

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SHERDLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Sutton, St Helens

LEA area: St Helens

Unique reference number: 104769

Headteacher: Mr G W Lomax

Reporting inspector: Jean-Pierre Kirkland  
4483

Dates of inspection: May 21<sup>st</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> 2001

Inspection number: 193623

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Mill Lane Sutton St Helens
Postcode:	WA9 4HA
Telephone number:	01744 813930
Fax number:	-
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs L Burgess
Date of previous inspection:	January 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
4483	Jean-Pierre Kirkland	Registered inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language Information and communication technology Music	What sort of school it is The school's results and pupils' achievements How well pupils are taught How well the school is led and managed Key issues for action
9952	Lillian Brock	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents
30853	Susan Betts	Team inspector	English Religious education	How good the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils are
18027	Sheila Mawer	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History	
18143	Bernice Magson	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art and design Design and technology	
4350	Clive Whittington	Team inspector	Science Physical education	
8837	Joyce Clarke	Team inspector	Special educational needs support	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Sherdley Primary School has 405 pupils on roll, making it much larger than most primary schools. The school is subject to small fluctuations in its numbers, but over time, the numbers on roll have generally remained steady. However, the school has a small, yet significant, number of pupils entering or leaving at times other than the normal ones for beginning education or leaving. The school has a nursery with 50 children currently attending part time. The school is located to the south east of St Helens town centre and serves an area which is a mixture of owner occupied housing and local authority and other housing for rent. Attainment on entry to the school is below average overall. A majority of the pupils come from white family backgrounds, with about three per cent from Black and Asian ethnic groups. Two pupils have English as an additional language, with one of these at an early stage of language development. Almost 14 per cent of the pupils attending the school are entitled to free school meals, a figure somewhat below the national average. Just under seven per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is well below the national average. However, over half of these pupils are receiving help from outside specialists, which is a high proportion. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is broadly similar to the national average.

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

Sherdley Primary is a good school. Standards are above average for pupils at age seven, and are improving from the well below average national test results last year to average levels by age 11 in English, mathematics and science. Through consistently good teaching, pupils are now making good progress overall from the nursery through to age 11, although progress has been satisfactory during the past two years. The work of the school is guided by a broad and balanced curriculum, with good levels of leadership and management, and with broadly average costs per pupil, the school provides good value for money.

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

- Ensures that overall, pupils make good progress throughout the school, resulting in above average standards in English, mathematics and science by age seven, and improving standards which are close to the national average by age 11;
- Provides consistently good teaching and learning opportunities throughout the school by building well on pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to work;
- Achieves above average standards in music throughout the school;
- Ensures children make a good start to their learning through good provision in the Foundation Stage;
- Provides good leadership and secure management from the headteacher, senior staff and governors;
- Encourages and succeeds in involving parents in the life of the school, and in children's learning.

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

- The use of assessment information to drive up standards,
- The progress and standards of higher attaining pupils;
- The use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning;
- The role of some coordinators so that learning and standards in their subjects are improved, and especially in geography;
- The provision made for the cultural development of pupils.

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

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

There has been a satisfactory rate of improvement since the school was previously inspected in 1997. Schemes of work have been produced and these are currently under review to take account of recent national changes. The school improvement plan is now of good quality and covers an appropriate range of priorities over time. Costings are included where known. Governors have a

more detailed knowledge of the work of the school and many are linked in to specific curriculum areas and special educational needs. The school has worked hard to encourage better performances and learning from higher attaining pupils, but this has not been entirely successful as yet, and more needs to be done, using assessment information on pupils more effectively. The role of the senior management team in monitoring standards, curriculum and teaching is now clear and carried out effectively and efficiently. Not all coordinators have yet developed their roles sufficiently well to ensure that teaching and learning are monitored effectively in their own subject areas. Standards for older pupils fell for a while in the national tests, but inspectors found these to be rising again. Provision in information and communication technology has improved significantly, and standards in music are above average throughout the school. There has been an improvement in the Foundation Stage provision since the previous inspection. The school is well placed to make further improvements.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	B	C	E	E
mathematics	B	C	E	E
science	B	C	E	E

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

The school has suffered from declining results in national tests during the past three years for pupils aged eleven. Results last year were well below average nationally, as well as for similar schools. Despite additional classes and an additional teacher for Year 6 the previous year, results overall have worsened. However, some targeted areas, such as boys' writing and spelling have improved during this period. When these results are compared to the results the same group of pupils obtained in the 1996 tests when they were seven years old, they have made satisfactory progress overall. Inspectors found standards for the current group of Year 6 pupils to be in line with national averages in English, mathematics and science, which is a significant improvement on the tests last year. Pupils' work across the junior section of the school shows good progress being made overall. However, inspectors judged that higher attaining pupils did not make as much progress as they could if they were given more freedom to explore their own creativity and undertake more sophisticated research work. By the end of Year 6, standards are close to national averages in most other subjects. In geography, standards are below average, due largely to the lack of development of map work skills in the subject. In music, which is a strength, standards are above average throughout the school. Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of musical terms, and much of the singing reaches a high standard. The school is setting realistic targets in English and mathematics, which were reached last year and have been set higher for the current year.

Children enter the nursery with levels that are below average overall. Good progress is made throughout the Foundation Stage, so that when pupils start the National Curriculum, their standards are average. The good progress made continues up to the age of seven. Pupils reach standards at that age that are above average in national tests in English and mathematics and teacher assessment in science, and inspectors confirm these results. Pupils' standards are also above average when compared to similar schools. Work shows a good rate of progression over time. Pupils' work in all other subjects is close to national averages by seven years old.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; pupils like coming to school, they settle down quickly to work in lessons and this improves their progress well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good; this is a harmonious community where all pupils get on well with one another.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is satisfactory. There is sometimes a reluctance by teachers to give pupils the freedom to explore their own ideas and creativity. Relationships are very good throughout the school and are a strength.
Attendance	Satisfactory and better than at the last inspection – attendance is close to the national average. There is no unauthorised absence. Punctuality is good.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Teaching is good overall. During the inspection, 14 per cent was judged as very good or better, 59 per cent was judged as good and 26 per cent was judged as satisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall, but with some examples of very good practice. Children benefit from a wide range of good opportunities to learn by doing and exploring, with good guidance from staff. In the rest of the school, teaching is good, with some very good teaching on occasions. The very good teaching incorporates clear learning objectives for the pupils, reviews them at the end, and sets a good steady pace to learning. Very good teaching builds successfully on prior learning experiences, so that planning has used assessment information effectively. In music, teachers ensure pupils sing to a good enough standard in two parts, before they progress on to three or four parts, for example. Good teaching occurs in most lessons, and especially in numeracy and literacy. Teachers have become confident with newer methods and give pupils time to explore ideas, debate issues and review what they have learnt at the end. Numeracy lessons begin with snappy mental sessions, which ensure that pupils are on their toes when it comes to the second section of problem solving tasks. Learning improves as a result. Pupils are taught basic skills of reading, writing and listening well in all areas of the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets in the lessons that focus on those areas, such as mathematics and English lessons. Their individual education plans are clear and ensure good progression is accomplished in learning. Pupils with English as an additional language make equally good progress. Higher attaining pupils are not always given enough opportunities to explore their own creativity and ideas, and their progress is not as good as it might be.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	There is a good well-balanced curriculum for the Foundation Stage, ensuring a good start is made to pupils' education. The curriculum in the rest of the school is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is generally good. Pupils have good quality targets to aim for, and these are reviewed regularly.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory overall for the few pupils who are identified.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. Provision for moral development is very good and a significant strength. Provision for cultural development is unsatisfactory, as there is insufficient emphasis placed on pupils' learning and developing a strong enough understanding of their own culture and the cultures of others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are secure and well cared for. The use of assessment to help pupils make future progress in their learning is unsatisfactory and needs further development.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Good. The school tries hard to ensure parents are kept fully informed and involved, and parents make a useful contribution to the life of the school through the parents' association and by supporting learning in classrooms and at home.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good purpose and direction for the work of the school with effective leadership and management at senior level; some aspects of subject coordination are in need of further development.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good overall; the governors have a good understanding of their roles, have undertaken recent and appropriate training, and they fulfil their statutory duties effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory, although better use needs to be made of assessment information and data when setting targets and seeking ways of improving standards.
The strategic use of resources	There is a good match of teachers and support staff to deliver the National Curriculum, with adequate resources and accommodation overall. Resources are well used, including computers. In its spending decisions, the school seeks to ensure that it gets good value for money.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• children like coming to school</li> <li>• children make good progress</li> <li>• behaviour, attitudes and values are all good, some excellent, especially attitudes and values</li> <li>• teaching is good; a lot of teachers have been here a long time</li> <li>• the school is approachable</li> <li>• staff have high expectations of pupils</li> <li>• the school is well led and managed</li> <li>• children are enabled to become mature and responsible</li> <li>• the curriculum is rich and interesting</li> <li>• it is an excellent school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more information in advance on what is going to be taught</li> <li>• better extra-curricular opportunities, especially for younger pupils</li> <li>• better information on progress in reports.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with a majority of the positive comments parents have made. Children are now making good progress, much of this due to the literacy and numeracy strategies, and to the improved facilities for information and communication technology. This is now a good school. Inspectors agree that more information on the curriculum would be helpful to parents in helping them give additional support to their children. Inspectors felt that the overall quality and range of extra-curricular activities were good and that information on pupils' reports regarding progress was at least satisfactory.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

