

INSPECTION REPORT

CHRIST CHURCH CofE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Whitby, Ellesmere Port

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111351

Headteacher: Miss G Fullbrook

Reporting inspector: Mr B Lord
2791

Dates of inspection: 29 October – 1 November, 2001

Inspection number: 192946

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Type of school: | Infant and Junior school |
| School category: | Voluntary Aided |
| Age range of pupils: | 4 - 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Deeside Ellesmere Port Cheshire |
| Postcode: | CH65 6TQ |
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| Appropriate authority: | The Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Reverend R Wiffen |
| Date of previous inspection: | 17 March 1997 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|--------------|----------------------|--|--|
| 2791 | Mr B Lord | Registered Inspector | Mathematics Science Music | What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further? |
| 9928 | Mr A Dobson | Lay Inspector | | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| 22740 | Mrs M Leah | Team Inspector | English Art Design Technology English as an additional language | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |
| 7994 | Mrs P Weston | Team Inspector | Information Technology Geography History Foundation Stage Equal Opportunities Special Educational Needs | |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Christ Church is a Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School. With 198 full time pupils aged between 4 and 11 it is of average size. It is situated in Whitby, a residential district of Ellesmere Port, but pupils come from a wide area. Most parents are strongly supportive of the school and their children's education. The overall attainment level of pupils entering the school varies from year to year from average to below average. The full range of ability is represented. An average proportion of pupils is entitled to a free school meal. There are currently no pupils from ethnic minorities. One pupil has a first language other than English. A below average percentage of pupils has special educational needs, and there are two pupils with statements of special educational need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Because of its overall effectiveness Christ Church is a deservedly popular school. As a result of very good leadership and management, and a well qualified, industrious and capable staff, teaching is consistently good throughout the school. Standards have risen considerably in recent years and are beginning to exceed national averages. The school provides good and improving value for money.

What the school does well

- Provides good quality learning opportunities in a well designed curriculum so that most pupils, especially girls, make good progress and achieve well.
- Excellent leadership by the headteacher, well supported by the governors and school staff, enables weaknesses to be diagnosed effectively and remedied efficiently.
- Provides a strongly Christian atmosphere where pupils display good behaviour and experience very good spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development in a safe and caring environment.
- Provides exceptionally good opportunities for parents and the local community to be involved in the work of the school.

What could be improved

- Standards attained by some boys.
- In a few lessons more attention should be paid to providing more exciting and challenging tasks, especially for the most able pupils.
- Because of recent staff changes effective curriculum leadership in mathematics and science is not fully developed.
- Standards in writing, which are not as good as those in reading.
- The standard of presentation of some routine written work.

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

The school's many strengths considerably outweigh comparatively minor weaknesses. The head and governors are well aware of what needs to be done to effect further improvements and have very good plans for the future.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997. Since then the results of national tests for seven year olds and eleven year olds have shown dramatic improvements. This success in raising standards was recognised by a national school improvement award in March 2001. In the previous inspection a significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching was observed, but in this inspection there was no unsatisfactory teaching and a great deal of good and very good teaching was observed. Recommendations in the previous report to establish effective schemes of work in information technology and design technology have been acted upon, and these areas are now strengths of the school. The school now has good up to date information technology resources which are well used by pupils. Considerable work has been carried out to design and implement a whole school curriculum plan and link this to better assessment and recording systems so that pupils' progress is now monitored very effectively. Much better arrangements are now in place for curriculum co-ordinators to provide leadership of subjects, although very recent staffing changes have resulted in co-ordination responsibilities for science and mathematics being in a developmental stage. Good systems have been introduced for senior staff to check on the quality of teaching throughout the school, and these have been beneficial in improving learning opportunities. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been efficiently introduced into the school.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

| Performance in: | compared with | | | | Key |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|---|
| | all schools | | | similar schools | |
| | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2001 | |
| English | D | C | C | C | well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E |
| mathematics | B | C | C | B | |
| science | B | C | C | C | |

The table shows that eleven year old pupils reached average standards in all three subjects in 2001. In 1997 and 1996 standards were below or well below average. Since then there has been a steady improvement in standards in all subjects. Because the year groups involved in calculating the above table are small it should be remembered that the effect of even one additional pupil can be considerable. Results at Christ Church have been significantly affected by a number of low attaining pupils transferring, late in their passage through primary education, from other schools. Standards attained by girls have been significantly higher than those attained by boys, and by a greater extent than that observed nationally. Although the proportion of pupils reaching the target level 4 in all three subjects has been above the national average, the proportion of pupils exceeding this level has been below the national average. The school has targets to raise standards attained by eleven year olds in all three core subjects to above the national average. Inspection evidence indicates that the school will meet these challenging targets. National tests for seven year olds have indicated improving trends in standards. There has been some variation from year to year, depending on the composition of the year group. Inspection evidence indicates they are currently average and showing improving trends. Standards in reading are particularly good, but there are some weaknesses in writing. Standards in mathematics and science are improving from average to above average. Standards attained by both seven year olds and eleven year olds in design technology, art, information technology, geography, history and music are above average. Pupils' work in these subjects benefits from well planned and enthusiastic teaching and well organised resources. Standards in physical education are about average. There are improving trends in all areas. Overall attainment levels of pupils entering the school vary from year to year. They are either average or below average. Pupils are now making good progress in the foundation stage, the infant age range and the junior age range. The quality of learning is good in all year groups and the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and the most able, are achieving well. The school is working hard and effectively to correct the underachievement of a small number of boys.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Good – pupils are happy in school and interested in their work. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Good – pupils understand, appreciate and follow school rules. School life is rarely disturbed by discipline problems. The occasional temporary exclusion has been fully justified. |
| Personal development and relationships | Very good – pupils co-operate with each other and the staff in an atmosphere of care and consideration for others. They show initiative and are willing to accept responsibility |
| Attendance | Good – above the average for primary schools. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

All the teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory or better. 86% was good or better and 33% was very good or better. Teaching is considerably better than at the time of the previous inspection. It is consistently good in the Foundation Stage, the infant age range and the junior age range. Good and very good practice was observed in all year groups. All subjects are taught well. Reading is taught particularly effectively in both the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Teachers work as a very effective team with an appropriate range of expertise. All teachers are competent at teaching English and mathematics, and the national numeracy and literacy strategies are being effectively implemented. The staff have acquired suitable skills to make good use of information technology equipment. All teachers try to ensure that pupils at all levels of prior attainment, including those with special educational needs and the more able, are given appropriately challenging work. Occasionally, especially with pupils in Years 3,4 and 5 more rigorous demands could sometime be made of potential high attainers. The school is working hard to correct the tendency for boys to achieve less well than girls. Very good use is made of the school's able and hardworking classroom assistants, together with a substantial number of effective volunteer helpers. The combination of good teaching, appropriate learning resources, and the co-operative attitudes of pupils ensures that most children engage in good quality learning and achieve to their full potential.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Very good – it is well organised and meets all statutory requirements, lays appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy, and has good provision for personal and social education. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Very good – they are well supported by both class teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator. All make good progress and achieve well. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | Very good – a pupil in the infant age range is making good progress because of effective support from teachers, a contribution from a visiting specialist and the helpful attitudes of other pupils. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Very good – pupils leave the school as confident and well adjusted eleven year olds with well developed social skills, a good appreciation of the difference between right and wrong, an appropriate insight into spiritual matters and a good understanding of both their own and other cultural backgrounds. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Very well – parents are right to be confident that the school provides a caring and sensitive environment, where children are safe and happy. |

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Excellent leadership and management by the headteacher – very well supported by all the staff, both teaching and non-teaching, who operate as a harmonious and effective team. The school is aware of the need to develop some curriculum leadership roles following staffing changes |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Very well – they have a very good understanding of all aspects of school organisation, and are appropriately involved in school evaluation and developmental planning. They have a very good grasp of financial matters, and work hard to ensure the school is safe and well maintained. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Very good – all aspects of performance are carefully analysed and the results used to inform forward planning and target setting. The quality of teaching and learning is regularly checked as part of the school's commitment to a policy of on-going improvement |
| The strategic use of resources | Good – the budget is managed skilfully with due regard to the principles of best value. This ensures that the school has adequate and up to date resources together with a balanced complement of teaching and non-teaching staff. The school is particularly good at planning developments in consultation with parents. The building is well maintained. The bright and cheerful accommodation is sufficient for the number of pupils in the school. |

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good teaching which enables their children to achieve to their full potential. • The good standards of behaviour in the school. • The effective leadership and management of the school, especially that provided by the head. • The way the school cares for children, ensuring that they are safe and happy, and helping them to become mature and responsible. • The way they are welcomed into the school, kept fully informed about all activities, and encouraged to be involved in the life of the school. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents thought there should be more interesting activities available outside normal lesson times. |

Inspectors agree fully with parents' positive views about the school. Inspectors consider the range of extra-curricular activities organised by the school is better than in most primary schools. They suggest however, that concerned parents should contact the governors and discuss how parents can give additional help to staff in organising additional out-of-school activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Overall levels of attainment of children entering the reception class, as is to be expected with a comparatively small intake, fluctuate from year to year. Assessments carried out by the school ("Baseline tests") indicate that they are generally average or below. There is, however, a full range of ability represented.
2. In the Foundation Stage good teaching and a well designed curriculum, which covers all the recommended areas of learning for the under-fives, ensure that all pupils learn well, make good progress and achieve well. Apart from a few pupils with low starting points nearly all pupils reach the levels expected of five year olds by the time they enter year 1.
3. There are no pupils with English as an additional language in the reception class, neither are there any pupils from ethnic minorities
4. Results of national tests for seven year olds in reading, writing and mathematics, and teacher assessments in science fluctuate a little from year to year depending on the composition of the year group. Recent results show that nearly all seven year olds are reaching the expected levels in these subjects. Since the previous inspection there have been good improvements. In 2000, for example, the proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected level was very high in comparison with the national average in the mathematics tests and science teacher assessment, well above average in the reading tests and above average in the writing tests. The overall performance in these assessments, based on average points scores, was not quite as good, because a below average proportion of pupils, especially among the boys, exceeded the expected levels. The 2001 results for seven year olds were not as good as those in 2000 largely because the ratio of boys to girl in the year groups was much different. The school has identified under achievement among boys as a general problem and is taking steps to solve it as described in the section of this report "How well are pupils taught?" The school is also addressing the issue of the lower standards in writing compared to reading. Observation of lessons, discussions with pupils, discussions with teachers, scrutiny of pupils' work and examination of teachers' records show that overall results at the end of the infant age range are set to improve further, and are on track to be above average in 2002. This is because the many recent improvements in the quality of education, described elsewhere in this report, are only just starting to have their full influence on the results of assessments of seven year olds.
5. Inspection evidence indicates that all infant pupils are now making good progress in all subjects, and nearly all are achieving well. The school's programme for developing social skills is effective in developing good pupil attitudes, and the teaching they receive is good. Year 2 pupils are on target to attain above average standards in English by the time they are seven. Standards in reading are still a little better than those in writing, but less so than in the recent past. Pupils are developing good speaking and listening skills. Handwriting is good for pupils' ages. Standards in mathematics are on track to be above average by the end of Year 2. Pupils are becoming equally skilful at both mental and written calculations. Since the previous inspection their ability to solve problems has improved. An emphasis on improving literacy and numeracy has been successful, not only in improving the standards pupils attain in mathematics and English, but also in helping to raise standards in all other subjects. Standards in science attained by seven year olds are above average and improving. Pupils acquire a sound knowledge of both biological and physical science, and also develop satisfactory experimental and investigative skills. Standards in information and communications technology have improved considerably since the previous inspection. By the end of Year 2 they are above average and set to improve further. Information technology is being used increasingly as an aid to learning in other subjects and is having a beneficial effect on the quality of pupils' achievement across the curriculum.
6. Standards attained by seven year olds in art, design and technology, information technology, history, geography, history and music are above average. Rather limited inspection evidence indicates that standards in physical education are at least average. There has been an all round improvement in standards since the previous inspection.
7. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to all parts of the curriculum. They make good progress and achieve to their potential in the reception class and the infant age range. This is because their needs are carefully analysed and good individual education plans are drawn up. These are successfully implemented because pupils receive good support from classroom teachers and classroom assistants, and from the school's part time teacher who spends her time exclusively helping children with learning difficulties.

