, the under fives are introduced to computers. They become increasingly confident in this work and demonstrate developing skills in using the mouse to control screen images. They use a range of building materials to make structures and make effective use of cutting and sticking techniques when joining materials together. The children show a growing awareness of objects around them and make good progress in using their observational skills. For example, a group making pancakes in the nursery, described accurately the changes they noticed when adding different ingredients into their bowls. They compared the mixture before and after stirring and were able to talk about the differences they observed.
- 90 The children in the nursery make generally good progress in the physical area of their learning. Most can hold a paintbrush or hold mark making materials comfortably and by the reception class they develop increasing skills in using tools, equipment and materials. The nursery children show developing skills using climbing apparatus, moving confidently and showing consideration for others. The older children use the space in the main hall very well, demonstrating increasing control of their bodily movements in changing direction, balancing, curling and springing. They use their hands and faces expressively in response to music.
- 91 From their earliest days in the nursery, the children make good progress in their creative development. They use a range of painting and print making skills with increasing control and imagination. They show good imagination in role-play activities. For example, in the nursery during outdoor play they drove their vehicles into the "McDonald's Drive In" to collect their food. Another group used plastic spanners and screwdrivers when they pretended to mend their car before travelling to Scotland. They demonstrated much creativity which was evident in the conversations which took place as they engaged in the various activities. As the children develop they use a widening range of appropriate materials, tools and other resources to express their ideas and to communicate their feelings.
- 92 The children under five enjoy coming to school and are confident and well motivated. They listen carefully to the adults who help them to co-operate effectively in group activities.
- 93 The quality of the teaching of the under fives is very good with some outstanding teaching in the nursery. The work is very well planned and is based appropriately on the nationally agreed desirable learning outcomes prior to the stage of compulsory education. The quality of the planning for outdoor activities in the nursery is of a particularly high calibre. Support staff make a significant contribution to the work with the under fives. All the adults play an important role in assessing the children's progress and the results are used effectively to plan future work. All the adults who work with the under fives have a good knowledge of the curriculum and are sensitive to the children's needs. They provide a stimulating, safe and secure learning environment which is entirely appropriate for the under fives.

- 94 Since the previous inspection, a new nursery teacher has been appointed, with responsibility for co-ordinating the work of the under fives. The curriculum is now well developed and good improvements are evident in the mathematical and creative areas of the children's learning. In addition, the good quality planning promotes effective continuity and progression from the nursery to the reception class.

ENGLISH

- 95 By the end Key Stage 1, standards in all aspects of English are at least in line with those found nationally and above the national average in writing. This is consistent with the most recent National Curriculum test results. The proportion of pupils exceeding the levels set by the National Curriculum is in line with the average in reading and well above that found nationally in writing, which again reflect national test results. Pupils at all levels of ability generally achieve good standards in relation to prior attainment. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection when standards in speaking and listening were described as below national expectations, and the proportion of pupils exceeding national standards in reading and writing was judged to be below average. Current inspection findings are consistent with recent national test results.
- 96 By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in English are broadly in line with those found nationally. This is an improvement on the most recent national test results, brought about by better teaching and the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. The great majority of pupils are on course to meet, and a significant proportion to exceed the levels set by the National Curriculum. Since the last inspection, standards have improved in speaking and listening, which were described as below national expectations at that stage. Currently, most pupils, at all levels of ability, achieve standards in all aspects of English which are generally appropriate in relation to their prior attainment.
- 97 At both key stages, pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. This is also true of those who come from families where English is not the first language of the home; their good progress means that additional support is no longer required. The improvements secured at both key stages are mainly due to improved teaching, supported by the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy.
- 98 At both key stages, the great majority of pupils make appropriate progress in extending their skills in speaking and listening. The youngest pupils develop confidence in talking and begin to listen carefully, with increasing awareness and understanding. These skills are particularly apparent during the whole-class element of the literacy hour, when pupils respond well to questions arising from the texts being studied. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 demonstrate a good ability to explain their ideas clearly, often using particularly good vocabulary. They begin to recognise that a more formal tone and vocabulary are needed in some situations. At Key Stage 2, the pupils build effectively on these early skills. Their growing vocabulary gives them the confidence to join in discussion and talk freely about their work. By the end of the key stage, pupils generally communicate their views clearly and confidently. They listen with interest to views of others and draw effectively on their growing general knowledge to convey thoughts and ideas. By the end of the key stage, the majority of pupils talk and listen with confidence in an increasing range of situations and are able to adapt language for specific purposes. This is apparent in their work in subjects other than English. In information and communication technology, for example, pupils show a good grasp of technological language, and are able to use relevant terms appropriately to express views about their work or request clarification when difficulties arise.