- 1 At the age of 11, inspectors found standards in English, mathematics and science in line with national averages. This is a significant improvement since the publication of the latest national tests for the Year 2000, when results were well below average in all three subjects. During the past three years, standards have been declining, despite a large number of school initiatives to prevent this from happening. Analysis of the test results for the Year 2000 pupils when they were in Year 2 in 1996 showed that this group of pupils had made at least satisfactory progress during the four years in the juniors. However, the school has not been increasing, to any great degree, the attainment of pupils at the higher levels. Because the proportion of Level 5 pupils is well below the national picture, results using a point score calculation are depressed. This year, the Year 6 pupils have made better progress, and although there is still an insufficient proportion attaining the higher level, inspectors found more pupils reaching the expected Level 4, and therefore improvements are taking place.
- 2 The last set of results for seven year olds showed above average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, with a similar situation in the teacher based science assessments. Inspectors confirm this picture. In all other subjects for pupils aged seven, attainment reaches expected levels, except for music, where attainment is above average. The average and above average levels for seven year olds represents good progress since starting the National Curriculum.
- 3 Children enter the Foundation Stage with levels that are below expectations for their age overall. Children have below average skills in language and literacy, especially in speaking, in personal, social and emotional development and in knowledge and understanding of the world. They make good progress in all areas of learning, so that when they reach the end of the reception classes, they have reached average levels and are ready to start the National Curriculum. A significant minority reaches this point earlier.
- 4 The standards of work currently reached by 11 year old pupils in English, mathematics and science are close to national averages. Inspectors found reading had developed well for older pupils, all of whom choose their own books by Year 6, and read fluently, with interest and expression. Writing is imaginative and clear to the general reader. Older pupils listen well to teachers and their friends in all lessons, and in assemblies. In mathematics, pupils' mental arithmetic is enhanced through continual practice at the start of each lesson, and pupils have a good grasp of measurement. In science, pupils have a good understanding of how to investigate through experiments, and this strength reported on during the previous inspection has been sustained.
- 5 Standards of work for seven year olds are generally above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. In English, inspectors found pupils to be enthusiastic readers. Written work shows good use of punctuation and sentence construction. Pupils listen well to stories, or in assemblies, for example. In mathematics, pupils are using different strategies for solving problems, helping them to gain a greater understanding of number patterns and sequences. In science, pupils begin to develop an understanding of how to research on their own, and to work well in an independent fashion.
- 6 Progress is good in English up to the age of seven. In the junior section of the school, progress is also good, but has not yet resulted in improved results in the national tests. This is mainly because the older pupils have not had the benefit of the good teaching consistently since they took their tests at age seven. The literacy hour has begun to raise standards throughout the school, and the progress is most noticeable for the pupils who have had the greatest length of time learning in the new way. In mathematics, there is equally good progress throughout the school, due largely to the introduction of the numeracy strategy. Mental work has speeded up, and pupils learn 'connections' between numbers, thereby consolidating their understanding of patterns. The progress made by pupils in science is good throughout the school. Pupils

develop good levels of investigative skills over time, they learn the properties of a fair test, and they use technical language well.

- 7 Standards in other subjects are in line with national averages by age seven, except in music, where they are above. By age 11, standards are in line for the most part with national averages, except in geography, where they are below, and in music where they are above. In music, the good standards are the result of good teaching and the development throughout the school of a positive culture of music appreciation. Performances in singing and composing are above average, as is, for example, pupils' knowledge of musical terminology and great composers. The progress made by pupils in developing musical skills is good in all classes. In geography, 11 year olds do not have sufficiently well developed skills in map-work, and progress over time in this subject is unsatisfactory.
- 8 Pupils make good progress in lessons throughout the school in physical education. This is due to the good teaching of basic skills, such as movement and control, as well as to the variety of activities offered to pupils, thereby enhancing the rate of learning.
- 9 There are very few pupils in the school from ethnic minority backgrounds. Most have good levels of language development similar to their friends. Those who need additional support receive this from teachers and assistants as necessary, and their progress is as good as their class friends. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress over time. Some receive additional help from visiting specialists, who use the information from assessments very effectively in planning the small steps in learning. In main classes, because teachers and other staff know their pupils so well, work is provided at an appropriate level, so pupils are challenged well and encouraged to make progress. This is particularly effective in the questioning techniques used by most teachers in literacy and numeracy lessons.
- 10 Occasionally, test results reveal significant differences between the achievements of boys and girls. This was the case two years ago in English, and in writing in particular, where boys did not perform as well as girls. The school immediately addressed this issue by focusing on improvements through additional support, and the problem has been overcome to a considerable extent. In other subjects, staff keep an eye on any gender variations, but nothing significant is currently causing concern.
- 11 Targets for improvement in pupil performance are relatively new to the school. They are now set in English and mathematics, are realistic, and show a determination to improve over time. Last year's targets were achieved and inspectors confirm that this year's targets are likely to be realised. Tracking of the performance of pupils across the years is also now beginning to be examined by staff, but this is at an early stage of development and the use of assessment knowledge to drive this initiative is insufficiently developed.

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

- 12 Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and this is a significant strength as well as an improvement since the previous inspection. The good behaviour noted at that time has been maintained. There is a happy atmosphere in school and this has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to school life and to their learning. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire feel that behaviour is good and that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. Parents say that pupils show respect for one another and for their teachers.
- 13 Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning; they work hard and show good levels of personal motivation to improve their work, which is a further strength. This makes a significant contribution to their success and to the progress they make. For example, in a Year 4 science lesson, pupils persevered in their investigations when measuring pulse rate and relating it to heart beat. As a result, they made good progress and were able to enter their findings on a bar chart. Children in the nursery and reception classes have very good attitudes to their work. The supportive and encouraging atmosphere helps them to settle and learn quickly. They respond well to the adults who work with them and enjoy exploring new learning. Children in a reception class displayed a mature attitude when offering ideas on how to care for the environment.

- 14 Pupils' behaviour is good and is fostered through the school's consistent expectations and its emphasis on positive praise. In lessons, most pupils behave well all of the time, although there are isolated examples of pupils attempting to distract others. Behaviour of children in the Foundation Stage is very good. They are attentive, sit still and follow instructions very well. The behaviour of Year 3 pupils was very good when they entered the world of the Vikings by exploring the way they communicated in writing. They made good progress and enjoyed writing their names in "Runes". Ideas of right and wrong are established very early for children in the foundation years. They have a clear understanding of what is acceptable behaviour and most comply with the standards set. Around the school, pupils are clear about the expected standards of behaviour and move sensibly around the building. During a discussion with pupils from Year 2, they confirmed that pupils are friendly and polite to each other and that the headteacher would not allow bullying. In the playground, their play is happy and lively and no incidents of bullying or unpleasant behaviour were observed during the inspection. There has been one fixed-period exclusion in the year prior to the inspection.
- 15 The school is a harmonious community and relationships within it are very good. This is a further strength. Pupils and staff all work together in a caring atmosphere and this raises the quality of pupils' learning and the quality of the life of the school. The personal development of pupils is satisfactory overall but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to work independently in the classroom. There are some opportunities for pupils to accept responsibility for tasks around the school but there are no regular procedures for taking pupils' views into account. A renewed focus on such opportunities is a feature of the personal, social and health education programme. Overall, pupils are enthusiastic about school life and those in Year 6 confirmed that they felt well prepared for the transfer to high school.
- 16 Attendance at the school has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory and in line with the national trend. There is no unauthorised absence and much of the authorised absence is due to parents taking children on holiday in term time. During the autumn term, 81 pupils achieved 100 per cent attendance. Most pupils arrive at school on time, parents confirm that their children like school and wish to attend regularly.

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

- 17 Teaching is good overall throughout the school and a strength in helping to raise standards and to improve progress. During the inspection overall, 14 per cent of teaching was judged as very good or better, 59 per cent was judged as good and 26 per cent was judged as satisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, especially in the elimination of all unsatisfactory practice and in increasing the proportion of very good teaching.
- 18 Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall, but with some examples of very good practice. The planning and methods employed by staff are good in all classes. In a language based reception session, for example, the teacher planned well to provide experiences aimed at raising understanding, with all levels of ability catered for in the planning and questioning. In the nursery, staff ensure children learn in small steps, especially when drawing or painting, and children are given time to think about what they have produced and to assess its quality. Children learn well as a result of the good opportunities provided for 'doing' and exploring, with good guidance from staff. Very good and sometimes excellent practice incorporates a wide range of skills development during the lesson, while catering for all pupils equally well. An outstandingly good example of this was in the reception class when numeracy skills were being developed using spots on a ladybird and the shape of a butterfly. Through very skilled questioning and using the resources effectively, the teaching focused on pupils' learning how to count up to 20, and developed their understanding of symmetry through the shape of the butterfly. The teaching in the Foundation Stage helps pupils to learn basic skills well, and to make good progress.
- 19 In the rest of the school, teaching is good. There are examples of very good teaching on occasions. The very good teaching incorporates clear learning objectives for the pupils, reviews them at the end, and sets a good steady pace to learning. This happens in many mathematics

lessons, when the new skills for learning are clearly displayed or shared at the outset of the lesson with the whole class. Very good teaching builds successfully on prior learning experiences, so that planning has used assessment information effectively. This happens in music, for example, when teachers ensure pupils sing to a high enough standard in two parts before they progress on to three or four parts. In art and design in Year 4, pupils benefit from good specialist advice from the teacher, increasing their progress well, and equipping them with good evaluative powers, which they employ successfully at the end of the lesson when reviewing their work.