8. The one infant age range pupil with English as an additional language is making good progress in English acquisition and in other subjects. This is because she receives sensitive and effective support from both school staff and a visiting specialist. She is also helped by very good relationships with other pupils who help and support her to have a full involvement in all aspects of school life.
9. There are no pupils from ethnic minorities in the infant age range.
10. National test results for eleven year olds in English, mathematics and science have shown a very considerable improvement since the previous inspection. This was recognised by the school receiving the Government's National Improvement award in March 2001. In all three subjects the 2001 results showed that an above average proportion reached the nationally expected level in all three subjects. Overall results in each subject were only average because a rather low proportion of pupils exceeded the nationally expected levels, mainly due to underachievement by a small number of boys, some of whom had been transferred from other schools late in their primary education. These "average" results do not do justice to the quality of education currently observed in the school. The many recent improvements in curriculum organisation and teaching methods, including strategies to improve the attainment of boys, have yet to have a full effect on standards at the end of Year 6. Inspectors are confident that the targets set by the school for further improvements in the results of tests for eleven year olds will be achieved, and that the current Year 6 is on track to obtain above average results in English, mathematics and science in 2002.
11. The school places appropriate emphasis on the development of language skills. Standards in English have improved since the previous inspection, and are now judged by inspectors to be above average. Progress throughout the junior age range is good in all aspects of English, and pupils are achieving well. Good provision for pupils to develop their listening and speaking skills includes opportunities to take part in school assemblies, and to be part of a school evaluation group consisting of parents, governors, teachers and pupils. Reading skills develop well as pupils are encouraged to use both fiction and non-fiction books not just in English lessons, but across the curriculum. Standards in writing are not as good as those in reading, but are improving. Pupils write for an appropriately wide range of audiences in a full range of styles. Handwriting is satisfactory, although the quality of presentation in some routine written work is sometimes a little careless. Pupils acquire an appropriately extensive vocabulary as they move through the junior years, and learn to spell with increasing accuracy. They acquire a sound knowledge of grammar and punctuation. Good language skills assist pupils' progress in other subjects, and progress in English is assisted by the many opportunities to listen, speak, read and write in lessons throughout the curriculum. The staff have worked hard to implement the National Literacy strategy recommendations for a daily "National Literacy Hour", and the activities in place are starting to raise further the standards in English.
12. The latest national tests in mathematics for eleven year olds indicated levels of attainment were only average. Evidence during the inspection, however, indicates that standards are rising to above average. Progress is now generally good and better than at the time of the last inspection. Pupil achievement is good. All pupils receive a good grounding in basic numerical skills. They benefit from regular mental arithmetic practice and solid teaching of routine arithmetical procedures. There are good opportunities for pupils to use mathematics in other subjects, for instance when learning about co-ordinates in geography, using measuring skills to produce plans in design technology, and drawing graphs to illustrate experimental results in science. Pupils make good progress in developing the ability to apply mathematical understanding to the solution of problems and progress in this and other aspects of mathematics is enhanced by regular homework.
13. Standards in science are now above average, and better than indicated by the 2001 tests for eleven year olds. They have improved since the previous inspection. Evidence collected during the inspection indicates that an above average proportion of pupils are attaining national curriculum targets for their ages, and a substantial proportion are exceeding these targets. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in the knowledge and understanding components of the National Curriculum, and also in the component dealing with the development of investigative and experimental skills. Overall achievement is good.
14. Standards in information technology have improved significantly since the last inspection. Most pupils are now acquiring skills that are above national expectations for their ages, and are making good progress in all junior age range year groups. They gain increasing competence in word processing techniques as they move through the school, and use the Internet with increasing confidence. They operate a range of programmes to process data producing, for example, computer generated graphs

of experimental results in science. Information technology is starting to make a significant contribution to pupils' progress in a range of other subjects.

15. Since the previous inspection pupils have started to make good progress in art, design technology, geography, history, and music. Standards in these subjects are above average by the end of year 6. Limited evidence collected during the inspection indicates that standards are at least average in physical education. Achievement in all these subjects is generally good.
16. As in the infant age range pupils with special educational needs receive good support from class teachers, classroom assistants and the school's special educational needs specialist. They make good progress and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
17. There are no pupils in the junior age range from ethnic minorities, neither are there any pupils with English as an additional language.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18. Pupils are happy and have a positive attitude to school life. Virtually all the parents who responded to the questionnaire state that their children like school. Pupils know they go to school to learn and settle down quickly. They are attentive, obey instructions and are keen to participate in lessons. Most pupils work hard, although some more-able pupils could occasionally be given more challenging work. Pupils are proud to show off their work, but their general presentation is sometimes not as neat as it could be. The well-formed handwriting found in their handwriting books is not always maintained in their general exercise books. Pupils respond particularly well when lessons have a good pace and the work is engaging but challenging. In these lessons, learning is fun. For instance in a mathematics lesson observed during the inspection, where pupils were investigating which numbers up to 20 could be expressed as the sum of two or more consecutive numbers, pupils became excited as they discovered for themselves more and more solutions. They were so involved that there was a positive groan when the lesson ended.
19. Behaviour is consistently good and this is an improvement from the previous inspection. This judgement coincides with the views of the vast majority of parents. Pupils know the rules well and think they are fair. They take the gaining of rewards seriously. Classrooms are quiet and have an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Movement around the school is orderly. Behaviour in assembly is very good and pupils are particularly respectful during prayers. Dining is a civilised social occasion and table manners are generally satisfactory but not all pupils are confident using a knife and fork by the age of seven. Playgrounds have a friendly atmosphere. Pupils report no concerns over bullying and have confidence in the teachers' ability to sort out any problems if they occur. There have been two temporary exclusions in the last year. Inspectors' examination of relevant documentation showed these to be fully justified.
20. Relationships in the school are very good and reflect well the school's aim to create a caring community. Pupils are considerate, polite and courteous. They get on well with each other and have an easy although respectful relationship with the staff. They make visitors feel welcome. When working in pairs or larger groups, pupils work very sensibly and productively. When given the opportunity they enthusiastically help one another. Many very good examples were observed during the inspection ranging from infants helping each other to get dressed after a physical education lesson to the effective use of literacy partners higher up in the school. During class discussions, pupils listen attentively to each other's opinions. The caring community is very well exemplified by pupils' attitudes to prayers. Their keenness to volunteer to say a prayer spontaneously on behalf of the class, for instance at the end of the day, is impressive.
21. Pupils make the most of the many opportunities to show initiative and to help in the running of the school. Extra responsibilities are accepted with enthusiasm and carried out conscientiously. These range from class monitor type duties in the reception class to more school-wide duties in Year 6, for instance helping in the library and on office duties. School clubs are popular and well attended. Throughout the school, homework is taken seriously. By the time they reach Year 6, most pupils show a good level of maturity; they are interesting to talk to and capable of expressing their own opinions.
22. The attendance rate is above the national average for primary schools. It would, however, be significantly better if fewer families chose to take holidays in term time. In the latest school year around a third of all pupils had a least one week's holiday during term time. Punctuality is good.

Registration is prompt and efficient and sets a positive tone at the beginning of the day. Lessons start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

23. All the teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory or better. 86% was good or better and 33% was very good or better. Teaching is considerably better than at the time of the previous inspection. It is consistently good in the Foundation Stage, the infant age range and the junior age range. Good or very good practice was observed in all year groups. All subjects are taught well. Reading is taught particularly effectively in both the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.
24. All the teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of National Curriculum subjects. In the reception class the latest recommendations for teaching in the Foundation Stage are interpreted well. All teachers possess a good insight into effective ways of teaching personal, social and health education. They are particularly skilful at teaching the basics of English and mathematics, and have been conscientious in making themselves familiar with the details of the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies, both of which are now effectively implemented throughout the school. The staff as a whole possess a wide range of expertise and are able to do full justice to the requirements of the primary curriculum. It is noteworthy, for example, that three of the staff possess musical expertise. This is used purposefully, not only in music lessons, but also in a range of extra-curricular activities.
25. Planning is good. It is based upon well structured schemes of work which meet the requirements of the National Curriculum in full. Individual lessons are planned so that learning follows a structured, co-ordinated and progressive sequence for pupils at all levels of attainment. Teachers usually expect all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the more able, to work hard and do their best. Occasionally, especially in Years 3, 4 and 5, more rigorous demands could sometimes be made of potential high attainers. Opportunities are sometimes lost to make lessons even more interesting, for instance by making greater use of better visual aids or video recordings.
26. Teaching methods are, however, generally effective. All teachers are competent when dealing with a whole class, being able to give appropriate instructions and explanations, and to involve all pupils in question and answer sessions. They make lesson objectives clear to pupils, and engage in discussion at the end of lessons to check the extent to which objectives have been achieved. Resources are well organised, so that when pupils work individually or in groups activities proceed briskly and smoothly. Individual and group tasks are usually adjusted to cater for the attainment levels of pupils involved. The school has recognised that in recent years girls have been attaining more highly than boys, and to a greater extent than observed nationally. Special efforts have been made to make learning methods more attractive to boys, for example by including more physical activities in some lessons. These methods are starting to show results, but the school needs to continue to monitor carefully the progress being made by boys and adjust methodology as necessary to produce further improvement.
27. All teachers manage their pupils well so that discipline problems or inappropriate behaviour rarely interfere with the smooth flow of learning. Within a warm and friendly atmosphere pupils understand sensible rules about how they should conduct themselves. Pupils follow instructions carefully, and treat books and equipment with respect. Most have a considerable affection for their teachers and appreciate the hard work that goes into their education.
28. Time within lessons is used well. They start promptly and proceed briskly. Classroom assistants and volunteer helpers make good contributions to the pace and effectiveness of learning. When pupils are working in groups they provide good support and assistance. Levels of books, equipment and other resources are much better than at the time of the previous equipment. Information technology resources have improved dramatically, and are now used extensively and effectively to assist teaching and learning in a range of subjects.
29. Class teachers know their pupils well and have clear and accurate perceptions of their strengths and weakness, and the progress they are making. All written work is carefully marked. Regular assessments of levels of attainment, especially in English and mathematics, help teachers to set targets for pupils, and explain to them what they need to do to improve.
30. Very good use is made of homework to support pupils' learning in a range of subjects, especially in English and mathematics. It is given regularly and is appropriately demanding. There is a progressive increase in the amount of homework pupils are given as they move up from the reception class to Year 6. A good feature of the school's homework policy is the way in which parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's work at home, and to make comments or ask questions in their children's homework diaries.