- 99 In reading, the great majority of pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, make good progress at both key stages. At Key Stage 1, reading is systematically and effectively taught with an appropriate emphasis placed on the development of phonic skills. The home reading scheme is well supported by parents and is having a very positive effect on the pupils' progress. Children with special educational needs receive good support from teachers and support staff and this is helping their progress. Towards the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils are confident readers and have a good grasp of a variety of strategies to help them read unfamiliar words. They know the difference between fiction and non-fiction and are able to find information in simple reference books. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to express preferences for particular books and their authors. They demonstrate a good understanding of what they have read, are able to provide detailed accounts of the story and to predict likely outcomes.
- 100 Older pupils at Key Stage 2 read with increasing confidence. Many read widely and demonstrate good levels of fluency and accuracy. They read expressively from a range of poems, stories and plays and are competent in using the library and CD ROM facilities to locate information. Higher attainers read challenging novels of their own choice, and can discuss confidently the plot, characters and style of the books. They talk enthusiastically about their reading and are able to support views about characters and aspects of the plot.
- 101 In writing, standards are above those found nationally by the end of Key Stage 1, and in the line with the average at the end of Key Stage 2. The pupils benefit greatly from literacy lessons and from additional opportunities for reading and engaging in extended writing activities. Pupils at Key Stage 1 are presented with a good range of opportunities for writing and most make good progress in developing their skills. By the end of the key stage, most are able to develop their ideas in a sequence of sentences, making appropriate use of capital letters and full stops. Higher attainers have a good feel for story language and their writing is well organised, imaginative and clear. They use appropriate grammar, spell accurately and their punctuation is generally correct. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' writing is generally lively and thoughtful and most pupils use an appropriate range of punctuation with accuracy and understand how to write paragraphs. Many show good skills in producing well structured narrative writing, and consolidate and extend their skills through the use of information technology.
- 102 Throughout the school, progress during literacy lessons is generally good, with clear evidence of pupils extending their skills in reading and spelling and their understanding of grammar. In addition, most pupils make good use of their speaking and listening, reading and writing skills in other subjects, such as history, geography and religious education, good opportunities are created for pupils to apply new skills, acquired during literacy lessons, in extended writing for various purposes. Their progress is further enhanced by well planned opportunities to use the excellent facilities of the computer suite. Activities which often involve incorporating graphic images to complement the text, as well as high quality presentation of each individual's completed work, provide considerable stimulation and motivation and have a positive effect on the quality of the pupils' work.
- 103 Pupils respond very well in all lessons and their behaviour is consistently of a high standard. They enjoy the literacy hour and often make particularly perceptive contributions during the whole-class text and word level work. At both key stages, pupils listen attentively and show an interest in their work. They co-operate sensibly when required to work together and take a pride in their work.
- 104 The quality of teaching is generally good and often of high quality at both key stages.

Over 85 per cent of lessons observed were good, 37 per cent were very good and 25 per cent were excellent. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Better planning and assessment and clear guidance provided by the National Literacy Strategy are important factors in the improvements made.