- 20 Good teaching occurs in most numeracy and literacy lessons. Teachers have become confident with newer methods and give pupils time to explore ideas, debate issues and review what they have learnt at the end. Numeracy lessons begin with snappy mental sessions. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils well, as in Year 2 opening session, to encourage all to take part, while recognising that all pupils have not yet grasped every aspect of the principle being taught. The good pace of the mental sessions ensure that pupils are on their toes when it comes to the second section of problem solving tasks and the rate of learning improves as a result. In English lessons, pupils benefit greatly from the improved skills of teachers in helping them learn the basic skills of reading, writing and listening. In Year 5, for example, the teacher's insistence on using the word 'I' to personalise a story, rather than 'you', resulted in pupils using their own imaginations more and developing their creative writing well.
- 21 Basic skills are taught well in the majority of lessons. Despite the very recent acquisition of the information and communication technology suite, teachers are focusing on developing skills of mouse control and more effective use of the keyboard, while introducing more complex programs using databases and spreadsheets. Younger pupils learn control appropriately though using a programmable robot. In science, teachers focus well on investigative work, allowing pupils the freedom to explore their creativity and own ideas. This aspect, however, does not extend to many other lessons, and is one of the main reasons why higher attaining pupils are not making as much progress as they might. While teachers are very conscious of the need to raise standards, and the school has provided several new initiatives in this field, the one neglected area is in independence and freedom of thought. Often, and sometimes appropriately, staff provide higher attaining pupils with additional work. Usually, however, this is a repeat of work they have already understood, but using different and new examples. This consolidates learning effectively, but does not move it on to new levels. In those lessons where teachers allow time for reflection, thinking, creativity and free expression, higher attaining pupils in particular benefit greatly and make much better progress. Science accomplishes this to a certain extent, as does music teaching. In music lessons, for example, pupils are asked to describe the feelings they experience when listening to great music, and to express this when they compose. Pupils learn to become creative and they generate new ideas. In lessons where opinions and attitudes are valued, such as in a Year 3 personal, social and health education lesson, or Year 6 English when planning a leaflet, learning is enhanced and progress improves as pupils develop imagination and creativity well.
- 22 Teachers challenge their pupils appropriately, either in written tasks, or through questioning. The basic needs of all pupils are met in this respect. Teachers manage their pupils well, and gain interest and enthusiasm for learning in lessons. This was effective in raising the rate of learning in a Year 6 geography lesson on grid references, particularly important since mapping skills are a relative weakness in this subject. Support assistants are used effectively in lessons, have clear roles and fulfil them well. This is particularly effective in the Foundation Stage, where many different groups of pupils are engaged in a wide range of activities, and support is essential.
- 23 Overall, marking of pupils' work is satisfactory. However, there is too much variation throughout the school. Some work is corrected effectively, with good pointers on how to improve. In other cases, technical words, which have been wrongly spelt, are left uncorrected, and this is not helpful in raising standards. Levels of homework are generally appropriate, and the amount and quality set as pupils reach upper juniors are good, and help prepare pupils well for their transfer to the high school.

- 24 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets in the lessons that focus on those areas, such as mathematics and English lessons. Their individual education plans are clear and ensure good progression is accomplished in learning. The targets in the individual education plans are good, and helpful in ensuring and measuring progress. However, the review in the next individual education plan does not state clearly how the previous objective was achieved, an outcome which is useful when planning further development. Pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress as their needs are met successfully by teachers who support them in lessons as and when appropriate. Most of these pupils are at a stage of language development where they need no additional support or help. Those who do are known well by staff, who ensure that they get the support they need whenever appropriate.

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

- 25 The school provides its pupils with a balanced, broadly based and relevant curriculum. It makes effective provision for the pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development, which gives them a firm foundation for the next stage of education. The school teaches all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, and the time allocated for teaching different subjects is adequate. Sex education, health education and drug awareness are taught through personal, social and health education lessons. The school provides regular homework to extend and develop pupils' learning. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good. It prepares them well for starting the National Curriculum. Overall, statutory requirements are met in full and findings are similar to those of the previous inspection.
- 26 The school is successfully implementing the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy. This is having a significant and positive impact on the improving the standards that the pupils achieve. The school is ensuring the step by step development of learning in English, mathematics and science through its systems for curriculum planning. This includes long, medium and short term planning.
- 27 There is adequate provision for pupils on the register of special educational needs. By following the policy for special educational needs, the school ensures that these pupils enjoy the whole range of educational experiences in the curriculum. Appropriate systems are in place for the identification of their special needs and for the formation of their individual education plans overall.
- 28 There is a detailed development plan, which the school has produced in response to a key issue from the previous inspection in 1997. The review of Curriculum 2000 is a priority for the school. Consequently, the policies and schemes of work for English, mathematics and science, as well for information and communication technology have been updated recently. These provide effective guidance, ensure continuity and progression and build effectively on prior learning. Younger pupils are actively involved in a Literacy Intervention Scheme in order to raise standards of reading and writing. Policies for foundation subjects are yet to be reviewed. New schemes of work in these subjects are being tried out this year, and any issues arising will be addressed as the development programme progresses. There are coordinators for all subjects, although some are more effective in carrying out their roles than others.
- 29 There are a number of educational visits to enrich pupils' experiences and overall extra-curricular provision is good. These are linked well to the work pupils are doing at the time. Recent visits include a visit to a Synagogue in Manchester (religious education), a day at 'Eureka' and a dance and drama production on the theme of sound (science) and a visit to Liverpool Museum (reception children). The junior choir has sung Easter hymns in an elderly people's home and has performed at other festivals in the church and in the town. The school also welcomes visitors from the community. For example, an officer from St. Helens Police Force worked with Year 5 to develop their drug awareness. A poet has held workshops for two days in Year 6 to explore and encourage poetry writing. Pupils also have opportunities to join a variety of clubs held at lunch-times and after school, such as rounders, cricket, tag rugby, recorders, percussion and choir.



- 30 Since September 2000, a new computer suite has been in use in school. This has allowed more pupils to have planned, regular, access to information and communication technology to enhance their learning across the curriculum.
- 31 There is a satisfactory policy on equal opportunities with appropriate implementation. The school ensures that all groups of pupils have equal access to the curriculum.
- 32 The school bases the curriculum for religious education on the locally agreed syllabus. The religious education curriculum is satisfactory, though the teaching of faiths other than Christianity is in its early stages. The time allowed for religious education over the whole year is adequate and is in line with the time recommended by the syllabus, but not all year groups have lessons in this subject continuously. For example, Year 6 are taught religious education alternately with personal and social education; Year 3 have one half term when religious education is not taught. This causes some disruption to the pattern of learning.
- 33 There is satisfactory provision overall for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and collective worship meets statutory requirements. Pupils are encouraged to work together in harmony and learn to respect and be sensitive to the needs of the whole school community.
- 34 The provision noted at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained. Some examples of spiritual development were seen in assemblies but opportunities to promote spirituality are not systematically built into the curriculum. Nursery children gasped with delight and wonder as they watched feathers float down during a lesson promoting the senses. In religious education, the use of stories makes a strong contribution to pupils' understanding of feelings such as forgiveness and reconciliation. In a junior assembly, pupils closed their eyes and imagined what it was like to be blind as the teacher told them a story about a blind man climbing a mountain and still "seeing" a beautiful view. Some lessons provide pupils with the time and opportunities to reflect on the wonders of life cycles for example when they study the growth of tadpoles into frogs but these are not planned for in a systematic way. The provision for music is strong in the school and pupils achieve above average standards as seen when older pupils joined in a hymn singing lesson with gusto.
- 35 Provision for pupils' moral development is very good and a great strength. Lessons promoting this begin in the nursery and are used as a basis for pupils to recognise the importance of moral choices. The choice between right and wrong is freely discussed during lessons and assemblies. Through the personal, social and health education programme, pupils reflect on personal qualities such as tolerance, kindness and sensitivity to others' needs and rights. All staff lead by example, and provide a clear moral code as a basis for behaviour. Honesty, fairness and respect for truth and justice are values that form a natural part of school life.
- 36 The social development of pupils is good and a further strength. There are many opportunities for pupils to work together within lessons and pupils respond well to these. This successfully promotes mature relationships and reinforces the view of parents that this is a "family" school. Social interaction outside lessons is good. Pupils share equipment well and boys and girls work and play well together. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are fully included in the life of the school and as a result, they form friendships and make good progress. Educational visits are a strong feature of pupils' social development and members of the public praise the children for their good behaviour.
- 37 The provision for pupils' cultural development is unsatisfactory. As noted at the time of the previous inspection, the provision for pupils to consider the feelings, values and beliefs of people from a range of cultures needs improving. Pupils study Judaism and Islam in religious education and have visited a synagogue. These opportunities have not been extended effectively to include more visits to places of worship other than those of the Christian faith. Overall, the curriculum does not include a richness and celebration of a wide range of cultures. Pupils study some aspects of their local community, for example when pupils visited Sutton Dam, Jodrell Bank and The World of Glass but these opportunities have not been extended to improve pupils' knowledge of the culture of their local area in depth. Visitors to school have

included a poet, musicians, theatre companies and visiting artists, all these opportunities enhancing pupils' cultural development.