31. Good quality teaching, a well organised curriculum and the very good attitudes of pupils combine together to ensure that all pupils acquire knowledge, skills and understanding in an effective way. Most pupils, particularly girls, consistently try hard when engaged in intellectual, physical or creative work. Most are aware of the targets at which they should be aiming and are keen to meet them. They display sustained concentration and show good levels of interest. They engage in independent work when, for example, they visit the library or access a computer base to acquire information. Productivity is high and the pace of learning brisk. The overall quality of learning is good, and the education of all pupils includes some outstandingly good learning experiences.

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

32. The curriculum for the Foundation year is well designed and appropriately balanced in line with the latest recommendations for the areas of learning for the under fives. It provides good opportunities for all pupils to meet the nationally prescribed goals for five year olds.
33. From Year 1 to Year 6, the school provides a broad range of worthwhile activities, which meets the interests and aptitudes of its pupils well. Since the previous inspection, a complete review of the curriculum has been undertaken and a rolling programme for the development of each subject over time has been initiated. In all subjects, long term planning has been substantially improved. Relevant schemes of work, based appropriately on national guidance, now provide for the promotion of skills and knowledge progressively over time. Appropriate balance between subjects has been achieved through careful planning of time allocations. The deficiencies in information technology and design and technology, identified in the previous report, have been rectified so that the curriculum in these subjects now meets statutory requirements and attainment is good. In science and in mathematics, greater attention is given to the development of skills of investigation and enquiry and this is having a positive effect on standards.
34. The school rightly gives priority to English and mathematics. The National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy are implemented successfully and provide a secure basis for learning in all classes. Pupils' appreciation of a range of literary styles is being strengthened through work in the Literacy Hour. The careful teaching of letters and their sounds in Years 1 and 2 makes a particularly good contribution to pupils' progress in reading and spelling. Greater attention to the practical application of mathematics is improving pupils' understanding.
35. The school provides a good range of extracurricular activities. Ninety-seven pupils and seven staff are involved in clubs in sports, music, drama and dance. A weekly homework club supports learning effectively for some pupils. Older boys and girls represent the school in competitive sports and in the choir. The range and availability of residential visits are better than in most schools. Separate residential visits are organised each year for pupils in Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6. Well-planned educational visits, for instance, to the theatre, to the woods, and visits, for example, from a storyteller, a theatre group or an artist in residence, enhance the curriculum considerably. Drama is a particular strength of the school and pupils are regularly encouraged to take part in school or group performances.
36. The school lives up to its aim to create a caring community where '... everyone can realise their God given potential and be valued.' All pupils have full access to the curriculum and to extracurricular activities. There is good provision, including individual support, for the one pupil who is learning English as an additional language. The school has identified the achievement of boys as a concern. As a result, the curriculum is being developed to provide more practical tasks to engage the boys' interest and raise their enthusiasm for learning. Non-fiction reading books have been especially chosen to encourage boys to greater effort. The school is monitoring the success of these initiatives and initial indications are encouraging. Appropriate arrangements are made for junior pupils who are talented in mathematics to work alongside older pupils or to receive suitable extension work. This is enabling them to make good progress in line with their abilities.
37. The curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. There is a clear policy setting out the arrangements for teaching and assessing progress at regular intervals. Termly audit of the provision and its impact is undertaken by the co-ordinator and reported to governors.
38. The school promotes personal, social and health education well. Sex education and drugs awareness are taught sensitively to older pupils. A good awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle is raised through the science curriculum and through the school's commitment to the Healthy Schools

Initiative. Weekly personal development lessons in all classes are organised carefully to explore social and moral issues and to foster responsible attitudes to citizenship.

39. The local community makes a very good contribution to the curriculum. Very close links to the church are fostered which considerably develop pupils' spiritual and social development. The vicar and a group of his parishioners give freely of their time to work with the pupils. Governors and local people frequently contribute to school life, for example, in sharing their expertise in information technology and design and technology or taking part in history projects. The school works very closely with parents. "Sharing afternoons" after school each month, when parents are invited to look at the children's work, are well attended and provide good opportunities for informal liaison between home and school. Coffee afternoons provide good opportunities for each class in turn to involve their parents in something special. Year 2 pupils have recently performed traditional country dancing and Year 5 a dance based on African myth. Regular links are established with local fire, police and rail authorities so that pupils are beginning to appreciate the wider community outside school. The school benefits from the support of outside agencies in providing extracurricular football and basket ball training.
40. Links with partner institutions are satisfactory. Visits are made to pre-school groups to help reception children settle quickly into school. All pupils in Year 6 visit their chosen high schools before transfer. Curriculum liaison is limited due to the large number of different schools to which pupils transfer. The school regularly supports students from local colleges in their training.
41. The curriculum is enriched by very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school theme is 'Love and forgiveness' and this is apparent in the general atmosphere of the school. Teachers pride themselves on valuing the pupils and being prepared to go the extra mile. They make sure that all achievements are recognised and celebrated. Parents are welcome into school and they express satisfaction with the values and attitudes promoted by the school.
42. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop spiritual awareness. In class assemblies and at the end of the day individual pupils are invited to offer a prayer to God. They do this with considerable sincerity. Other pupils show respect, putting their hands together and closing their eyes. Pupils are often encouraged to stop and reflect. In a history lesson, for example, they thought about the feelings of mothers in the Second World War and showed great empathy when questioned by the teacher. Some lessons excite the pupils and inspire awe and wonder. They gasped with amazement, for example, when examining the intricate working mechanism of an old camera shutter. In an infant hymn practice the spiritual atmosphere was enhanced by appropriate welcoming gestures as the pupils sang "Come Lord Jesus Come". Older pupils write about their favourite psalms. They make comments such as "I like this psalm because it describes how a kind and loving God cares for us very much".
43. The provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good. Teachers set very good examples and encourage and reward good behaviour. All pupils are taught right from wrong and to respect others. Pupils are expected to be honest, co-operative and well-mannered to each other and to teachers. The school has a very clear system of rewards and sanctions. Rewards are valued by pupils. Class discussion time is often used to consider social and moral issues. This happened when a teacher set out to help the pupils understand that personality was more important than appearances and that what you were on the inside was more important than what you were on the outside. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to develop good relationships and the ability to work as a team, and to observe rules. Teams are formed not only within class activities but across the school. An example of this is the computer team. Each year group has a representative in the team and they meet regularly. They are responsible for the information technology equipment in their class. Pupils have good opportunities to develop maturity through residential visits. They learn the importance of helping others less fortunate than themselves, supporting several charities, including a child from Kosova and the local children's hospice. They perform in local events such as singing at a concert to celebrate 'The Mothers Union' 150 years celebration.
44. The school makes good provision for pupils' cultural development. They have opportunities to listen to music in lessons, in particular in Year 1 where there is often quiet background music to set a calming atmosphere. They see examples of and paint in the style of different artists work such as Kandinsky and Monet and celebrate National Poetry Day. They go Carol Singing to the homes of their neighbours to say "thank you". All school performances, such as the recent production of "All Aboard", are popular with parents. There are also many visitors to the school such as a visiting theatre group who presented 'Nana's Nightingale'. A member of the church visits assembly at least

once a week and is well known to the pupils. Pupils study their local area and further afield as, for example, when they travelled to Llandudno to visit a Victorian seaside town. In Geography they consider and compare the homes of Africans in Zambia with that of themselves. They present dances based around an African myth. Pupils are taught about the diversity of the culture and beliefs of modern Britain and to value this diversity.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. The good levels of care described in the previous inspection report have been maintained and improved. They are now very good. This is a happy and friendly community based on strong Christian principles where pupils are valued and treated with respect. The headteacher, the staff, the vicar and the many helpers all know the pupils well. They provide good role models. Relationships are very good and pupils trust and respect adults in the school. They look upon their teachers as friends. Supervision is good at all times. Parents are justified in considering the school as a safe and secure environment.
46. Procedures for child protection are effective. Two members of staff are fully trained in the subject and all staff are regularly reminded on what to do if they have a cause for concern.
47. Health and safety is taken seriously. The procedures are good and applied effectively. This ensures that the school is regularly inspected, all equipment is regularly checked and there is a good level of first aid cover. In practical lessons, for instance, and when pupils are going swimming, safety is positively stressed. The importance of healthy eating is regularly emphasised.
48. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good. Registers are well kept and regularly monitored by the headteacher. All absences without reason are rigorously followed up and the services of the Education Welfare Officer are called upon when necessary.
49. The school has effective procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. School rules are simple, well publicised and applied consistently. Discipline is maintained within the school's ethos of care and consideration. Staff do not shout. Pupils know what is expected of them. Good behaviour is positively recognised. Sanctions are clear and well understood by the pupils. The threat of going to the lunch club – a period of detention – is a highly effective sanction. Bullying and racism are not tolerated. The school follows its policies correctly regarding the keeping of records and the informing of parents when a serious incident of inappropriate behaviour has taken place.
50. Procedures for supporting pupils' personal development are good. Teachers know their pupils well. Pupils are given encouragement and opportunities to take responsibility and to learn to make choices. Monitoring personal development has historically been largely informal but a good procedure has recently been introduced to record formally all significant events that happen to each pupil whilst at the school. The comments on personal and social development in the pupils' annual reports are of good quality.
51. Since the previous inspection very considerable improvements have been made to the school's systems for assessing, recording and monitoring pupils' academic progress. Teachers now maintain an ongoing record for all pupils in all subjects, although those for mathematics and English are rightly more detailed than others. These records allow the effectiveness of the curriculum to be evaluated, and underachievement on the part of individual pupils to be detected. On the basis of these good records pupils are set targets for improvement and their progress towards them carefully recorded.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

52. Parents have a good opinion of the school. The responses on the questionnaire are more positive than the comparable figures for the previous inspection. This is consistent with the view of many parents that this is a good and improving school.
53. Parents are pleased with virtually all aspects of the school. They particularly approve of the quality of teaching, the progress their children make, the standards of behaviour, the way the school is led and managed - especially by the headteacher, the way their children are cared for and how the school helps the children to become mature and responsible. Parents find the school very approachable, they feel well informed about their children's progress and are encouraged to be involved in the life of the school. The inspectors agree fully with these positive views. A few parents thought there should be a more interesting range of activities outside lessons. The inspectors consider that the range of

extra-curricular activities organised by the school is better than in most primary schools of this size. They suggest however, that concerned parents should contact the governors and discuss how parents can give additional help to staff in organising more out-of-school activities.