- 105 Teachers at both key stages have a secure knowledge of the subject and a good understanding of how pupils learn. This enables pupils to make consistent progress in developing their literacy skills. Nearly all lessons follow closely the structure set by the National Literacy Strategy, and teachers' planning is detailed and sets appropriate expectations of the pupils. Shared texts are carefully selected to provide an interesting stimulus and are used effectively to extend pupils' language skills and knowledge. Big books are used well to display text in classes for younger pupils and good use is made of the overhead projector for the same purpose in lessons for older pupils. In the best teaching, the objectives for the lesson are shared with the class which helps pupils to gain a good self-knowledge of their own learning.
- 106 Teachers at Key Stage 1 are very skilful in teaching the basic skills of reading and writing. This is reflected in the range of strategies which pupils employ to read unfamiliar words and the structured approach they use when tackling written tasks. High expectations and excellent class management are strong features in the best lessons at Key Stage 2. In Year 5, for example, the teacher and support staff co-operated very effectively to extend fully the pupils at all levels of ability. Challenging work captured pupils' interest and resulted in high levels of productivity. In most lessons, focused reading sessions are used effectively to improve pupils' intonation and expression, and increasing emphasis is placed on developing higher order reading skills such as scanning and skimming in classes of older pupils.
- 107 Although most elements of the literacy hour are addressed effectively, there is some inconsistency in the effectiveness of the final plenary session. In some instances, insufficient time is allowed for this important aspect of the lesson. In addition, in a small minority of lessons at Key Stage 2, insufficient time is given to the introductory whole-class elements of the lesson and pupils are given too long to work independently or in pairs with limited teacher intervention. This results in a loss of pace and reduces the quality of work produced by the pupils. At both key stages, day-to-day assessment is used effectively to plan appropriate work for pupils of differing ability. Homework, mainly in the form of home reading is used effectively to support learning at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2, the use of homework to support learning varies from one class to another and is not a consistent feature in the teaching.
- 108 Throughout the school, the teaching of English is co-ordinated very effectively and this has contributed to the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy.

MATHEMATICS

- 109 At both key stages, standards are broadly in line with the national average. The great majority of pupils are on course to reach the national standard by the end of both key stages; this is consistent with the most recent national test results. Most, including those with special educational needs, make good progress at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory progress at Key Stage 2, in relation to their prior attainment. Since the last inspection the proportion of pupils exceeding levels expected nationally has increased significantly at Key Stage 1, and is now above the national average. Similarly results have improved at Key Stage 2. At the time of the last inspection only 44 per cent reached the national standard, where as in the 1999 national tests, 71 per cent reached this level.
- 110 The youngest Key Stage 1 pupils can count accurately and can read, write and order

numbers to 10 and beyond. Some of the higher attainers have a well-developed sense of number and demonstrate increasing confidence in solving problems. For example, in one group some of the pupils were able to determine the number of packets of sweets, each containing five sweets, that could be made from 75 sweets. They understood how to count in fives and used this knowledge to help them calculate accurately the answer to this and similar problems. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils have good recall of addition and subtraction facts to 10. They demonstrate an increasing understanding of place value and are confident in ordering numbers to 100. They understand the relationship between halves, quarters and eighths and can recognise number sequences in counting activities. At Key Stage 2, the pupils build satisfactorily upon this good start. They make increasing progress in understanding place value and, by Year 6, the great majority are competent in using accurately the four rules of number. The pupils develop satisfactory skills in solving a range of problems, including those involving the extension of the number system including negative numbers and the relationship of fractions, decimals and percentages. Some of the higher attaining pupils know how to use negative co-ordinates to translate shapes from the first to the fourth quadrant.

- 111 At Key Stage 1, pupils have a good knowledge of shapes, space and measures. They have accurate skills in estimation using a range of non-standard units. By the end of the key stage, they can use standard units of length, mass, capacity and time with reasonable accuracy. Pupils use a growing mathematical vocabulary when describing common three and two dimensional shapes. By the end of Year 6, the pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the orders of symmetry. In an investigation on shape the oldest pupils demonstrated their developing use of related mathematical language when, for example, they wrote a concluding sentence to describe their findings. They concluded that the diagonals of a rhombus bisect the angles at the vertices. The oldest pupils know how to use basic formulae to calculate perimeters and areas of regular shapes. In addition, they know how to measure accurately points on a straight line and angles to the nearest degree.
- 112 By the end of Year 6, the pupils have a satisfactory grasp of the use of a range of charts, graphs and diagrams to record information gathered and to interpret the information accurately. Some of the higher attaining pupils are able to use their knowledge of graphical interpretation effectively when solving problems related to distance, speed and time. The oldest pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the concept of probability and can use the scale 0 – 1 when making decisions.
- 113 At both key stages the pupils have some opportunities to develop and practise their numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, in a Year 5 class, the pupils studied population growth in urban and rural areas. They were able to calculate accurately the percentage increase in urban population for various areas between 1901 and 1981.
- 114 Throughout the school the pupils respond very well to their work in mathematics. They participate keenly, listen carefully to their teachers and are very well behaved. Pupils enjoy mental work and are interested in the content of the lessons.