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

- 38 The procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' attendance and behaviour are good and there are good procedures for dealing with any incidents of bullying. These are strengths of the school. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are also good. Parents appreciate the pastoral care provided for their children. Most parents feel that the headteacher and staff are approachable and are sensitive to concerns about their children's progress or the need for additional support. They are pleased with the way that the school rewards positive attitudes. These good features have been maintained since the previous inspection. The procedures for monitoring academic progress are unsatisfactory as noted at the time of the previous inspection.
- 39 All staff, including those who provide additional support, have a good awareness of pupils who may be experiencing difficulties or whose welfare is giving cause for concern. Child protection procedures are good and there are clear guidelines for reporting any concerns. Children are well cared for in the Foundation Stage.
- 40 The school is aware of the increasing tendency for pupils to have holidays in term time and does its best to encourage parents to avoid this. There is good support from the educational welfare service.
- 41 The school has good procedures for the promotion of pupils' behaviour and for dealing with unsatisfactory behaviour. All staff have clear expectations of pupils' behaviour and are consistent in their approach to any lapses. Pupils are clear that the headteacher and staff will deal very quickly with any worries that they may have about unkind behaviour or bullying. The activities planned for pupils with special educational needs are well matched to their needs and reflect their individual education plans. There is insufficient detail on the outcome of reviews, however, included in the following stage when setting new targets. The procedures for monitoring personal development are satisfactory. The personal, social and health education programme is sensitive to the needs of all age groups and caters well for the developing maturity of children as they move through school. The coordinator is currently developing and extending the programme to include aspects of citizenship. A Year 6 lesson on personal hygiene showed pupils analysing and evaluating a range of hygiene products. This was a good introduction to the module on caring for the body including sex education.
- 42 The school meets statutory requirements for providing a safe, clean place for pupils and adults to work in. Pupils confirm that they feel safe and secure. The school has clear health and safety procedures, supported by a good health and safety policy and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Actual or potential hazards are reported and dealt with quickly as when the school responded to a request from a parent to keep windows closed when children move along the external paths of the school. The caretaker, the headteacher and members of the governing body regularly monitor all aspects of health and safety and risk assessments are undertaken although there is no formal way of recording the results. Medical needs are planned for and while there is only one fully qualified first aider, all members of staff have received emergency first aid training.
- 43 The procedures for assessing pupils' academic attainment and progress are satisfactory overall. National testing of pupils takes place at ages seven and 11, and there is a baseline test for children when they enter the Foundation Stage of education in the reception class. For the youngest children assessment of their progress is regular and focused, and gives a good indication of their achievements towards the Early Learning Goals. In the infants and juniors, assessments of progress in literacy have been introduced in each year group and records are maintained to plot progress in reading and spelling. A home school diary is available for pupils to share reading with parents, although the systems are inconsistent between classes and have limited use as a tool for marking. Pupils are tested in other subjects using a range of commercial and school based tests, but there has been little formalised analysis of results and

insufficient detail to enable teachers to plan for pupils' continuous progress. Target setting in classes is inconsistent and very few teachers negotiate targets for improvement with individual pupils. Marking is also varied without sufficient attention to the criteria to be used in assessing pupils' work. As a result there is little useful targeted help provided in the marking of pupils' books. The coordinator has developed an assessment policy for the school. With the help of the local authority, the senior management team for the school has begun to analyse the results of pupils at seven and 11 years of age to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and learning in school. It is too early yet to judge the effectiveness of this more detailed examination of the progress of pupils.

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

- 44 The good support of parents has been maintained since the previous inspection and the information that they receive has been improved so that this feature is now a strength. The partnership between parents and the school is good and improves pupils' learning and their experiences of school life. The headteacher places great value on the involvement of parents in children's learning and this has a strong influence on the harmonious relationships. Most parents confirm that the headteacher and staff are approachable and that they feel able to discuss any worries or concerns with them. Some parents have had a long association with the school and feel positive about the improvements that are being made. At the meeting prior to the inspection and in the responses on the parents' questionnaires, most parents show good support for the school and its work. They feel that their children are making good progress because the school expects them to work hard and achieve well.
- 45 The quality and quantity of information which parents receive is good overall and a strength of the school. Parents are kept well informed about school events through the regular newsletters. Parents of children who are new to the nursery or reception classes receive good information booklets about organisation, school routines and helping their children to learn. This helps them to prepare the way and has a positive effect on the way children settle into school. Any questions or concerns are answered when parents of children new to the school are invited to an induction meeting. There are information boards for parents in the nursery and school and these are updated regularly. The prospectus fulfils legal requirements but information on progress made on the action plan following the previous inspection is missing from the annual report of the governing body. Reports to parents on pupils' progress are satisfactory and contain targets for future development. Some targets are specific to the subject but others are of a more general nature. The sensitive comments on pupils' personal and social development show that teachers know pupils well. Parents appreciate the two formal consultation evenings when they can discuss the progress their children are making but would like advance information about the curriculum in order to offer maximum support to their children. This was also requested at the time of the previous inspection.
- 46 The school benefits by involving parents in its development, which is a strength. Most parents give good support to the work of the school and to their children's learning through their involvement in homework activities. Many parents listen to children read, help with spelling and provide children with resources to bring into school to support the work of the classroom. For example, parents of nursery children helped with the designs for a garden. Many parents respond to requests for help in and out of the classroom. There was a very good response to a request for parents of Year 2 children to help out on Dinosaur Day. The school holds meetings for parents on any new developments in the curriculum. A parent has developed a web site for the school. Parents and past parents are on the school's governing body and take forward any views that other parents may have. Parents of children with special educational needs are fully involved in the review process of their individual education plans. There is an enthusiastic and dynamic 'Friends of Sherdley' group with a committee of twenty dedicated members. They hold a range of social and fund raising activities and parents particularly appreciate the uniform sale the association holds during the summer term. Through their efforts, the school has benefited from computer equipment, a CD player and curtains for the infant hall.

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

- 47 The school is well led and managed. The headteacher, senior management team and governing body share a clear vision for the future of the school, which is clearly linked to the school's good quality plan for improvement. The development plan is a good guide for future improvement, with clear priorities and strategies for achieving success. There is a shared capacity to succeed. Staff are keen to raise standards, and there has been a good development in the areas of literacy and numeracy, with teachers taking on new teaching ideas well. This is resulting in improving standards in the juniors, and inspectors noted improved standards in this year's oldest pupils. All documentation regarding planning is clear and prioritises well. Schemes of work in individual subjects have improved since the previous inspection, and most of these are now being redrafted to meet the requirements of the new curriculum for schools. Teachers and other staff work well together as teams. There is a good level of joint planning in year groups, so that all pupils receive a similar curriculum. There have been a number of recent initiatives within the school aimed at raising standards, including additional classes, more support in lessons, and setting arrangements for English and mathematics.
- 48 The teaching of the main subjects of English, mathematics and science is being monitored and evaluated well in a regular fashion by appropriate subject leaders and senior staff. Good records are maintained of classroom visits, and feedback is given which helps staff to work on improving their teaching styles. About a third of the staff have benefited from training in how to monitor in the classrooms, so that the visits are carefully planned and structured. The low standards that have been recorded over the last two years are now improving, and this year they are close to national averages.
- 49 The main area for improvement within the overall management structure is in the strengthening of the role of coordinators. There is no effective monitoring of standards or teaching in areas of the curriculum other than English, mathematics and science, and some coordinators have only a superficial idea or knowledge of pupil performance and teaching in their areas of responsibility. This lack of monitoring, even of pupils' work, is not adequate in raising standards across the board, and has, in the case of geography, resulted in standards being below the expected level for 11 year olds. There is good subject leadership shown in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, music and physical education.
- 50 Governors fulfil their obligations very well. They have secure knowledge and understanding of the work of the school, and are kept well informed the headteacher. Many help in school on a regular basis, and a number have specific evaluative curriculum roles in areas such as literacy, numeracy and special educational needs. Governors have good quality committees that deal with the obligatory day to day matters for which they have responsibility, and powers of these groups are fully delegated from the main body.
- 51 Staffing is relatively stable and meets the needs of the curriculum. There are a sufficient number of appropriately qualified teachers who bring a good range of experiences and expertise to the school. Although many of them have taught at the school for several years, they have all had recent and relevant training, particularly in implementing the literacy and numeracy strategies successfully. This has improved their subject knowledge and confidence within the classroom. New teachers are well supported both by the local educational authority and the school with a formal mentoring system in place. Staff development has been a recent priority, and within the targets set has been the issue of raising standards for higher attaining pupils. The action taken to meet the school's targets has been satisfactory.
- 52 The school has implemented its 'Performance Management' scheme and targets have been set for the professional development of individual teachers. The teaching staff is well deployed and there is a good balance of curriculum strengths across the school. However coordinators in a number of subjects have not had any management training and are not yet effective in their roles. Suitably qualified classroom assistants provide good support for pupils with special educational needs and other pupils in the school. Recently some of them attended valuable courses with the teaching staff in the infants on how to provide the best support for pupils during the literacy lesson. The headteacher is unhappy that because of budget restraints he is unable to provide sufficient time for the two members of the senior management team to carry out some of their management duties. However, these teachers are very effective in their

monitoring roles and have been instrumental in raising standards and provision in both English and mathematics.