54. The quality of information provided to parents, particularly on their child's progress is very good overall and represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection. The provision of a termly meeting between the class teacher and parents at a time that is convenient for both non-working and working parents is better than in most schools. At these meetings, parents are given a good overview of their child's progress including the national curriculum levels at which he or she is working. This information is supplemented by the very good 'class sharing' sessions held every month, whereby parents are invited to the classroom to look in detail at the work their child has done and discuss any concerns with the teacher. Comments in reading and homework diaries are used effectively as a means of communication between parents and teacher. The pupils' reports are of generally good quality and meet statutory regulations. They are written in an easy-to-understand style and contain no jargon. Progress is clearly stated together with details of what the child can actually do in English and mathematics. Opportunities are sometimes missed to say what a pupil needs to do to improve, although the school has other systems for imparting this information to parents. The positive tone of the reports is in keeping with the school's ethos, but occasionally there may be a risk that parents are given too optimistic a view of their child's progress. The provision of information on future work for each year group each term is very effective in encouraging parents to be involved in their child's learning.
55. The prospectus is informative and very easy to read. It has been much improved since the previous inspection.
56. The school is very successful in involving parents in the life of the school. Many parents, together with members of the parish, help regularly in the school. One volunteer helper has been recognised by the regional press with a "Man of the Year Award". This additional help is very well organised and the positive impact is felt throughout the school both in classrooms and on trips. For instance a walk in the nearby woods by reception children was made far more productive and manageable by the presence of a large number of parents. The School Evaluation Group made up of parents representing each year group together with a staff member and pupils when necessary, is an excellent forum for discussing and developing new ideas. The school makes good use of questionnaires to assess parental views on matters such as homework with the result that unlike in many primary schools, there is very little parental dissatisfaction with the school's homework practices. An association for friends of the school is successful in organising events and fund-raising.
57. Collectively, the approachability of the staff, the regular access for parents to good quality information on their child's progress and the success of involving parents in both children's learning and the life of the school, is producing a very positive partnership between home and school. The effectiveness of this partnership has improved since the previous inspection and is now a strength of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

58. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. She deals very efficiently with all administrative matters but displays great warmth and a caring attitude when dealing with staff, pupils or parents. She ensures that there is a clear educational direction for the work of the school, and that all its activities reflect its admirable aims and values. The head has managed substantial improvements in all aspects of the school's work since the previous inspection. Parents are right to feel "the school is safe in her hands". The head is well supported by the assistant heads and the rest of the staff, both teaching and non-teaching. At all stages of the inspection process clear messages were received that the head is held in very high regard by staff, governors, pupils and parents.
59. The roles of subject co-ordinators are well defined, and curriculum management has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Due to very recent staffing changes curriculum leadership for mathematics and science is currently not as effective as the leadership in other curriculum areas, but should improve as developmental plans are implemented. Curriculum leaders have revised and updated schemes of work. There have been particular improvements in schemes of work for information technology, design technology, and music since the previous inspection. The National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies have been efficiently implemented. Good systems have been developed for monitoring the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of the curriculum. Assessment and record keeping systems have been substantially improved, and very good target setting systems for individual pupils established.

60. All the teaching staff have benefited from the efficient implementation of programmes of appraisal, performance management and staff development. A recently appointed newly qualified teacher has received an outstandingly good introduction to the teaching profession.
61. The governors are very effective in supporting and promoting the school. They fulfil their statutory duties conscientiously, are well informed about all aspects of the school and play a full part in its life. Members of the governing body accept a wide range of specific responsibilities which appropriately reflect their interests and expertise. The governors are justifiably proud of the school's improved performance over the last five years, but are not complacent, and continue to plan effectively for further improvement. Targets for improved levels of pupil attainment have been set, and inspectors consider the school is on track to meet these targets.
62. The budget is managed very efficiently. Due attention is paid to the financial planning of educational developments and to the principles of best value. This has ensured that the school has better resources than at the time of the previous inspection. The accommodation is very well maintained and efficiently used. The high quality of display throughout the school adds considerably to the effectiveness of the learning environment. The school has particularly good consultation systems. Both parents and pupils have, for example, been extensively involved in discussions about types of snacks which children should be allowed to bring to school.
63. The governing body has very good plans for the future which are firmly centred on the need to maintain and improve the high standards in all aspects of school life which have already been established. Forward planning is closely linked to financial predictions, which in turn are linked to forecasts of pupil numbers. Main priorities for the future have been soundly formulated. These include the exploration of closer collaboration with providers of nursery education.
64. The school has benefited from a number of specific grants. These have all been used effectively for their intended purposes, for example, improvements in the quality and range of information technology equipment.
65. Additional funding for the education of pupils with special educational needs and the education of pupils with English as an additional language is used appropriately.
66. The school is well staffed with both teaching and non-teaching staff. All work together as a harmonious and effective team. Between them the staff have a full range of expertise in primary education. They are particularly strong in their ability to teach literacy and numeracy, and have taken pains to become fully conversant with the potential of information technology as an aid to learning. There is also a very good pool of musical talent, with three members of staff being accomplished musicians. There is an excellent shared commitment to ongoing improvement of the already very good characteristics of the school. The accommodation is sufficient for the number of pupils and all available space is fully and efficiently used.
67. The school makes good use of links with the local community to assist in the education of its pupils. Close association with the church is very beneficial in promoting the spiritual and moral development of pupils.
68. Parents are right to feel that the school is very well led and managed.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

69. To improve standards and the quality of education further in this already successful school the head, staff, and governors should:-
 - (1) Further develop teaching methods to ensure that learning experiences are equally as attractive to boys as to girls. (See paragraphs 4, 10, 26, 36, 85, 88, 89, 102.)
 - (2) Refine lesson planning so that there are fewer lost opportunities to provide exciting and challenging learning tasks, especially for the more able pupils. (See paragraphs 18, 25, 108)
 - (3) Implement plans to make curriculum leadership in science and mathematics as effective as that for other subjects. (See paragraphs 59, 109)
 - (4) Implement plans to bring standards in writing up to those in reading. (See paragraphs 4, 11)

- (5) Pay more attention to the quality of presentation of some routine work in pupils' notebooks. (See paragraphs 11, 18)

70. Inspectors acknowledge that the school is already working on most of these issues. Minor points which the staff and governors should consider include:-

- (a) Ensuring that comments on annual written reports, while being positive and encouraging, do not give parents an unduly optimistic view of their child's attainment. (See paragraph 54)
- (b) Making clearer on written reports what children need to do to improve, and the targets at which they should be aiming. (See paragraph 54)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 49 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 36 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 2 | 14 | 26 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 4 | 29 | 53 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils on the school's roll | YR – Y6 |
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 198 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 17 |
| Special educational needs | YR – Y6 |
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 2 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 25 |
| 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 | 11 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 5 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 4.6 |
| National comparative data | 5.2 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.1 |
| 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 2)

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 2001 | 18 | 8 | 26 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 15 | 12 | 18 |
| | Girls | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| | Total | 23 | 22 | 23 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 88 (94) | 84 (94) | 88 (100) |
| | National | 84 (83) | 86 (84) | 91 (90) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 15 | 16 | 16 |
| | Girls | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| | Total | 23 | 24 | 24 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 88 (97) | 92 (100) | 92 (100) |
| | National | 85 (84) | 89 (88) | 89 (88) |

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 2001 | 18 | 15 | 33 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 13 | 13 | 17 |
| | Girls | 14 | 12 | 15 |
| | Total | 27 | 25 | 32 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 82 (70) | 76 (67) | 97 (83) |
| | National | 75 (75) | 71 (72) | 87 (85) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 13 | 13 | 17 |
| | Girls | 14 | 13 | 15 |
| | Total | 27 | 26 | 32 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 82 (73) | 79 (73) | 97 (83) |
| | National | 72 (70) | 74 (72) | 82 (79) |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 |
| Black – other | 0 |
| Indian | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 |
| White | 169 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 0 |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

| | Fixed period | Permanent |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 0 | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 | 0 |
| Black – other | 0 | 0 |
| Indian | 0 | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 | 0 |
| White | 2 | 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) | 8.5 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 23.3 |
| Average class size | 28.3 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|----|
| Total number of education support staff | 3 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 79 |

FTE means full-time equivalent

Financial information

| Financial year | 2000 - 2001 |
|--|-------------|
| | £ |
| Total income | 377595 |
| Total expenditure | 381316 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 1976 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 9037 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 5316 |

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|---|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 3 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 3 |
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 198 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 51 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 67 | 29 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 45 | 49 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 35 | 53 | 6 | 0 | 6 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 49 | 45 | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| The teaching is good. | 61 | 37 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 37 | 51 | 8 | 4 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 82 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 75 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 65 | 29 | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 63 | 35 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 61 | 33 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 45 | 33 | 8 | 6 | 8 |

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

71. Since the previous inspection the new Foundation Stage Curriculum has been successfully introduced. Standards have been maintained and the children continue to make good progress. At the time of the inspection, 29 children were attending the reception class. There were no children learning English as an additional language, neither were there any children from ethnic minorities.
72. Children enter the reception class in the year in which they reach five years of age. Initially this is on a part-time basis for one to three weeks depending on age. This allows a 'gentle introduction' to school life. Procedures to assist children to settle are very good. Parents report they are very well informed and value the support staff offer. Notices and information about the work in the reception class are either sent home or displayed for parents to see when they collect their children. A typically good example of a helpful reminder for parents was displayed in the infant entrance hall, here among the many useful tips was "Show respect for scribble and doodles as the first stage of writing development". Though variable from year to year attainment on entry to reception is average or below for children of this age. All children achieve well and many attain the Early Learning Goals by the age of five. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and progress as well as they are able. This is because of the consistently good quality teaching and overall provision.
73. Teaching is never less than good with very good and excellent teaching observed. Planning is usually detailed with activities well organised to make maximum use of all adults. A team approach to teaching works well and contributes to the smooth running of all activities. Staff skills, for example in story telling, make learning an enjoyable as well as an effective experience.

Personal, social and emotional development

74. Children make very good progress in this aspect of their development with the great majority achieving the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the reception class. They use equipment and resources very well. They quickly get to know the routines of the class and become independent, registering their attendance each day by 'writing' their names on the whiteboard. They choose whether or not they will have milk or juice at snack time and those who wish to use their own money to buy snacks from the snack trolley. The children respond very well to adults, joining in or finishing activities when asked. They tidy equipment away helpfully and use the toilet independently. Most have the confidence to speak to the whole class and take part in imaginative role play, for example when re-enacting the story of the "Three Bears". There are gasps of "wow" when in a physical development lesson children, acting as a team, use a large cloth "parachute" to form a mushroom large enough to step under.
75. The quality of teaching is very good and sometimes excellent. Routines are designed to promote self-sufficiency, for example a class leader for the day is chosen with responsibility to take the register to the office. Activity areas such as 'The Garden Centre' encourage children to play co-operatively. All staff constantly present positive attitudes and values and use stories well to teach children the difference between right and wrong. Good use is made of 'The Three Bears' story to encourage the children to consider the difference between right and wrong. The teacher asked the children what did they think about Goldilocks eating up baby bear's porridge and how would he or she have felt. Staff have a very secure knowledge and understanding of the needs of those in their care and use the daily sessions very well to build the children's self-esteem and to give them a sense of achievement.