- 115 At both key stages, the quality of the teaching is generally good. Over 75 per cent of lessons observed were in this category and 13 per cent were very good. Lessons are usually well planned and effectively organised. However, the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is more effective at Key Stage 1. In some classes for older pupils, too little attention is given to the balance of the major elements of numeracy lessons. In particular, the final plenary session is often too short to be productive. Overall, the teaching demonstrates secure subject knowledge, which is often reflected in the good quality of questioning to assess the pupils' level of understanding, consolidate their learning and extend their thinking. In the best lessons, the pupils are made aware of the lesson objectives; they are set clear targets and given frequent reminders of what is expected of them. However, this practice is not consistent throughout the school. In all classes, appropriate attention is given to matching the work to the pupils' levels of ability. This is particularly helping the pupils with special educational needs to make progress towards the targets set for them. In addition, the good quality support of classroom assistants and volunteer helpers also contributes significantly to the learning of these pupils. Although computers are situated in classrooms, insufficient attention is given to planning how work in mathematics can be used to extend pupils' information technology capability.
- 116 Since the last inspection, the school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy. This has been instrumental in helping to improve pupils' ability to calculate mentally. In addition, the work planned is now better matched to the pupils' different levels of ability so that they are now challenged more appropriately. The content of the work in mathematics continues to reflect the requirements of the National Curriculum, which are met fully.

SCIENCE

- 117 By the end of both key stages, the great majority of pupils achieve standards which are broadly in line with those found nationally. Throughout the school, most pupils of average and lower ability, including those with special educational needs, achieve appropriate standards in relation to their prior attainment. However, at both key stages, a significant number of high ability pupils are capable of achieving better standards. This is reflected in the most recent national test results, which show that the proportion of the school's pupils exceeding the national expectation is well below that found nationally. Although the programme of work generally meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, the experimental and investigative elements are under-emphasised at both key stages. In addition, insufficient attention is given to analysing previous test results in order to identify areas which need improvement.
- 118 The youngest pupils make good progress in talking about and describing the simple features of what they see about them. As they progress, they identify more closely the similarities and differences between objects and become aware of how some things can change. In one lesson, for example, pupils examined ice balloons. They realised that they had been produced by putting water into a balloon and freezing it. By observing over a period of time, they were able to see and explain that warmer temperatures cause ice to melt and change back to water. Towards the end of Key Stage 1, pupils show a good knowledge of plants and how they grow. In Year 2, for example, the pupils knew about and were able to explain the particular function of various part of a plant, such as root, stem and petals. Most showed a good knowledge of the conditions which plants need to grow.

- 119 At Key Stage 2, pupils begin to examine objects and materials more closely. For example, in Year 3, they engaged in tasks to group materials according to specific criteria, and consider which materials would be suitable for particular parts of a building, such as their school. Most were able to identify hard materials suitable for external use, and some of the higher attainers were able to use the term "transparent" when explaining the requirements for materials to be used for windows. As they progress, pupils become familiar with equipment and instruments which can be used for specific purposes. Pupils in Year 4, for example, looked closely at the use of thermometers to measure temperature. They considered which parts of the school might be colder than others, giving their reasons, before measuring the temperature to see if their original thoughts had been correct.
- 120 Older pupils become aware of the importance of conducting a fair test. This was apparent in Year 5, for example, when pupils observed the changes which occurred over a period of time to nails placed in test-tubes containing water mixed with varying amounts of salt. The pupils appreciated the importance of not disturbing the test tubes in any way, in order to ensure a fair test. They observed and recorded the changes which occurred systematically to inform their findings. In Year 6, as part of their study of materials and their properties, pupils examined closely a variety of rocks and different types of soil. They were able to classify what they observed on the basis of characteristics which included appearance, texture and permeability, before recording their findings appropriately.
- 121 At both key stages, pupils make steady progress in extending their scientific knowledge. However, their progress in developing skills in the experimental and investigative aspects of science is less consistent. Some year groups, such as Year 5, place appropriate emphasis on the systematic development of enquiry skills such as making a prediction, setting up fair tests, observing systematically, using appropriate equipment and recording findings accurately. In general, however, the development of these skills is under-emphasised.
- 122 The work in science makes a good contribution towards the development of pupils' literacy skills. They use effectively a range of reference materials to find information and an increasing vocabulary to explain their findings. Much of the work also contributes towards pupils' numeracy skills. The work in Year 4, which involved the use of thermometers to measure temperatures accurately, is an example of this feature in the learning.
- 123 Throughout the school, pupils respond positively in science lessons and demonstrate very good attitudes towards their work. They show high levels of curiosity and a good ability to recall learning from previous lessons. They generally listen attentively during the whole-class introduction to lessons and often ask perceptive questions that indicate their growing knowledge. They share resources without fuss, and their ability to co-operate sensibly in pairs or small groups is a good feature, particularly when pupils are given the opportunity to engage in experimental and investigative work.