- 53 Although the accommodation is satisfactory and allows the curriculum to be taught effectively, the nursery and one of the Year 2 classrooms are very cramped. Staff make good use of the accommodation that is available. Improvements since the previous inspection have included an all year outside play area for the nursery and a refurbished parents' room. Circulation within the school is difficult at times with only a narrow corridor linking the infant section with the juniors. It is also necessary to pass through both halls to reach the classrooms and this sometimes disturbs the lessons or assemblies that are taking place there. Because of the limited space there is no room for a central library, but the school makes suitable alternative arrangements by having mobile book trolleys in each teaching area and a small library for the older pupils is positioned in the entrance hall.
- 54 The overall quality and quality of resources is satisfactory, with particular strengths in the foundation stage, information and communication technology and music. Geography and history are under-resourced, causing some problems in geography where standards are not high enough for 11 year olds.
- 55 The school makes good use of strategic resources, including specific grants and other funding. Finance is managed efficiently by the headteacher and secretary. The governors are very effective in fulfilling their financial responsibilities. They are involved fully in managing the budget and ensure that the school's educational priorities are funded appropriately. They take time regularly to consider how to get the best value for money from what is spent, by looking at competitive tendering and viable alternatives. They are clear that cheapest is not always the best. They are beginning to look at the way in which new spending affects both standards and progress, especially since the introduction of the new information and communication technology suite at the beginning of the year 2001.
- 56 With current provision being at least satisfactory through the curriculum, supported by good levels of teaching, management and leadership, with good progress and improving standards, overall value for money is good.

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

- 57 In order to raise standards and to improve the quality of educational provision, the school should now:
- (1) Use assessment more effectively for setting targets to improve pupils' progress and to make it more consistent throughout the school; (paragraphs 43, 81, 92, 102, 104, 110)
  - (2) Create more opportunities for higher attaining pupils to use their own initiative and take greater responsibility for their own learning; (paragraphs 21, 70, 85, 92, 110, 116)
  - (3) Make more consistent and better use of information and communication technology to enhance pupils' learning across the curriculum; (paragraphs 81, 132, 135)
  - (4) Provide further training for subject coordinators to develop their role more fully in monitoring and evaluating the work in their subjects; (paragraphs paragraphs 49, 102, 116, 122, 145)
  - (5) Ensure that standards in geography are improved through more consistent teaching of basic skills; (paragraphs 7, 114, 116)

The governors should also consider the following point for consideration in their action plan:

- Ensure that pupils throughout the school are given more opportunities through the curriculum to understand their own cultures and the cultures of other peoples, so that they are better prepared for life in a multicultural society. (paragraphs 37, 106, 125, 156)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

86\*

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

68

\* one lesson not graded for teaching

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1%	13%	59%	26%	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	379
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	56

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	27

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	23
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	93.7
National comparative data	94.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	19	24	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	17	19
	Girls	24	24	24
	Total	41	41	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (96)	95 (94)	100 (98)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	19	18
	Girls	24	24	24
	Total	41	43	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (94)	100 (96)	98 (98)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	27	29	56

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	19	21
	Girls	22	20	23
	Total	36	39	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	64 (86)	70 (80)	79 (90)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	19	15
	Girls	19	22	20
	Total	32	41	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	57 (73)	73 (73)	63 (84)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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	5
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	0
White	311
Any other minority ethnic group	3

*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	1	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)	16
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.8:1
Average class size	27.1

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	176.5

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	670,223
Total expenditure	666,585
Expenditure per pupil	1714
Balance brought forward from previous year	Nil
Balance carried forward to next year	3,638

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	405
Number of questionnaires returned	125

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	74	24	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	70	30	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	65	34	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	49	44	6	0	2
The teaching is good.	78	19	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	34	13	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	22	3	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	22	1	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	45	43	8	3	1
The school is well led and managed.	68	30	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	35	1	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	40	18	1	7

## **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**

- 58 Before entering school, all children have part time nursery experience, generally in the attached school nursery class. Children transfer into one of the two infant classes in the year in which they have their fifth birthday. They are introduced into full time education gradually through a period of induction visits. The teachers from the infant classes also visit the children in their more familiar nursery setting so that relationships can be well established. As a result, friendly and amicable partnership exists with most families. Parents are encouraged to participate fully in the induction programme both in the nursery and in school. Care is taken to welcome parents and to ensure that they fully understand the curriculum in the Foundation Stage. Workshops are also provided early during each school year so that parents have the opportunity to learn and ask questions about the teaching of literacy and numeracy in the early years.
- 59 When the children enter the nursery class their knowledge, skills, and understanding vary considerably but are mostly below expected levels. This is particularly noticeable with lower than expected speaking skills. Skills in listening are satisfactory. The children are making good progress in nursery. By the time of their entry into the reception year, assessments show that they are now mostly in line with the local authority averages in all areas of learning for children of this age. Good progress continues in all areas of learning throughout the reception year and on entry to National Curriculum at the age of six the pupils are achieving the required standard for children at the end of the Foundation Stage.
- 60 During this school year, since the establishment of the new Foundation Stage for younger children, the school has given good attention to providing appropriate accommodation and resources. As a result the classrooms are bright and cheerful with appropriately placed resources set out to excite and stimulate children to learn. The school has made a good effort to involve parents in this process of change by asking them to design with their children a new outdoor nursery play area. The resulting outdoor garden is a well designed area in which parents and children have some ownership with the school. Although small it provides exciting opportunities in a mixture of roundabouts, paths and garden areas. Children in the reception year have less outdoor provision at present, but the school tries to compensate by arranging, on a regular basis, opportunities for exploration with large and small apparatus.
- 61 The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good. It has a good balance and breadth, and provides many enrichment activities, which enhance the education of the younger children. Whenever possible the teachers take the children out to learn more about their local area, for instance with a trip by train, or a visit to the local park. Each day the children participate in a mixture of focused and continuous play activities, which are well planned and revisited over a week to ensure learning is secure. For example, during the inspection, the nursery children listened together to an audiotape, which introduced a range of everyday sounds for them to distinguish and match to a series of pictures. The following day the activity became an individual continuous play task where children individually could listen to the tape at the listening centre and play the game alone. The literacy and numeracy strategies are being introduced gradually to the children in the reception classes, and they are making good progress in achieving expected standards for their age. At present parents are not informed of the termly curriculum focus in each class, but the teachers are planning to address this.
- 62 There are sufficient suitably qualified teachers for the children in the Foundation Stage. They have developed a good working partnership and are making good efforts to improve their knowledge of the requirements for the education of the younger children. Support assistants are available to work alongside the teachers. They are newly appointed and are still learning their role. Training for support staff is planned but has not yet taken place.

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

- 63 The children enter nursery and school with some immaturities in their personal, social, and emotional skills, which are below expectations. Teachers work hard to create a caring and friendly environment. The quality of teaching is good throughout, with teachers formally and informally promoting and tracking the progress of children in this important area of their development. Over a period of time the children learn to trust adults and other children. The teachers have a good understanding of the ability of children to face new challenges or to work in a group with others. Gradually they encourage the children to become more independent and where appropriate to consider the needs of others. Children understand class rules in both the nursery and reception classes, but for some it is difficult to accept that it is necessary to achieve acceptable standards of behaviour. Teachers and support assistants are firm but fair, gently insisting that children recognise that they must behave responsibly and in a caring manner both for themselves and for others. Good examples of care and consideration of others were seen. In the reception class one child responded to the cry for help from another who was experiencing difficulties balancing on a bench in a physical education lesson. Without any adult intervention the children helped each other and both showed real pleasure when the challenge was achieved. Children are taught how to move around school and the classroom, and how to treat resources respectfully. By the end of the Foundation Stage in both the nursery and reception classes, they have made good progress and have skills in line with expectations of children of this age.