Communication, language and literacy

76. Teaching is never less than good and leads to good achievement in most areas. Most children attain the early learning goals by the time they start Year 1. The literacy strategy has been adapted very well and by the end of the reception year most children achieve well in speaking and listening and reading. Achievement in writing is not as good and fewer children achieve the Early Learning Goals although the teacher pays good attention to teaching these skills. The teacher provides opportunities for stimulating role play. This enables children to take a full part in imaginative play, for instance, when they buy seeds from the Garden Centre and talk about the flowers they are hoping to grow from seed. In circle time they pass a cuddly toy to each other and talk about the things that they like best. All know to wait for their turn and listen carefully to each other. With the help of the teaching assistant a group of children making porridge for the three bears are able to describe what they are doing.

They begin to understand the meaning of words such as 'instructions' as they read them from the packet and can relate the instructions to the class. They have good book skills and are able to identify the title of a book and the correct way to hold it and turn the pages. They are beginning to look closely at print and higher achieving children are recognising more commonly used words such as 'look' 'came' 'it' and 'the'. They recognise familiar story book words such as 'Goldilocks'. They can identify which are long words and which are short words. When reading from books the teacher uses pictures and voice expressively to hold the children's interest. All children concentrate very well and watch and listen well. Questions are asked skilfully to extend children's understanding of the story and assess what they know and this promotes individual speaking skills. The teacher gives opportunities to predict what might happen extending the children's thinking skills. When reading the story of 'The Three Bears' she questions the children about the ending of the story. One child is able to make comparisons between the ending in the story read and the different ending that he had heard in his previous school. Because the teacher takes the opportunity to encourage the children to discuss which ending they preferred and why, the child is able to say that he liked the ending where they all became friends and Goldilocks said that she was sorry. Good relationships and management, together with supportive feedback give children the confidence and encouragement to contribute to discussion. The children take turns to take 'Bertie Bear' home and are encouraged to look after him and to write about his exploits in the class book. They delight in retelling these events whilst the rest of the class listen carefully. When responding to letters sent by Bertie Bear most are experimenting with writing, making marks or single letters to convey meaning. A minority are able to complete a short letter writing words on the page to convey meaning. The teacher uses good teaching methods and consequently a large proportion of children show a knowledge of some of the letters of the alphabet and are able to draw them in the air. About half of the children can hear the sounds of letters and point to them. The listening centre is a source of interest to the children as they listen to familiar stories and follow instruction to 'dress the bear'.

Mathematical Development

77. Teaching is good. Most children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of their reception year. The numeracy strategy has been adapted well and computer programs are well integrated into the planning. These strategies successfully consolidate the children's understanding of, for example, size, shape and ordering as they dress Teddy. The teaching assistant makes good use of children to teach the concept of 'less than' and the terminology 'zero' as they perform the counting rhyme 'Five currant buns'. This physical involvement enables the children to more easily understand zero. The teacher extends this activity and explains clearly to the children, enabling a good number to recognise the numbers nine to zero. In small group activities because the teacher demonstrates clearly to the children they are able to count out seven counters from a larger group and add one more. Some children exclaim "that makes eight". By the end of the activities higher achieving pupils are able to count seven in their head and add one more correctly. Average attaining pupils are able to count to eight in their heads and lower achieving pupils are able to count to five in their heads. Lower achieving pupils use construction materials and experiment making tall and short shapes, they search the sand to discover hidden shapes and then successfully sort by shape two beads and three cubes. Skilful questioning by the teacher extends the learning of children engaged on this task. Children become able to follow the pattern and predict that the next number will be four. Achievement of all pupils is good and this is because the teacher challenges appropriately through questions and listens to children's responses, encouraging when necessary. Children are encouraged to work independently. They share and take turns. Resources are used well with good variety to hold children's interest.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

78. Teaching is very good. Most children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they begin Year 1. The teacher plans very interesting activities which are clearly focused to enable the children to make good use of their senses. A good example of this was the walk in the nearby woods. Here the children paid attention to the road markings and cars as well as the trees and creatures to be found in the woods. They looked closely at different colours of leaves and different signs of autumn. They felt the bark of different trees and compared textures. The teacher encouraged the children to consider their surroundings and to talk about what they could see around them. An example of this was when she asked them to say if they liked or disliked a feature such as dead and decaying trees. This form of questioning enabled the children to begin to understand that trees and flowers are subject to decay and regeneration. This theme is reinforced through their work back in school when children plant seeds and predict that they will grow into the flowers on the packet. Using microscopes they investigate bark and leaves from their walk. As they observe patterns and colours one child exclaims "the branch of the tree isn't really brown - it's sort of green". The children know roads are for vehicles

to drive on and pavements provide safe routes for walkers. When guided by the teacher and working from a large cushioned street map, the children gain good sense of direction and also of following directions given by the teacher as they travel up, down and turn when steering their cars along the roads of the map. Through the use of interesting computer programs the children learn, often helped by parent helpers, to control the mouse well. On the trip to the woods there were a very good number of parent helpers. The teacher had prepared very clear instructions for the helpers and these were also shared with the children before setting off.

Physical Development

79. Teaching is never less than good and in one lesson observed was excellent. The children make good progress overall and most achieve the Early Learning Goals in their physical development. A very good routine has been established for changing and dressing. Children help one another if necessary. The outside secure play area attached to the reception class is not very large and does restrict the full use of large apparatus, but children also have access to the infant play area. When this is used the teacher plans very carefully to ensure that all children have equal access to all apparatus. The correct attention is paid to warming up and cooling down exercises with children showing good use of space. The teacher has clear objectives and activities are well chosen to achieve success. She manages to balance familiar routines with new experiences, gradually increasing and changing activities as children's skills develop. The children roll hoops and ride bicycles and scooters around obstacles. They practice balancing on logs and swinging in the adventure area. A few have started to master the skill of sending and receiving bean bags and large balls. The children learn the discipline of moving correctly from one activity to another and of the need to behave sensibly when handling apparatus. In the lesson where teaching was excellent the teacher chose to use a parachute. By using this apparatus she developed the children's skill of working as part of a group. They learnt how to collectively control the parachute in order to make a ball bounce. The teacher had excellent control and was able to allow the children's natural excitement to heighten their enjoyment whilst still maintaining order and an active learning environment.

Creative Development

80. Only a small amount of teaching was observed in this area during the inspection, but much indirect evidence indicates that teaching is at least good. Work on display and in albums shows that the children's achievement is good and that most reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. The teacher plans to ensure that all areas of development are linked and creative development plays a very important part in reinforcing and enhancing the other areas of learning. There is good role play as the children play together in the 'cottage'. All enjoy making and tasting porridge with the teaching assistant. Some decide to add a little milk whilst others add jam. The children respond to music, becoming aware of beat as they dance to the music of 'The Teddy Bears Picnic'. They sing simple songs from memory and match movements to music. They have favourite nursery rhymes and songs and clap their hands to the beat. Using a wide range of materials to make pictures. They create line drawings and make comparisons with bead paintings. They design and make their own seed packets for the garden centre. The teacher reinforces their understanding of the properties of shapes such as circles, triangles and squares as they carefully complete pictures for display. They are beginning to observe patterns and colours in the environment, for example leaves turning brown in the autumn.
81. Formal and on-going assessments are carried out thoroughly. There are many very good pictorial records of children's achievements. These are well annotated and attractively presented.

ENGLISH

82. Overall standards of seven-year-olds seen during the inspection are close to those found in most schools, and are showing improving trends. Overall standards of eleven-year-olds continue to improve and are better than in most schools. Standards of reading and of speaking and listening are high throughout the school due to the consistently good teaching of these skills in English lessons and across the curriculum. A high percentage of pupils, especially but not only in the infants, do better in reading than in writing.
83. In the 2001 national tests for seven-year-olds in reading, the school's performance was better than that of most schools and better than the average for similar schools. All of the pupils reached the expected level and a good percentage reached the higher level. In writing the pupils performed less well. Standards attained were well below those in most schools and very low when compared with

similar schools. The percentage who reached the expected level was well below other schools. No pupils reached the higher level. Targets for the current year 2 are for better results than those of 2001. Inspectors consider the school is on track to meet these targets.

84. In the 2001 national tests for eleven-year-olds in English the school's performance was average compared to all schools. It was also average when compared to similar schools. The percentage who reached the expected level was above that of other schools, but the overall standards were depressed by the below average percentage of pupils who reached the higher level. Inspectors consider the current Year 6 is on track to attain above average results in 2002.
85. Overall, since the previous inspection there has been good improvement. With the exception of writing in Year 2 in 2001, standards have risen at a greater rate than the national trend. However, results vary from year to year due to the nature of the classes. Girls perform consistently above the average for girls nationally, but boys do less well than boys nationally. This has a significant effect on the school's results. For example, in 2000, when standards at age seven were above the national average there was a high percentage of girls in the class. In 2001, when the writing standards dropped, almost two-thirds of the Year 2 class were boys. The school has identified boys' attainment as an area of concern and is beginning to implement strategies to improve boys' performance. The school has also begun to focus particularly on the development of writing skills in order to raise standards. Whilst appropriate challenge is provided for all ranges of ability in most of the lessons seen, targets set in writing are not always high enough to ensure that all the potential higher attainers achieve as well as they can. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They are supported effectively in class and in withdrawal groups so that they make good progress. Carefully organised additional literacy support for a small group of pupils in Years 3 and 4 is proving very beneficial to their progress. There is a good level of effective help for the one pupil who speaks English as an additional language.
86. Almost all pupils achieve well in developing speaking and listening skills. This is due in part to the abundant clearly focused opportunities provided for pupils to practise their emerging skills across the curriculum. Drama and role-play activities are well organised to promote good learning. Pupils of all ages take part enthusiastically. For instance, pupils in Year 4 practise and perform the "The Pied Piper". Pupils in Year 6 improvise situations in freeze-frame activities in a lesson about World War Two. Pupils listen well in large and small groups. They respond to a wide range of speakers including a storyteller, visitors who talk about their personal experiences in history, religious education or science, the vicar in assembly and their teachers. All staff use language precisely so that pupils increase their understanding and vocabulary and become increasingly confident in expressing their own ideas. In Year 5, for instance, pupils describe their mixed-media work and the effects they have created with shape and line. Teachers listen carefully and provide positive feedback which promotes self-esteem. In Year 2, pupils are keen to contribute to class discussion. For instance, in a personal, social and emotional development lesson, most pupils express their opinions clearly and higher attainers explain the reasons behind their choice at length. In Year 6, pupils are becoming skilful at arguing a point of view as when debating a proposed new bus route. They take on the roles of residents, councillors and builders to make their cases persuasively. They are confident to present their own research to the class and question each other thoughtfully to evaluate evidence.
87. Overall, the pupils achieve well in learning to read. Standards are above average at both the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6. Many pupils, particularly in the infants make very good progress. All staff model positive attitudes to books, and demonstrate their enjoyment of reading. As a result the vast majority of the pupils are enthusiastic readers. Teachers keep careful records and monitor progress over time. In the infants, this is particularly effective in the systematic teaching of letters and their sounds and enables pupils to make good progress in reading and spelling. Almost all pupils in Year 2 are becoming confident in using these phonic skills together with picture and context clues to read simple unfamiliar texts. They are enthusiastic to practise at home each day. Most pupils locate information in basic reference texts using contents and index. Higher attainers are becoming independent readers and retrieve and use information from non-fiction books with confidence. They discuss their favourite books and express preferences, for example, for "scary" stories. In Year 6, pupils use their well-developed reading skills to carry out research from books, from a CD-ROM or from the Internet. They have good library skills and know how to use the Dewey Decimal System to find books and information. Some have developed skills of skimming and scanning. Almost all enjoy a range of literary styles and are familiar with some of the works of famous writers like Shakespeare and children's authors like Roald Dahl and Jacqueline Wilson. They identify their favourite characters in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and particularly appreciate the humour of the play. Most pupils understand the significant ideas in a story and use influence and deduction when describing aspects of the characters and the plot. Higher attainers understand nuances beyond the literal interpretation of