- 124 At both key stages, the quality of teaching is generally satisfactory; it is often good at Key Stage 2, where 50 per cent of the lessons observed were in that category. The planning of most lessons is clear with precise objectives, and careful preparation enables teachers to be secure in their subject knowledge. This helps pupils to make good progress in extending their scientific knowledge and understanding. Some of the lessons create good opportunities for pupils to engage in worthwhile experimental and investigative activities which enable them to develop good skills in scientific enquiry such as making predictions, organising a fair test, and using appropriate equipment to carry out their observations. However, in some lessons opportunities for pupils to engage in such activities are limited and too much time is spent completing work-sheets. This is a contributory factor in the underachievement of some higher ability pupils. In the best teaching, pupils are made aware of the lesson objectives, and this, together with on-going assessment by the teacher, helps pupils to gain a good understanding of their own learning. In all lessons, teacher explanation and questioning skills are very effective, helping to capture pupils' interest and curiosity. Classroom management is also a consistently good feature in the teaching, helping pupils to sustain concentration and promoting good levels of productivity. Throughout the school, the marking of pupils' work is generally constructive in valuing effort and identifying areas for improvement.
- 125 Since the last inspection, the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard at the end of Key Stage 2 has increased from 53 per cent to 71 per cent, which indicates a reasonable rate of improvement. However, the experimental and investigative elements of science remain under-emphasised.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- 126 By the end of both key stages, standards are broadly in line with the national expectations. Throughout the school, pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, generally achieve good standards in relation to their prior learning. A significant proportion of Key Stage 2 pupils achieve particularly high standards in the communication element of the subject.
- 127 Younger pupils show growing confidence in using the mouse to control events on the screen. They are able to access relevant tools in order to create a simple design or build a picture. As they progress, they are able to enter simple text and amend and improve their work. By the end of the key stage most are proficient in using the space bar and delete button, changing the font and using the spell check facilities. The pupils gain experience in handling data, learning to use information technology to sort and present information. In Year 1, for example, following a survey to find eye colours within the class, pupils entered their information and printed out simple graphs to represent their findings. They were able to interpret these graphs correctly; for example, to identify the most common and least common eye colours. Pupils also extend their knowledge and understanding of control technology by using the roamer robotic toy. They are able to enter a series of commands to make the roamer travel various distances and change directions.