### **Language, literacy and communication**

- 64 The overall attainment of children in language and literacy on entry to the nursery is below expected levels, and for a few children oral communication is difficult. The teacher and support assistant are aware of these difficulties and seek to overcome these difficulties. Teaching is good throughout. With gentle encouragement the children are expected to explain their needs and describe their ideas. Through role-play they are introduced to new vocabulary and practice new words uninhibited. A garden centre has been set up in the nursery area giving good opportunities for children to learn a new vocabulary as well as improve their mathematical skills. Children can buy packets of seeds from a shopkeeper and improve their understanding of the world around them as they discuss how best to plant seeds and the requirements that the seeds will need to grow. They learn to share books together and to sing nursery rhymes and action songs improving their skills of recall of the words and actions as they do so. In the reception year, the children show that good progress has been achieved in improving their listening skills. They enjoy listening to stories and can remember and repeat instructions accurately.
- 65 The teaching is mostly good with the teachers having suitable knowledge of the literacy curriculum for reception class children. They choose appropriate books to share with the children and hear children read regularly. The teachers make good links to other areas of the curriculum. For example, one teacher read the story of "The Bad-Tempered Ladybird" by Eric Carle to the children and emphasised the qualities the ladybird needed in order to be more friendly and supportive of others. Through skilful reading of the text the children were encouraged to read other books by the same author and are developing a good knowledge of a number of his stories. Children are developing their writing skills. In the nursery, they all attempt to write their name. In the reception year, the children all write their name accurately, and some are beginning to write their own ideas independently. Most children write a simple sentence or phrase with adult support.

### **Mathematical development**

- 66 Children's learning in mathematics is mostly good and in some lessons is very good. The teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge but are extremely skilful at introducing the children to a range of experiences, which excite and interest the children so that their learning is fast, structured and rigorous. By the time of formal assessments, many are achieving above the expected levels for children of their age, and when they start the National Curriculum, they have a good understanding of number. Most children in the reception year have a good

understanding of the concept of numbers to six, and many understand numbers at least to ten. Some higher attaining children understand the concept of numbers to 20. They are able to double numbers to 20 easily and quickly with good mental recall and have a good understanding of “one more or one less.” In the nursery, children soon learn to recognise numbers and to count numbers independently matching one to one with numbers at least to five. The children make good progress learning about shape space and measure both in their free play and also during focused teaching times. By the age of five, most children recognise and name squares, rectangles, triangles and circles. Higher attaining children name ovals and diamond shapes. They know the sphere, cylinder and cuboid and are beginning to understand the difference between two and three-dimensional shapes. All children are improving and using mathematical vocabulary often practising their skills in mathematics through other areas of the curriculum.

### **Knowledge and Understanding of the World**

- 67 The children enter the nursery with a below average knowledge of the world around them. They learn quickly and make good progress in improving their skills of observation. The teacher provides a good range of activities improving their knowledge through the use of a focus area. For example, the teacher working on the five senses introduced the children to the work of the ear, describing its job in receiving and transmitting sounds to the brain. She had high expectations but with good use of appropriate language and the good use of practical experiences, the children were beginning to understand that the ear acts as a sound box receiving and transmitting messages. They also made good progress in learning that they need to look after their own ears so that their hearing is not restricted. In the reception year their knowledge and understanding is increased by many practical activities. They go on a nature trail to discover mini-beasts and are encouraged to research their results to name the garden insects. In one good lesson one group of children while working on birds participated in a lovely experiment to paint with feathers, sharing together their discoveries created by the different effects the feathers could make in texture, shape or colour. Other children watched feathers floating in the air, and even peered through a peacock’s feather. They explained that “the peacock’s feather looked like an eye” and showed awe and wonder as they observed the feathers float gradually down to the ground. Good progress is maintained throughout the Foundation Stage and with appropriate teaching the children reach expected levels by the time they start the National Curriculum.

### **Creative development**

- 68 By the time the children start the National Curriculum, they have made good progress in creative development and are achieving expected levels. The quality of teaching is good in all classrooms. The teachers develop good links between subjects so that the children’s creative development is often promoted during several activities during the school day. For instance in a mathematics task the children made ladybirds, attaching wings and the spots, and promoted their skills of observation and manipulative skills with glue as they attached the ladybird body parts at the same time developing their mathematical understanding of symmetry. The children are encouraged to be independent in their learning. The nursery children are expected to make their own models and the teachers wait patiently while the children use spatulas to glue, or scissors to learn to cut. They have good experiences with malleable materials making play-dough insects, or cakes for a café. They use boxes and yoghurt pots to make musical instruments and shakers. Some opportunities are created for them to make music together although these opportunities are infrequent. Most children have under developed observation skills and unsatisfactory pencil control in the reception year. Although many good opportunities are provided in lessons to improve their pictures and models, at the age of five many are still lacking attention to detail in their work. Most children are developing well their creative ideas, but they often lack the skill to translate their ideas to paper. Most enjoy creative activities and often it is their over-exuberance, which prevents them giving sufficient concentrated attention and time to the creative task.

### **Physical development**

- 69 Although on entry to nursery most children have physical skills below expected levels, they enjoy physical activities and are keen to improve their actions. They learn to ride on tricycles,

scooters and bikes changing direction, stopping and starting appropriately, and developing a good understanding of personal space. They run and jump and play with small balls and bats improving their control as they practise. The older children, in the reception classes, are developing these skills further. They climb and jump, many balance successfully. Good progress is made from the nursery year in that they are now able to throw a ball or beanbag with some accuracy towards a given marker. These older children are beginning to understand about the values of exercise and will stop to feel the increase in their heartbeat as the exercises are undertaken. The teachers have good understanding of the requirements of children in the Foundation Stage for physical development and they are seeking to provide an appropriate curriculum in which the children gain a good sense of satisfaction and pleasure in the activities and through regular practice improve their physical skills. The teaching of physical development is good. There is currently insufficient guidance for the support assistants in these activities so that they sometimes unsure of how to reinforce teaching points.

## ENGLISH

- 70 Standards in English for pupils aged 11 are currently similar to the national average as they were at the time of the previous inspection, but standards are rising throughout the school. For pupils aged seven, standards are above average, which represents an improvement since the last inspection. National test results have shown decline over the past three years; when the same groups of pupils took their tests aged seven, results were also below average, accounting to some degree for the declining standards recently. Progress for these pupils has been satisfactory from age seven to 11.
- 71 The main strengths in English are:
- Good planning and management by teachers in the literacy hour contributing to good learning by pupils;
  - Improving standards and progress for all pupils;
  - Good coordination in English, including the emphasis placed recently on analysing pupils' results in tests in order to set targets.
- 72 The main areas for development in English are:
- To provide opportunities for higher attaining pupils to develop through independent activities;
  - To improve the use of resources, including library books and information and communication technology, to further enhance and develop pupils' learning.
- 73 The beneficial effects of the literacy hour are gradually being felt throughout school for all groups of pupils. Teachers are particularly careful in their lesson planning and preparation so that activities develop pupils' skills and understanding whilst lessons are pleasurable. Pupils in a Year 1 class, for example, made good progress in learning to read words like 'ice', 'mine' and 'pipe', and in sequencing sentences. To bring this about the teachers involved pupils in a story, a lively word 'bingo' game and four other interesting group activities designed to address individual pupils' needs. Extra tasks were available for pupils who had finished. Such activities are managed well in all classes, with pupils familiar with routines and the expectations of the teachers for pupils to work hard. Teachers involve pupils at every opportunity during the lessons. In a whole class session seen in Year 4, pupils improved their understanding of the way language is used in poetry through expressive reading interspersed with skilful questioning by the teacher. Pupils increased their knowledge of the use of alliteration. Throughout such sessions, teachers encourage the use of a wide range of vocabulary by pupils and regularly refer to aspects of grammar or punctuation learned on other occasions. For example, in Year 5, when pupils were thinking about the point of view from which a story is told, they consolidated their knowledge of clauses, conjunctions, inverted commas, and plurals as the teacher referred to these in the text. The positive approach of staff to the literacy hour is encouraging, and is helping to raise standards for all pupils in English.
- 74 The successful introduction of the literacy hour is having a significant impact on pupils' attainment and progress. Pupils between the ages of five and seven progress well which leads to good standards overall in reading and writing by the time they are seven. As the literacy hour takes effect through the school, the progress of pupils is improving. Pupils in Year 6 this year

are found to have standards in line with national averages where as in national tests in 2000, pupils achieved results which were well below average.