the story. They appreciate the ways in which authors create an effect, for instance, by using metaphors such as 'blackcurrant eyes'.

88. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in learning writing skills, although some boys find this aspect of the curriculum particularly difficult. Standards are broadly average at both the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6. The school is increasingly careful to choose subject matter to interest the boys in order to increase their effort. In Year 2, pupils sequence their writing to a given plan using headings of "first, next, then" and "finally" to order their ideas. They write in short sentences to retell stories or recall their own experiences. Most show little imagination individually in writing a poem, but in a class activity suggest suitable adjectives such as *salty*, *cold* or *stormy* to describe the sea. They are becoming aware of capital letters and full stops, but not all use them reliably in their work. They use their good knowledge of letters and their sounds to make reasonable attempts at spelling. By the time they reach Year 6, most pupils have sufficient writing skills to support their work in other subjects. They are aware of appropriate form, for instance, to take notes or write reports. Most pupils are becoming aware of figures of speech like similes, metaphors and personification and higher attainers use them appropriately in their writing. For instance, describing "a ship's lounge like a dead sailors' graveyard", or a "blue sapphire clock smiling with glee at death". Lower attainers are unsure of the requirements for different genre and have limited vocabulary. They write in simple sentences with over use of the connective 'and'. Most pupils spell everyday simple words correctly. A few still spell phonetically as in 'choclet fatury'. Higher attainers spell regular polysyllabic words correctly. The school has improved the teaching of handwriting since the last inspection with the implementation of a scheme of work. Skills are taught systematically over time and pupils from the infants onwards can write in legible joined script. Whilst handwriting is good in handwriting practice and in special work, day-to-day writing in books across the curriculum is a little untidy. Insufficient care is sometimes taken in the presentation of daily work.
89. The quality of teaching is good overall. Some excellent and very good teaching was observed in Year 2 and Year 6. This represents a tremendous improvement on the barely satisfactory standards noted in the last report and is responsible for raising attainment. All teachers use their good knowledge and understanding of the subject to plan lessons which include all elements of the National Literacy Strategy. They build carefully on what pupils already know so that pupils make good progress in lessons over time. The teachers are skilful in managing pupils. They use praise effectively to encourage pupils to work hard and give of their best. Homework is used consistently to consolidate learning in class. Resources are invariably well prepared and accessible. Books are of good quality and are used effectively to support learning. In the very good lessons, clear objectives are shared with pupils at the beginning of the lesson and revisited at the end so that pupils know how to succeed and can reflect on their own learning. Teachers are enthusiastic and lively in their approach. They attempt to involve all pupils with strategies such as "hot seating" and "paired literacy partners". When teaching is occasionally less successful, although still of a satisfactory standard, the pace of the lesson is slower. Interest levels, particularly among the boys, tend to fall. Group tasks could sometimes be a little more exciting and demanding so as to fully challenge potential high attainers.
90. Leadership and management of the subject are good. There are effective procedures for the evaluation of teaching and learning in class, and the efficient monitoring of standards of work. Assessment data is used to check on school, class and individual performance. Analysis of data is used to develop the curriculum in order to raise standards. A good example of this is the recent improvement in the range of non-fiction materials and books in an attempt to raise the interest and standards of boys.
91. Work in other subjects is carefully planned to support the pupils learning in literacy. In design and technology and art, for example, pupils learn subject specific language, and develop their skills in explaining and describing procedures. There is an excellent example of cross-curricular work in a history topic on World War Two. Pupils write in a range of genre from letters home from soldiers, to imaginative poems on the Blitz and factual reports. Pupils use information technology to retrieve information as well as to consolidate their skills, for example, in spelling, and to present their work.
92. The school library provides an attractive resource for learning and is used well especially by older pupils.
93. Pupils' learning in English greatly supports their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They enjoy a wide range of literature from African myths to Shakespeare, and are involved in debate on social and moral issues. Pupils learn the value of co-operation when working with literacy partners and in group discussion.

MATHEMATICS

94. Since the previous inspection there have been very substantial improvements in standards attained both at the end of the infant age range and at the end of the junior age range. In the 2001 national tests for 7 year olds an above average proportion of pupils reached the expected level, although the proportion of pupils exceeding this level was a little below average. A similar picture emerged in the 2001 tests for 11 year olds. Although the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level was above average, the proportion of pupils exceeding this level was below average. These results meant that the overall performance at both the end of the infant age range and at the end of the junior age range was only average. Results for 11 year olds were, however, lower than would otherwise have been the case because a few lower attaining pupils were transferred from other schools, and only received a small amount of their primary education at Christ Church. It should also be borne in mind that the 2001 cohort of 11 year olds had received only partial benefit from the greatly improved quality of education in the school since the previous inspection.
95. Inspection evidence indicates that overall standards attained by seven year olds are moving to above average. Standards attained by eleven year olds are also above average, and inspectors consider the school will reach its targets for improved results in 2002.
96. By the end of Year 2 most pupils have a good grasp of basic arithmetic processes, and can carry out appropriate calculations both mentally and on paper. They can add, subtract, divide and multiply using reasonably large positive numbers. Early in Year 2, for example, pupils carry out calculations such as $204 + 600 = 804$, and $3 \times 8 = 24$. In Year 1 they start to measure, first using non-standard measures such as finger lengths and then moving on to use conventional units for both length and capacity. Pupils acquire a good mathematical vocabulary and are able to discuss their work both with each other and their teachers. They are familiar with the names of common two dimensional shapes, and can draw and interpret bar graphs, for example to illustrate the range of preferences for fruits among the members of their class. They can apply their mathematical knowledge and understanding to the world outside the classroom, for instance by calculating shopping bills and the change they should receive from shopkeepers.
97. By the end of Year 6 pupils carry out a full range of mathematical operations with confidence and accuracy. As well as acquiring a good facility with the four rules of number, both mentally and in written calculations, they can solve problems and apply their mathematical skills to a wide range of practical situations. They recognise mathematical patterns, and can extend sequences of numbers correctly, using negative numbers if necessary. Pupils can estimate and approximate, and work with fractions, decimals and percentages. They have a good mathematical vocabulary, and are able to identify and describe the properties of a wide range of two dimensional and three dimensional shapes. They understand symmetry, and can draw two dimensional nets to fold into three dimensional shapes. In Years 5 and 6 pupils carry out impressive work on probability. They are able to discuss the range of probability of events from "impossible" to "certain", and put mathematical interpretations on verbal descriptions. They can draw and interpret bar graphs, pie charts and line graphs, and make good use of these skills not only in mathematics but also in science. Pupils are able to work confidently with co-ordinates and apply such mathematical knowledge to their work in geography.
98. Throughout the school nearly all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are engaged in good quality learning and achieving well. Pupils with learning difficulties receive appropriate help and support both from class teachers and the special needs teacher. Although pupils frequently applaud good efforts by their class mates they never deride failure or difficulties in completing work.
99. Appropriate arrangements are made for pupils with a particular aptitude for mathematics to progress more quickly than others. They either move to a year group ahead of their own for mathematics lessons, or have individual tuition from the headteacher. Good attention is paid to the development of mathematical skills in other subjects. Pupils use measuring techniques in design technology, work with co-ordinates in geography, and make extensive use of graphs in science.
100. The quality of teaching in both the infant department and the junior department is usually good, quite often very good and never unsatisfactory. All the teaching is well planned and based on a good scheme of work which meets fully the requirements of the National Curriculum and ensures that the National Numeracy Strategy is fully implemented. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject and have engaged in considerable in-service training to keep up to date with the latest developments. They expect pupils in their classes to work hard, but maintain a friendly atmosphere in which good behaviour and co-operation is the norm. Lesson time is used well. Most lessons start with a brisk ten minutes of mental arithmetic. This is followed by individual or group work, organised so that pupils at

different levels of attainment have exercises of appropriate difficulty. Groups and individuals are well supported by teachers, classroom assistants and quite often volunteer helpers. Lessons usually finish with a very effective plenary session in which the teacher discusses with the class the extent to which the objectives of the lesson have been achieved. Books, work sheets and other resources are well organised so that lessons proceed smoothly. In most lessons a computer is available so that pupils can use suitable programmes to carry out on-screen exercises to consolidate other forms of learning. Regular homework forms an effective part of the teaching strategy.

101. Nearly all pupils try hard and are acquiring mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding at a good rate. They sometimes grumble about their homework, but most do their best to complete it on time. A significant proportion of pupils spoken to by inspectors said mathematics was their favourite subject. In all lessons observed levels of interest and concentration were good. Most pupils could be trusted to get on with their learning tasks without direct, continuous supervision.