- 128 Pupils at Key Stage 2 build effectively on these early skills. Many make particularly good progress in extending their skills in communicating information. They demonstrate increasing keyboard skills and are able to use a growing range of computer facilities. In Year 3, for example, pupils were able to incorporate suitable illustrations and designs to add to their text, when producing a greetings card. Many older pupils produce work of a particularly high standard. They are able to use "cut and paste" techniques to highlight, move and re-position parts of the text. They produce a wide range of work which demonstrates an ability to refine and present information in different forms and styles appropriate for specific purposes. The pupils extend their skills significantly in handling information. They are able to add to, amend and interrogate information, and are beginning to learn how to create their own database for a specific purpose. Pupils in Year 4, for example, created a simple data handling package to store and present information collected as part of a class project on weather. Older pupils are able to change an existing spreadsheet and develop their own; for example, to plan a party within a given budget. The pupils' skills in the control element of information technology are extended through the use of Logo. The pupils are able to enter a series of commands accurately to programme a screen image to draw some quite complex geometrical shapes.
- 129 At both key stages, the pupils demonstrate a keen interest in the subject. They listen attentively to their teacher and show great enthusiasm and enjoyment when working in the computer suite. They co-operate very effectively when working in pairs and their behaviour is consistently of a very good standard. Their strong interest in the subject is reflected in their ability to recall accurately learning from previous lessons.
- 130 The work in information technology has a positive effect on the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. However, in some classes, insufficient opportunities are created for pupils to extend their information technology skills during work in other subjects.
- 131 The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. All of the lessons observed were in that category and one was very good. The effective deployment of a support teacher employed specifically for information technology has a very positive impact on pupils' progress and achievement. This means that teaching is secure in terms of knowledge and expertise. Excellent planning provides precise learning objectives and detailed information about lesson organisation. This enables pupils at all levels of attainment to be extended intellectually and make good progress in acquiring relevant skills, knowledge and understanding. The good balance achieved between explanation and demonstration, and in providing opportunities for pupils to learn through trial and error, has a positive effect on pupils' learning. They develop independence and the confidence to experiment and explore in order to overcome difficulties. Good lesson organisation and class management enables the work to move at a good pace. These factors, together with the opportunity for whole-group teaching in the computer suite, promote good levels of productivity by the pupils.
- 132 Information technology is co-ordinated very effectively and is given high priority in the school. Very good guidelines have been produced which contribute significantly towards the good progress made by the pupils. The computer suite is proving to be of great benefit, helping pupils to extend their skills during formal lessons and in the computer club which is held on two evenings a week. The suite is appropriately linked to the Internet in order to enable the school to achieve the next phase of development and enable its pupils to access the Internet and communicate by electronic mail.

- 133 The programme of work in information technology meets fully the requirements of the National Curriculum. Since the last inspection, the school has improved resources considerably. This has resulted in a wider range of opportunities for the pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 134 By the end of both key stages, the attainment of the great majority of the pupils meets the standards set by the St Helens Agreed Syllabus, and most pupils at all levels of ability, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.
- 135 Throughout the school, the pupils make consistent progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the traditions of Christianity and teachings of other religions and are able to relate these to everyday life. At Key Stage 1, pupils are aware that the Bible is a special book and understand that it is divided into Old and New Testaments. The younger pupils are familiar with Bible stories such as the "Temptation of Jesus" and the "Call to Discipleship of His Followers". As they progress they are able to relate such events to their own choice of friends. They learn to use a religious vocabulary correctly, including such words as, 'disciple', 'follower', 'ministry' and 'faithful'. They are also familiar with Hindu and Muslim practices.
- 136 At Key Stage 2, pupils consider a wide range of issues and make good progress. Pupils in Year 6, for example, were familiar with how Christians prepare for Lent and the importance of prayer. All the pupils are able to put forward their ideas on how they can give their time to help other people and many submit written presentations of high quality.
- 137 Pupils at both key stages are well motivated and enjoy religious education lessons. For many it is their favourite subject. The substantial majority of pupils' work effectively in whole class and small groups and as individuals. Relationships between the pupils and the teachers are mature and productive. They show respect for each other's point of view and collaborate well together during group activities. They handle resources and artefacts with care.
- 138 The quality of teaching is good at both key stages and teachers show a good knowledge of the subject. Lessons are well planned and managed. Lesson objectives are clear and based appropriately on the locally agreed syllabus. At both key stages, resources are used effectively to support the pupils' learning. Good use of assessment helps the teachers to adjust the degree of challenge appropriately. Good quality teacher explanation and skilful questioning are strong features at both key stages. Religious education makes an important contribution to the development of the pupils' literacy skills. They write for a range of purposes, with opportunities for extended writing about the topics they are studying.
- 139 Since the last inspection the school has made good progress in improving the programme of work in religious education. All the pupils receive their curriculum entitlement and standards of attainment and progress at both key stages have improved.

ART

- 140 At both key stages, pupils work at levels that are appropriate for their age and the majority, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in expressing their own ideas and feelings and developing their understanding of the work of artists and designers.