- 75 Pupils show interest and enthusiasm for all their activities in English. Staff know their pupils well, and pupils settle down to work readily. They enjoy the structure of the literacy hour, concentrating well in lessons. Pupils' listening skills are good throughout. They listen well both to teachers and to each other. In a lesson in Year 6, pupils were keen to hear what their friends thought was persuasive about the text in a leaflet, enabling them to incorporate these ideas successfully with their own in later work. Listening carefully to rhyming words in a Year 3 lesson on 'Funny Poems' encouraged pupils to use a wide range of vocabulary in their own poems. Speaking skills are less well developed, but pupils are gaining confidence steadily. They give focused replies to questions using grammatically correct sentences on the whole.
- 76 Pupils learn to read through shared and guided reading sessions. By the age of seven, pupils' reading skills are above average overall. These pupils are enthusiastic readers and many also read at home regularly. They use a variety of strategies to read unknown words. Many pupils read fluently and with expression. Several pupils visit the local library regularly. In a lesson in Year 2, pupils enjoyed practising their research skills using books on dinosaurs, effectively making links with science. They were able to use both contents and an index to find information. The standards of 11 year old pupils are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils in Year 6 read books of their own choice. They tackle some of the difficult words in for example, 'The Wind in the Willows' or 'Dr. Dolittle' with some success. In a guided reading session in Year 5, pupils relished in finding out the meanings of words like 'whinnied' or 'colt'. Pupils' interest in reading is enhanced by the wide range of literature introduced to them during the literacy hour. The school holds a book fair regularly, so that pupils can increase the number of books they read.
- 77 Pupils have the opportunity to use their knowledge of language, grammar and punctuation for a wide range of purposes daily in the literacy hour. One result of this is the lively and interesting writing of pupils throughout the school. Standards are above average by age seven. Pupils in Year 1 were delighted to be writing three sentences for a recipe for a meal for frightening a cat. Year 2 pupils have a good range of forms of writing including stories, rhymes and letters, higher attaining pupils showing some awareness of the reader. Most pupils are beginning to sequence sentences, and punctuate them with full stops and capital letters. There are some good attempts at spelling words like 'screamed', although spelling of simpler words is sometimes inaccurate. The handwriting of some pupils of this age is joined and generally letters are accurately formed. By Year 6, standards of writing meet national averages. Higher and average attaining pupils' writing is imaginative, clear and organised into paragraphs. They use appropriate and interesting words for effect such as 'scurried out', or 'slammed shut'. Pupils' punctuation is developing. Higher attaining pupils use apostrophes and inverted commas correctly on many occasions. In Year 5, pupils' writing is already adventurous, and shows that pupils have some knowledge of, for example, verbs, adjectives, pronouns, similes and metaphors. Their handwriting is often neat and legible. Homework makes an adequate and regular contribution to pupils' progress in writing. These examples illustrate the wide use of English by pupils.
- 78 The leadership provided by the coordinator is good. The English policy has been re-written, and the literacy hour has been evaluated regularly. She and the staff have analysed the data from tests taken each year. Any issues arising have been addressed well by the coordinator and staff. As a result group targets have been set. Targeted areas such as boys' spelling, and handwriting generally, have improved in recent years. Currently, targets are focused on raising standards of higher attaining pupils. When the coordinator and staff identify areas for concern in pupils' work, the coordinator takes some action. Staff have had training in teaching grammar, spelling, guided and shared writing, so that they now feel more confident in their delivery of the literacy hour. The English policy has been re-written and is satisfactory. Pupils' work is sampled once a year and planning is sampled twice a year. A key issue in the last inspection was to provide more opportunity for extended writing. This now takes place once a fortnight. When improvements were needed in reading, arrangements were made to have guided reading outside the literacy hour. There are termly assessments for pupils, and a portfolio of pupils'

work. Teaching has been monitored successfully by the headteacher and the coordinator, and good quality feedback has been provided for staff.

- 79 The first area for development relates to the key issue in the last inspection, which was providing more challenge for higher attaining pupils. The extension activities used by teachers in lessons go some way to addressing this, but older, higher attaining pupils do not make enough progress since they are not given sufficient freedom to explore their own creativity or undertake more sophisticated research work. For example, some lessons were seen in the junior part of the school where the introduction to the literacy hour was of good quality, but longer than might be necessary for some higher attaining pupils. These pupils could not use their capabilities to full effect by working creatively and independently at tasks for a longer period in lessons.
- 80 A second area for development is concerned with the use of resources. Although the quantity of books in school is adequate, access to a whole range of books is inadequate, since trolleys of books are located in classrooms. Also, when pupils wish to choose a book for reading, there is no coding of books in some classrooms to guide pupils to books of the right level. Apart from drafting work, there is not much evidence of the use of information and communication technology to enhance learning in English.

## **MATHEMATICS**

- 81 The standards attained for pupils aged 11 are similar to the national average. The picture was the same at the previous inspection. These pupils show a significant improvement from the test results for last year's group of 11 year olds, which were well below average. Standards at age seven are above average and similar to the tests of Year 2000. They are higher than at the time of the previous inspection.
- 82 Strengths in mathematics are:
- Improved standards throughout the school;
  - Good gains in learning throughout the school, and more challenge for the higher attainers up to the age of seven;
  - Improved teaching through the successful implementation of the numeracy strategy;
  - Good leadership by a very knowledgeable and enthusiastic coordinator.
- 83 The areas for improvement are:
- To continue to raise standards for 11 year olds by providing more challenge for the higher attainers;
  - Develop more opportunities in the teaching for pupils to be given the responsibilities to explore and investigate real life problems for themselves;
  - Use information and communication technology to enhance mathematics and particularly to improve the standards in data handling;
  - Continue the work of developing a consistent approach to assessment and marking which will enable teachers to plan the next stage of pupils learning at the correct level.
- 84 By the age of seven, pupils show the good standards and progress they have made in mathematics, through their understanding and accuracy in using numbers to over a 100 in a wide variety of situations. Standards are above average. At the beginning of the year, these pupils were only calculating the answers to simple number sentences of up to 20 and now they work out confidently the change from £5 after buying three objects. A strength of the teaching and of particular benefit to the higher attaining pupils is the way the teachers encourage them to use different strategies to solve problems and explain how they work out their mental strategies. This has challenged these pupils to work successfully and achieve Level 3 in their tests. The lower attaining pupils, although not as confident with larger numbers and problem solving identify the right angles in a variety of shapes, showing some progress in angle recognition. All pupils gain a good range of experiences in measuring and describing the properties of shapes but sometimes these tasks lack a practical focus for investigation. On these occasions the teacher is over dependent on the use of workbooks and sheets. Pupils are sometimes given the



opportunity to collect information and make and interpret simple graphs. The use of information and communication technology to enhance this area of learning is slowly being introduced. The recent investigation on the size of hand spans in the class gave the pupils the opportunity to investigate a real problem solving activity. This kind of activity is not widely taught and remains an area of weakness from the previous inspection.

- 85 As pupils move through the school they make satisfactory progress overall by the age of 11 and good gains in their learning. This includes pupils with special educational needs. The numeracy strategy is helping pupils to work more confidently in applying their mathematical knowledge to problem solving. However, most teachers over direct the lessons and are reluctant to give pupils the responsibility for planning, organising and carrying out real life investigations themselves. This significantly reduces the opportunities for the higher attaining pupils to be challenged sufficiently in their learning and progress is not as good as it could be. This weakness still remains an area of development since the previous inspection.
- 86 In their basic numeracy, the higher and average attaining pupils in Year 6 are developing a good mental facility to work competently on a wide range of calculations. The 'booster class' for these Year 6 pupils and 'springboard' in Year 5 have helped to raise standards in numbers and measures and so enable these pupils to achieve higher levels of attainment than the pupils from last year. Approximately 11 per cent are expected to achieve Level 5 and these pupils are already solving word problems to three decimal places and working out a simple algebraic formula. Higher attainers generally know their tables but a few of the lower attaining pupils cannot work quickly enough yet, especially in the oral part of the lesson. On occasions, the lower attaining and pupils with special educational needs require more practical resources to help with levels of understanding and to reinforce their learning. Nearly everyone takes a pride in the presentation of their work. Pupils have had some opportunities to draw and interpret information from traffic surveys and present information about themselves, but generally standards and progress in data handling are not as good as they could be. Information and communication technology is just beginning to support this area of learning sufficiently.
- 87 The quality of teaching is good and is having a positive impact on the pupils' good gains in their learning. This is a much better picture than at the previous inspection when teaching was judged to be mostly satisfactory or better. All of the teaching has many good features, which the scrutiny of work also confirmed, but there was only one very good lesson, which was in Year 6. The reasons for the teaching not being even better are very closely linked to the areas for improvement outlined above. In the very good lesson, all of these improvements were present and if not shown in the lesson itself, were seen in the planning or scrutiny of work. The investigation given to the pupils was highly challenging but the teacher skilfully adapted it to meet the needs of the range of ability within the class. The pupils worked in groups on the task, and were given the responsibility and independence to share their ideas and try out different solutions to a real life investigation. They were highly motivated and often excited in applying the algebra skills they had learnt recently in numeracy to this task. One group used the computer very effectively to work out ideas on a function machine. The majority made very good gains in their learning. Afterwards the teacher followed her normal practice of reviewing the lesson and assessing the next stage in her teaching and the focus of learning for the pupils. Where specific pupils had difficulties this was noted.
- 88 Because some teachers do not regularly review their lessons or link the marking to the objectives of the lesson, the levels of work set for pupils are not always correct. For example, in Year 4 the lower set were working on a task with angles that was more difficult to achieve than the relatively easy work given to the higher set. A strength of all of the teaching is the very good relationships established with the pupils and the encouragement given to them to behave well and work hard. This helps them to concentrate and work productively to make the good gains in their learning.
- 89 All teachers have a clear understanding of the objectives of the numeracy strategy and are confident in their teaching of these basic skills. The numeracy strategy has been effectively implemented into all classes. There is a stimulating environment in classrooms where numeracy has a high focus and where good displays remind pupils of the rules and language of mathematics. Teachers cover a good range of work but occasionally in the independent tasks,

where time limits are not set, pupils don't work as productively as they could. More resources are also needed by a few teachers in the mental starter to make sure that all pupils can and do take part. Numeracy skills are used soundly across the curriculum but there is scope to develop this more widely, especially in design and technology, science and history. Literacy skills, however, are promoted well through discussion, explaining mental strategies and recording information. Parents are happy with the levels of homework that are set. Pupils throughout the juniors regularly take work home to reinforce and improve their skills further and this is contributing to the improving standards in the school.