SCIENCE

102. National assessments have shown that standards attained by seven year olds have improved significantly over the last five years, and are much better than at the time of the previous inspection. In 2001 all year 2 pupils reached the nationally expected level, although the proportion of pupils attaining higher than the national expectation was a little lower than the national average. Standards attained by girls have been consistently higher than those attained by boys. The school has started to address this issue and there are indications that the gap is narrowing. The situation needs further monitoring, and the school should continue to work on methods to motivate boys.
103. Most pupils start the infant stage with knowledge and understanding of the world that is about average for five year olds, although a significant minority are below average, and very few above average. The quality of learning in Years 1 and 2 is good, and pupils at all levels of prior attainment, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Most pupils achieve well, but a few pupils, particularly among the boys, could do a little better. Inspectors consider overall standards attained at the end of the present Year 2 will be above average.
104. Inspection observations and a scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that attainment in the infant age range is uniformly distributed across the range of topics specified by the National Curriculum. Good work enables pupils to become familiar with a wide variety of living things. They use an appropriate biological vocabulary to describe the trees, leaves, twigs, shoots and roots they have observed when carrying out surveys in local woodland. Measuring techniques are well developed, for example, by practical activities with water in a variety of containers. A study of the physics of sound is linked effectively to work with musical instruments. Pupils become progressively acquainted with a wide range of materials, and can discuss, for example, the differences between man made and naturally occurring substances. The quality of learning has been enhanced by successful efforts to introduce more experimental work into the curriculum. Pupils have investigated, for instance, how far tubs loaded with different numbers of pennies will slide down a slope. Good links with other subjects have been forged. When pupils learn about electrical circuits they use their knowledge to construct a working lighthouse in design and technology. Science activities link to mathematics when pupils, as part of their work on healthy diets, analyse data and produce bar charts to illustrate the distribution of food preferences in their class.
105. Because the activities in science are interesting infant pupils are well motivated, concentrate well, enjoy their work and give of their best. Pupils behave well and this makes an important contribution to their good progress.
106. National tests for eleven year olds show that standards have risen considerably since the previous inspection. In 2001 an above average proportion of pupils attained the expected level for their age, although a less than average proportion exceeded the expected level. A tendency for girls to perform better than boys has decreased, although the school still needs to keep a careful eye on comparative performances. Prior attainment of current and recent Year 6 pupils at the start of the junior age range is difficult to judge because over the last four years a significant number of pupils have transferred into years 3, 4 and 5 from other schools. Inspectors consider that all pupils in the junior age range, including those with special education needs are learning well, making good progress and achieving to their potential. The school has taken steps to correct underachievement of some brighter pupils, but further care needs to be taken that potential high attainers are fully stretched in all lessons. The school has set targets for improving further the results of tests for eleven year olds. Inspectors

consider the school is on track to meet these targets, and that overall levels of attainment at the end of the current Year 6 will be above average.

107. Attainment of Year 6 pupils is fairly uniform across the topics specified by the National Curriculum, but is particularly good in biological sections. Even in Year 4, for example, pupils have gained a good knowledge of the structure of the human skeleton and the distribution of muscles. They have carried out investigations, linked to their work in mathematics, to clarify how the length of bones in the human arm change with age, and produced appropriate graphs. By the end of the junior age range pupils have a good knowledge of what constitutes a healthy diet. They understand how micro-organisms can be both useful, for example in making dough rise, and harmful, for example in making milk go sour. Pupils have a thorough understanding of electrical circuits and have carried out useful exercises in fault-finding in circuits. They are well aware of the dangers of misuse of electrical appliances. Good use is made of the school grounds and the local environment for ecological studies and pupils are able to discuss a wide range of habitats to be found in the vicinity. Because the activities in science are interesting the pupils are well motivated, concentrate well, enjoy their work and give of their best. Pupils behave well and this makes an important contribution to the good progress they make.
108. Teaching observed during the inspection was good and very good with both infant and junior classes. A scrutiny of written work indicated that good practice observed was typical of that which normally occurs. Science teaching has improved since the previous inspection. It is now based very firmly on a well balanced scheme of work which meets all the requirements of the National Curriculum. Teachers have a firm knowledge of science and know how to teach it effectively. They plan their lessons carefully, taking pains to ensure that tasks of varying levels of difficulty are available to cater for pupils at different levels of attainment. Occasionally opportunities are lost to provide even more interesting and challenging work for the brightest pupils, for example by making greater use of video recordings and spectacular demonstrations. All teachers have a good relationship with the pupils, and discipline problems rarely interfere with the smooth flow of lessons. The pupils are assessed regularly so that teachers are able to plan work which builds on knowledge and skills already consolidated by the various groups in the class. This approach enables most pupils to achieve well. Teachers also promote and encourage basic skills in science lessons. For example writing skills are used in recording investigations and mathematical skills are involved when presenting information graphically. Increasingly effective use is being made of information and communication technology to support work in science through word processing, data handling and specific science programs.
109. Curriculum leadership in science is currently not fully in place because of very recent staff changes. There are, however, firm plans to develop the role of the subject co-ordinator. Attractive displays of science work in classrooms enhance the educational environment of the school. Science makes a worthwhile contribution to the spiritual, moral and social development of the pupils by providing them with insights into the wonders of nature and physical phenomena.

ART AND DESIGN

110. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have improved considerably since the last inspection and are now above average. Evidence from the large variety of high quality work on display and in pupils' sketchbooks indicates that pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well throughout the school. The recently implemented scheme of work, based on local education authority guidance, promotes the development of practical skills and techniques as well as the appreciation of the work of a wide range of artists. All pupils have access to the full curriculum.
111. Teachers' skills and enthusiasm inspire pupils to enjoy the subject and take pride in their work. In Year 1 pupils explore colour through mixing paint. They create a range of interesting shades and tints by adding black or white in varying degrees to a primary colour. In Year 2, pupils experiment with tone to create light and dark in their pictures. They look closely at the way Rembrandt uses shading in his portraits and carefully use soft pencils or charcoal to express their own ideas. In Year 3, pupils consider how different effects are achieved and express preferences. They use layers of colour to create texture, tone and shape based on Dégas' work, as well as using tissue to create an extra dimension. By the time pupils reach Year 6 they have gained a wide range of skills with which to work imaginatively as well as good appreciation of particular styles and artists. They are inspired by a theatre visit and use printing, stencilling and masking techniques after the style of Klimt to express their response to "A Midsummer Night's Dream". They are able to evaluate their own work and suggest improvements.
112. Due to the organisation of the timetable, no art lessons were seen during the inspection. Scrutiny of teachers' plans, of pupils' work and discussion with staff and pupils indicate that the quality of teaching

is consistently good in all classes. The teachers use their good knowledge and understanding of the subject to provide high quality, interesting experiences from which the pupils learn well. All staff are encouraging and supportive to pupils in developing their ideas. Through careful presentation of work, they raise confidence and self-esteem so that pupils take pride in their achievements. The teachers' planning shows clear objectives and well-focused teaching points, which support learning in small steps over time.

113. Regular visits from artists in residence enhance the curriculum. Large-scale projects like three-dimensional sculpture, ceramic and textile work widen the pupils' experience. The display of finished work in school provides a stimulating learning environment for all. There are very good cross-curricular links. For instance, in Year 5, music is used creatively to provoke an imaginative response. Links with literacy, especially speaking and listening are well developed. Teachers use subject specific language carefully and accurately as in Year 2 when pupils learn to describe what they see in terms of tone and shading, or in Year 5 when pupils describe the relief, shape and line in the mixed-media work of Ben Nicholson. Studies in art make a particularly good contribution to the pupils' cultural development.
114. Leadership and management of the subject are good, especially in promoting the development of a rich curriculum.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

115. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are above average. There has been considerable improvement, especially in the elements of designing and evaluating, since the last inspection when attainment was unsatisfactory. This is due to the consistently high quality of teaching, which promotes the development of skills progressively over time. The enthusiasm and skill of the curriculum co-ordinator in supporting the staff, and in leading the implementation of a thorough scheme of work based on national guidance is having a very beneficial effect on pupils' attainment. In-service training has contributed significantly to teachers' confidence and expertise.
116. All pupils achieve well. They learn designing and making skills through a series of well-organised topics, which build, step-by-step on what they already know. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They are well supported by both teachers and classroom assistants, and benefit from working in groups containing pupils at higher attainment levels.
117. Pupils in Year 2 were observed in the middle of a topic on wheeled vehicles. They investigate the structure of vehicles with a range of construction toys. They accurately describe what they have learnt in terms of what worked and what did not using words like ideas, design and evaluate, as well as chassis, axle and wheels. They use this information to design and make vehicles of their own. With a little help they measure, cut, assemble and join card and batons. Tools such as vices, saws and scissors are used safely and skilfully. All pupils show imagination and pride in finishing off their products. By the end of Year 2, examples of work show that pupils produce detailed labelled plans of their designs and are skilful in testing their ideas and evaluating their work. In Year 6, pupils were observed at the beginning of a topic about bridges. They consider the relative strengths of different structures and test out their ideas. They are becoming aware of several methods of making their bridge stronger. They use technical vocabulary such as span, load and deflection when feeding back their conclusions to the class. By the end of Year 6, examples of work indicate that pupils are successful in designing a bridge to particular specifications of span, load and cost. They draw detailed, labelled designs and list and cost the resources they will need. They are perceptive in evaluating their own work and suggest changes both to their product and to the process they have used.
118. The quality of teaching was very good in both lessons observed, and a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers planning indicated this is typical. Teachers use their good knowledge and understanding to plan clearly focused work with particular emphasis on the development of skills. Tasks are carefully organised and resources prepared so that pupils concentrate on the specific challenge and work hard. Lessons proceed at a good pace. Pupils have plenty to both do and think about. Teachers have high expectations and encourage pupils to think for themselves and to be independent in solving problems. Class management is very good and pupils respond very quickly to their teachers even when engaged in exciting practical activities.
119. Ongoing assessment of skills is used to monitor pupils' progress over time and plan new work. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social development through the excellent opportunities provided for co-operative work. Literacy skills are also developed well. Particular emphasis is put on

extending vocabulary through the use of appropriate technical language. Pupils develop speaking and listening skills very effectively through frequently explaining what they have done or how things work.

GEOGRAPHY

120. When the school was last inspected pupils were making satisfactory progress and standards were about average. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection because the subject is taught in blocks. There was insufficient evidence to make a fully balanced judgement, but evidence from teachers planning and pupils' individual records indicates above average standards, good teaching and good learning in both the infant and junior age ranges. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are above average.
121. Teachers are careful to make sure that pupils develop geographical skills and knowledge in a progressive way as they move through the school. By the age of seven pupils are able to draw a map showing grid references and plot their journey to school. They are starting to understand how to use "A-Z" type atlases. A visit to the seaside enables pupils to note road signs and road numbers and compare how places are linked to each other. They are able to study first hand natural features such as sand and pebbles and compare them with man made features such as those found in the "Fun Park". Infant teachers make very good use of "Barnaby Bear" to introduce travel throughout the wider world. This globe trotting animal encourages pupils to exercise their natural curiosity and ask questions of the type " I wonder what like is like in ...?". Answers are provided from a good range of books including giant atlases.
122. By the age of eleven pupils have a good understanding of the main characteristics of planet earth and its place in the solar system. Links to books read in English lessons make the topic more meaningful. Pupils are able to interpret maps of various types. They understand scales, co-ordinates and can use keys. They are able to explain weather forecasting maps, and can identify areas of high and low rainfall. Year 6 pupils can discuss the water cycle, and illustrate it with clear diagrams. They can describe the physical features of rivers from their source to the sea, using terms such as estuary and delta. Pupils are familiar with globes, atlases and appropriate computer programmes that enable them to locate places all over the world. They are quickly able to ascertain, for example, that Lusaka is the capital of Zambia, and draw up a list the African countries that are adjacent to Zambia. They are aware of the points of the compass and use them when map reading.
123. Pupils with special educational need work in the same groups as they do in English lessons. This enables work to be accurately targeted to meet their needs and they achieve well.
124. Teachers make good use of a nationally recommended programme of work. They plan carefully to develop both geographical knowledge and skills of geographical enquiry. Planning includes appropriate fieldwork which brings the subject alive for the pupils. Pupils in Years 4,5 and 6 all take part in residential visits in which there are good opportunities to apply geographical skills. Teachers identify assess pupils' attainments in each topic studied and use the results to report to parents at the end of each term. Information and communication technology is increasingly used as a major resource. In addition to accessing data on the Internet or CD-ROMs, pupils use a digital camera to support their record keeping.