- 141 At Key Stage 1, pupils become aware of pattern, colour and texture in natural and made forms. They are able to recognise those visual elements, including line, shape and form in the work of other artists and traditions and to apply this to their own work. For example, younger Key Stage 1 pupils were able to recognise visual elements of pattern, colour, line and shape in their study of Rangoli patterns arising from their work in religious education, and to use this in designing their own Rangoli patterns. Older Key Stage 1 pupils were able to consider the work of Arcomboldo and Van Gogh, noticing the differing styles and how different effects are achieved. Pupils were able to use this knowledge and understanding in producing their own drawings, paintings and prints.
- 142 At Key Stage 2, pupils build on this early work, extending their appreciation of visual and tactile elements and their skills on the use of materials, tools and techniques. For example, older Key Stage 2 pupils were able to use Indian wood blocks to help them design and make print blocks of their own using colour printing techniques. Careful teaching of techniques and the use of good quality materials and reference books enabled pupils to achieve good results.
- 143 The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Lessons are well planned and organised and pupils are introduced to a range of skills and techniques in two and three-dimensional work. The management of pupils is very good and ensures that practical work is undertaken safely, in an atmosphere which enables pupils to consider and reflect upon their work.
- 144 Pupils enjoy their work in art and are keen to compare, and try out in their own work, the ideas, materials and approaches used in the different styles and traditions to which they are introduced. Pupils co-operate well in sharing resources and are prepared to discuss and evaluate their own and other pupils' work in a constructive way.
- 145 Since the last inspection, standards in art have remained in line with levels appropriate to their age. The school proposes to introduce a revised scheme of work, incorporating existing good practice to ensure consistency for the future.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 146 Due to timetabling arrangements it was only possible to see one lesson devoted to design and technology. This provided insufficient evidence to make an evaluation of pupils' attainment and progress in design and technology overall.
- 147 Since the previous inspection, the new co-ordinator for the subject has produced draft proposals for a policy document and scheme of work for the teaching of design and technology at both key stages. These proposals are still at an early stage of development. It has not therefore been possible to evaluate their effectiveness in bringing about improvement in the quality of the work undertaken in design and technology.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

- 148 Due to the timing of the inspection and the school's timetabling arrangements it was not possible to observe lessons in geography or history at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils attain levels in both geography and history which are appropriate for their age. Since the last report, standards in geography at Key Stage 2 have improved considerably and pupils at all levels of ability, including those with special educational needs, now make satisfactory progress in relation to prior attainment. Older pupils benefit from fieldwork, which is an established component of the work in geography.
- 149 In their work in history pupils develop a good understanding of chronology and are able to place the events, people and changes, in the periods they study, within a chronological framework. Younger Key Stage 2 pupils demonstrate a developing understanding of historical evidence and its interpretation. In Year 3, for example, during their study of Celts and Roman invaders and settlers, the pupils offered perceptive suggestions as to how Lindow man may have met his death. Pupils were able to talk about the claims and suggest different interpretations as to who he was and what happened to him.
- 150 The learning in history and geography is enhanced by the good teaching in both subjects. Lessons are carefully prepared and designed to interest and stimulate the pupils. For example, in preparation for a study of India in geography with older Key Stage 2 pupils, the teacher arranged for the pupils to write to a relative who had spent some time in India, with their questions about the country. They received in reply, an excellent extended E-mail letter full of interesting information about the geographical features and climate, settlement and the lives of the people in India. They made good use of this information in the lessons which followed, and demonstrated an ability to make a distinction between fact and opinion.
- 151 In both history and geography, visits and fieldwork make an important contribution to the quality and range of the work undertaken. For example, in history a younger Key Stage 2 class visited Liverpool Museum in connection with their study of Ancient Egypt. The visit was supported by a good selection of reference materials and the work arising from the visit was of a good quality, covering a range of topics including Howard Carter's discoveries, the Nile floods, Pharaohs, pyramids and hieroglyphics. Pupils were able to select and organise the historical information, use appropriate terminology, and communicate their knowledge in a variety of ways, including a well presented display of their writing, illustrations and artefacts.
- 152 Pupils' attitudes to their work in geography and history are good. They are enthusiastic and interested, use resources well in undertaking personal studies, collaborate in instructive ways and behave responsibly. Literacy skills are successfully employed and numeracy skills well used in map work and in the production of graphs, charts and diagrams.
- 153 In geography, there has been considerable progress since the last inspection. The school has produced a plan of action to draw up a scheme of work, set realistic targets of the skills to be acquired by pupils at the end of each year in both key stages and to continuously evaluate the progress and attainment in geography.

MUSIC

- 154 The majority of the pupils at both key stages work at levels appropriate for their age. Most at all levels of ability, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress during their time in school.
- 155 At Key Stage 1, the pupils make good progress. Those in Year 1 are able to name and handle correctly such instruments as cabasa, maracas and castanets. They listen to Indian music and are able to perform effectively a rhythmic accompaniment to a Divali rhyme. The pupils receiving recorder tuition are able to play a range of notes using the correct fingering and are able to perform simple melodies using staff notation.
- 156 At Key Stage 2, pupils' progress is generally satisfactory. The 28 pupils who receive instrumental tuition make good progress, and performances by the orchestra in assembly are of high quality. Singing in assemblies makes an important contribution to the pupils' musical education. Some of the singing is particularly tuneful. For example, in the hymn "Peace, Perfect Peace" where the singing was gentle and melodic. Music in assembly makes an important contribution towards the pupils' spiritual development. Pupils are encouraged to reflect as they listen to music of quality such as Pachelbel's Canon.
- 157 Pupils are well motivated and enjoy music lessons. They are very well behaved and handle instruments and resources with care. They show respect for each other's performances and relationships are mature and productive. They listen attentively in lessons and assemblies to music from a range of cultures.
- 158 There is one specialist musician on the staff who has a secure knowledge of the subject. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory and some of the teaching is very good. Most lessons are well prepared, planned and managed and have clear learning objectives. However, in a very small minority of lessons the musical content is limited and pupils make little progress. Teaching methods are varied appropriately, and this makes a significant contribution to the pace of lessons and helps to sustain the pupils' interest. At both key stages resources are used effectively to support the pupils' learning. Music makes only a limited contribution to the development of the pupils' writing skills with the emphasis being placed on performance rather than written work. The extended vocabulary arising from the study of music in other cultures makes an important contribution towards the development of language skills.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 159 By the end of Key Stage 1, the great majority of the Year 2 pupils work above levels expected for their age in dance. In gymnastics they work at appropriate levels for their age. Most of the pupils including those with special educational needs, make good progress in dance and satisfactory progress in gymnastics. The programme in physical education, for Key Stage 1 pupils, also includes games during the summer term.
- 160 By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils make satisfactory progress in dance and swimming. They work at appropriate levels for their age. During the summer term pupils at Key Stage 2 also take part in athletics, games and outdoor adventurous activities.

- 161 In dance, Year 2 pupils demonstrate very good control in performing well-sequenced traditional dance movements incorporating steps such as the swing, chassez and promenade. Their learning shows real progress in moving fluidly with poise and rhythm. In gymnastics Year 2 pupils are able to combine movement sequences on large apparatus, which incorporate stretching, curling and jumping combinations.
- 162 At Key Stage 2, the pupils continue to develop ideas for creating their own dance sequences and make sound progress in evaluating and improving their work. However, they do not always take sufficient advantage of the space available to work with sufficient vigour and pace. By Year 6, nearly all of the pupils can swim 25 metres unaided. The pupils develop good skills in swimming using effective and efficient strokes on the front and on the back.
- 163 Pupils demonstrate good attitudes towards physical education. They are sensible in situations which require them to be aware of matters of safety, for example, when moving about the poolside or when carrying large apparatus and clearing it away. They are very well behaved and co-operate fully in all lessons.
- 164 Throughout the school, the quality of teaching is good with particularly high quality teaching in dance at Key Stage 1. Lessons are well planned and organised with appropriate attention given to matters of safety. Pupils are challenged appropriately and in all lessons they are well managed. An important factor in the pupils' learning relates to the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject, enabling them to demonstrate effective techniques that help the pupils to make progress.
- 165 Since the last inspection, the school has continued to maintain standards in physical education. In addition, the older pupils continue to take part in inter-school sports. Last year the school gained success in swimming when the girls' team were runners-up in a local gala.