HISTORY

125. When the school was last inspected, pupils made satisfactory progress and standards were in line with national expectations. Standards have risen. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards of work are now above average and pupils are achieving well. Pupils with special educational needs receive effective help in lessons and make good progress relative to their previous learning.
126. By the age of seven pupils are developing an understanding of time. They can place events in order and are using words that are associated with the passage of time. Younger pupils identify toys from the past and discuss what it was like to be a child in "olden times". History is brought alive when the teacher arranges for an elderly visitor to talk to the pupils about life and holidays when she was a child and opportunities are taken to dress in the style of Victorians. Pupils are able to place her life on an imaginary time line between the Victorians and now and know that time beyond now is the future. The teacher reminds the children that we learn from others by listening and watching and this is a very good prompt to the pupils. They listen to the visitor carefully asking very relevant questions.

127. By the age of 11, pupils have a good knowledge of different periods of British history. They develop a sense of chronology, periods and events, using a wide variety of ways of representing and interpreting them. Pupils work well together as they did when researching the 1960s. Because the teacher has prepared a very good display of the 1960s which gives a flavour of events, she captures their interest and equips them with ideas and methods for further investigation. Pupils are then able to make good contribution to the brain storming exercise at the end of the lesson. Pupils in Year 5 develop good research skills when searching for information about Ancient Greece. The teacher encourages independent learning, provides good resources and gives good explanations. Good questioning encourages pupils to think for themselves. Pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of when and where World War Two took place. They know the key events and leaders and can discuss in detail, for example, an Anderson Shelter, the A.R.P. and blackout curtains. In group activities pupils use a picture and previous knowledge to present a historical drama of an event in this war. The teacher skilfully leads the group discussions teasing out pupils' ideas. Because of this she is able to ensure that all pupils have an opportunity to contribute to group activity and a good understanding of the event.
128. There are good curriculum links and this enhances the subject by making it more meaningful for the pupils and reinforcing their learning. Pupils in Year 2 produce their own miniature books describing the events of the Great Fire of London. These books provide very good examples of pupils behaving as authors. All contain a dedication, for example " I dedicate this book to my Mum and Dad". They show good understanding of the lay out of books and where to find information including, for example, a glossary and bibliography. Older pupils write thoughtful lines of poetry, for example, 'The Bomb'.
- Face like thunder nearer nearer
Bang it goes. Houses gone!
129. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and is good overall with some very good practice. Lessons are well planned to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. They are varied, interesting and often contain appropriate practical work. Teachers make very good use of visits to local places of interest and museums. They produce very good displays using excellent artefacts, for example a display to introduce World War Two. There are very good relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils are well aware of class rules and this enables staff to make the most of lessons and achieve well. Teachers use a variety of teaching methods including good use of artefacts, opportunities for role play, a hands on approach to the subject, use of videos and visitors to school. All of these approaches to teaching enable pupils with special educational need to take an active part in the subject. They make good progress and achieve well.
130. History makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A good example was when younger pupils were asked to close their eyes and reflect on a visitor's memories of her holidays in the 1940's. Their visit to Llandudno, which just happened to coincide with the shooting of a Victorian drama by the BBC, allowed them to see at first hand the dress of Victorians set against the background of a Victorian seaside town,

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

131. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Standards at the age of seven were broadly in line and standards by the age of 11 were below national expectations. Standards of work are now above average overall, and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well. This is because the school gave high priority to improving resources and the skills of both teachers and pupils. All classes now have access to at least one multi-media computer and there are plans to increase this substantially in the near future. Teachers' expertise has greatly increased through training and support from the subject co-ordinator.
132. By the age of seven standards are above those found nationally. Pupils have developed good skills, particularly in word processing, and they explain their work well. In a class lesson they use the word processor to edit a previous letter that had been sent home. This letter was to be sent to parents to inform them of a proposed visit to Llandudno. With the help of a governor of the school they use a digital camera to capture the mood of despair in a dance lesson. They know how to research the Internet and use this to tour Bodellwydden Castle. Using colour they complete a pie chart showing favourite sandwich fillings and extend this to a vertical block graph. There are good examples of the use of other technical equipment for example the use of the laminator to aid presentation and the microwave when making porridge. Those pupils who have electronic mail facilities at home send letters and parents reply. All children have their own electronic mail address. During the inspection an activity of great excitement was the scanning into the computer and printing of the pupils' family

photographs from the '70s. In their topic work on farming the pupils successfully programmed the Roamer (an electrically driven, steerable model vehicle) to follow a given route.

133. By the age of 11 pupils are more sophisticated in their use of information communication technology. They can use the facilities of word processing programs to make presentations on topics. The Year 6 Recycling Officers use their computer skills to organise a competition. Pupils know how to alter the size, type and colour of the font to make, for example, labels and to improve the presentation of their work. They import pictures into their work. Pupils understand the use of the tool bar and in topic work pupils can produce a simple spreadsheet and block graphs. They access the Web to find information about rivers in the Congo.
134. Some direct teaching was seen during the inspection, but substantial evidence was obtained from an examination of teachers' planning and pupils' previously completed work. Inspectors judged that the overall quality of teaching was good, and that it enabled pupils at all levels of prior attainment to achieve well. Good quality learning resulted from effective planning and preparation which provided appropriate challenges for all pupils. Teachers use demonstrations well, and take care to explain exactly what they require pupils to do. Teachers work very effectively with classroom assistants and other additional helpers in the classroom. Relationships are very good and pupils work co-operatively and share resources well when required. Adults interact well with pupils enabling them to gain confidence as they develop their skills. There are very good links with other subjects and there is good coverage of all areas of learning. They make good use of national guidance to plan the curriculum.
135. Good management of the subject has been successful in raising standards, particularly through staff training. There are good plans for further development of the subject.

MUSIC

136. Standards attained at the end of both the infant and junior age ranges are above average. Seven year olds sing tunefully with a good sense of rhythm, and are familiar with a wide range of hymns and songs, some from different times and places. They know about most common instruments and the sounds they produce, and have worked with a range of percussion instruments to accompany singing and to create their own compositions. Pupils are able to keep a record of their compositions using non-standard notation. An example observed during the inspection involved Year 1 pupils composing music to suggest "A Jungle Scene". Infant pupils listen to, discuss and compare interesting pieces of music. After hearing "Daybreak" by Ravel, one Year 2 pupil wrote "I could almost see the sun coming up. The calm and peaceful music made me happy".
137. In the junior age range pupils have many opportunities to display their above average performance skills. The school choir takes part in several concerts and musical productions each year, and sings Christmas Carols at the Ellesmere Port boat museum. There are two school recorder groups, members of which provide music at events such as the Harvest Festival. All pupils can take part in an annual "Talent Evening", and individual classes provide musical entertainment for parents at the monthly coffee afternoons organised by the school. Composing activities continue in music lessons, with junior pupils using a wider range of instruments than infants. By the end of Year 6 many pupils read music and can document their compositions in formal notation. When listening to the "Carnival of the Animals" (Saint-Saens) pupils in Years 5 and 6 can identify most of the instruments being used, make good suggestions about each of the animals represented, and describe the feelings that the music engenders.
138. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in music. They enjoy the subject and can be trusted to use expensive instruments with care. Because of the good teaching they receive they are interested and keen to learn. Not only do music lessons make the obvious contribution to pupils' cultural development, but they also enhance social development by providing many opportunities for co-operative activities.
139. Teaching is good or better in both the infant and junior age ranges. Lessons are carefully planned and the school's stock of good resources well organised. The school has adopted a very good scheme of work which includes a wide range of recorded music. This enables the subject to be taught effectively by all teachers, whether or not they have musical expertise. Because of good relationships pupils enjoy with teachers discipline is never a problem. Pupils of all ages can be trusted to treat musical instruments with care, and follow instructions conscientiously.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

140. As at the time of the previous inspection, overall standards at seven and eleven years are similar to those found in most schools. Overall standards continue to be about average, although in swimming, pupils achieve very well and standards are above average by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6. Almost all pupils in Year 6 attain the expected standards, and some are already working at higher levels. In games and in dance, pupils achieve well in lessons and attain skills progressively as they move through the school. All pupils are included in the full curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress alongside their peers. No lessons were seen in gymnastics during the inspection, but discussions with staff and pupils indicate that standards are similar to those in dance and games.
141. In all classes, pupils are becoming increasingly aware of the effect of exercise on the body, and of the place of exercise in a healthy lifestyle. They know about safety aspects in warming up and cooling down. Pupils in Year 1 are making sound progress in learning games skills. They concentrate to throw a beanbag into a hoop and practise to improve their aim. The majority have not yet grasped the concept of working together in teams. In Year 4, pupils co-operate well in two's and three's to practise throwing and passing skills. They pass and receive a ball showing anticipation of speed and position. They are beginning to use their skills with control and co-ordination in simple group games. They have not yet learnt to employ tactics in their game. Pupils particularly enjoy dance lessons and respond enthusiastically to rhythm. They co-operate very successfully to work in small groups. In Year 2, pupils remember and repeat traditional dance patterns to music. They control their bodies and co-ordinate their movement. In groups, they work hard to compose simple dances with three sequences of movement and are confident to perform for others. They do not evaluate their own or other's work. In Year 6, pupils use specific dance techniques in their own composition. They co-operate well moving alone or in unison whilst varying speed, height and direction to create an interesting sequence. They move expressively with good control. They are able to say what they liked about the performance of others.
142. The overall quality of teaching is good in both the junior and infant age ranges, with examples of very good teaching. All teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of the subject, which they use to plan clearly focused lessons with the emphasis on the development of skills. Pupils are well managed and groups organised effectively so that all co-operate and concentrate on the tasks in hand. Resources are appropriately prepared and no time is wasted. Most lessons proceed at a good pace. In the very good lessons, the teachers' lively and enthusiastic approach and high expectations establish a purposeful working atmosphere where learning is fun. Clear objectives are shared with the pupils at the outset and checked at the end. Consequently pupils know how to improve their work and are aware of their own learning. Where lessons are a little less successful instructions are not always clear enough to enable pupils to respond immediately.
143. The curriculum is enhanced for older pupils by extracurricular activities in football and netball and the opportunity to join in local competitions. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection with the introduction of a scheme of work, which promotes step-by-step development of skills in all attainment targets over time. Good opportunities for co-operating and collaborating with others support social development.