- 90 The strong and effective coordinator has had a significant impact on the improved confidence of the teachers and the progress being made through the school. She has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning and through her rigorous monitoring and that of the headteacher has been instrumental in helping to raise standards.

## SCIENCE

- 91 Standards in science for pupils aged 11 are broadly similar to the national average, although there are too few pupils reaching higher levels. This is similar to the standards at the last inspection, but is a very marked improvement from the national test results in 2000. For those for pupils aged seven, standards are above average. The last inspection reported that the area of investigative science was a strength but that higher attainers were not sufficiently challenged. Both these findings are still true. Resources, unsatisfactory then, have improved and they are now adequate. The strengths in the subject are:

- The high priority given to the subject and the good teaching across the school, which ensures that pupils make good progress in their learning during lessons observed;
- The frequent opportunities provided during lessons for scientific enquiry;
- The pupils' interest in and attitudes to science.

- 92 The areas for improvement are:

- Further development of scientific enquiry to provide opportunities for investigations which are less teacher directed;
- Standardising assessment procedures, particularly marking;
- Work that more appropriately targets those pupils with the potential for higher attainment.

- 93 Science is covered very effectively. All classes benefit from the good teaching throughout the school. From Year 1 onwards, pupils are encouraged by good, well-targeted questions. These questions reinforce what has already been learned and develops thinking by encouraging pupils to put different facts together to make logical conclusions. A very good lesson was seen in Year 2, where pupils thought carefully about the changes made to their cake mix during the preparation and cooking process.

- 94 The area of scientific enquiry is given a priority and most learning is as a direct result of this important element. Lessons are planned so that pupils develop the ability to make predictions and, following a variety of experiments, reach conclusions. This was seen in all lessons. These included tests over the half term in Year 3 to see what conditions are needed for healthy plants to grow; and a consideration of the different temperatures needed to melt a range of materials, including ice, chocolate, butter and cheese in Year 5. These good teaching methods result in enhanced learning, and overall, progress is good across the school.

- 95 It is directly due to these two strengths that pupils are so interested and enthusiastic about the subject. They are all very keen to contribute and in some lessons, take a personal pride in what they have produced. This was very evident in a lesson where Year 6 pupils had made bridges in a design and technology lesson and then investigated the ingredients of a 'fair test' to see which was the strongest. Many pupils cooperate together, working effectively with a common purpose.

- 96 The first area for improvement is to develop scientific enquiry still further. Many of the tasks at present are led by the teachers rather than allowing pupils to find their own methods. Pupils are not encouraged sufficiently to find their own answers to relevant questions, and this restricts their creativity and freedom of thought, contributing to the lack of pupils gaining higher levels.
- 97 The quality of marking is inconsistent throughout the school. The best is supportive and gives help for improvement. In some cases questions are asked which reinforce learning. In one exercise book, for example, a Year 6 teacher wrote, 'What do your results tell you?' The pupil then wrote an answer to this. Knowledge gained from assessment is not then used to set work which is always specific to the needs of each individual pupil, particularly those with a potential for higher attainment.
- 98 Work to specifically develop the needs of higher attaining pupils is usually given as an additional activity, to be tackled after the whole-class tasks have been completed, with separate work rarely set for these pupils. Some of these 'challenges' are not appropriately targeted, many being at a level suitable for everyone in the class. Many pupils with above average ability are able, when given the opportunity, to formulate their own questions and challenges.
- 99 There is a recently produced draft policy and the scheme of work is based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines. The school recognises this as an area for development and has planned for it to be completed by spring 2002.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

- 100 Standards are in line with the nationally expected levels for pupils at the age of seven and 11. Since the last inspection standards have been maintained at both key stages.
- 101 The strengths of the subject are:
- The good use made of whole school projects to introduce and develop knowledge and skills in art and design;
  - Good use of community links to provide a forum to celebrate the good artwork of pupils.
- 102 The areas for improvement in art are:
- Raise standards by developing skills and knowledge through the use of a systematic scheme of work;
  - Develop effective assessment procedures to identify pupils' current standards and set targets for improvement;
  - Improve the role of the coordinator to monitor the teaching and learning.
- 103 Most teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge, but the quality of learning is enhanced by the skilful involvement of all pupils in a number of whole school art projects. The teachers plan work together on a common focus appropriate to the age and ability of each year group. Through the use of the joint art project, teachers have additional opportunities to improve their teaching using the support and advice offered by specialist teachers within school. These joint activities are also beneficial for the pupils, developing a valuable sense of corporate achievement and celebration among them. For example the school has participated in the building of a large Millennium Frieze of clay tiles. Under the guidance of a member of the teaching staff, each year group worked to represent the life and work of the school through this media. Younger pupils made textured handprints or etched faces for the border of the frieze; others illustrated the National Curriculum subjects for the side sections; and the oldest pupils prepared the main section of the frieze to symbolise the name of the school. Pupils and teachers are justifiably proud of their contribution to this large mural. Good progress has been made in learning by pupils gaining greater understanding and skill in the use of clay, and a better knowledge of the process of firing clay. The project also provided useful school business links when a local brick company volunteered to support the project by firing the clay tiles.
- 104 Throughout the school the teaching of the basic skills of drawing, painting and collage is satisfactory. The teachers recognise the value of pupils celebrating and appraising each other's work. Good opportunities are also provided for parents and the local community to share the

achievements of the pupils by displaying pupils' work at the local hospital, or church. A recent project to plan "A House of the Future" was displayed at a nearby new housing development. These displays give a good indication of the satisfactory standards achieved by pupils.

- 105 Although some assessment of pupils' work is taking place it is generally informal, relying on the expertise of each teacher for the focus of the assessment. Some procedures do not give sufficient indication of the rates of progress of pupils, or identify the strengths and weaknesses in their performance. Most teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of the ability levels of pupils in their class and challenge them appropriately. However, assessment does not identify pupils' current standards and set targets for improvement. As a result, learning and progress are satisfactory rather than good.
- 106 Art is taught to pupils on a topic cycle alongside design and technology. All elements of the art curriculum are included for each year group, but practical activities do not always cover the range of skills needed to be developed. Coverage of the work of famous artists is also inconsistent, and lacks a balance between the study of European classical or modern art, the traditional art from other cultural traditions, or even local artists. By the age of 11, pupils have satisfactory knowledge of some famous artwork of Picasso, Michelangelo and Van Gogh, but have no knowledge of local artists such as L.S.Lowry. They described clearly their favourite pieces of Pop Artwork of Andy Warhol and Roy Lichenstein. Pupils in Year 5 have tried to produce artwork in the style of Peter Mondrian to represent the high-rise buildings in the city of London, linking with a geography and history topic about the capital city. Other pupils have been introduced to a further range of work by famous artists, but find it difficult to describe the significance of their artistic styles. A new scheme of work is being developed to provide more consistency to the art curriculum, and a timetable of monitoring of teaching and learning by the art coordinator is planned to start in 2002.
- 107 Teaching and learning are not being monitored well enough to ensure that that the new scheme is providing a systematic and rigorous programme to develop skills and knowledge throughout school.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

- 108 Standards are in line with expected levels for pupils at the age of seven and 11, and have been maintained at both key stages since the last inspection.
- 109 The strengths in design and technology are:
- Enthusiasm and interest of the pupils;
  - In design and technology projects, lessons are well-structured in order to gradually increase pupils' skills and knowledge;
  - The subject links well to other subjects of the curriculum providing opportunities to practice new skills.
- 110 Areas for improvement are:
- More opportunities for independent research and investigations;
  - Greater use of the structured scheme of work to develop skills and knowledge systematically through the whole school;
  - Increased use of assessment to monitor the progress of pupils.
- 111 Pupils enjoy lessons in design and technology and show positive attitudes to learning. They work hard and sustain good levels of concentration. They listen carefully to instructions in lessons, and show persistence and perseverance as they work to achieve a completed model. For example, during the inspection pupils in Year 6 eagerly continued long after the end of a lesson to complete a model bridge structure. They were fascinated by the project, and keen to achieve the targets in the challenge. They talked about their projects avidly, adding that they liked design and technology lessons as it allows time for them to pursue and make up their own ideas. In most lessons pupils cooperate sensibly when working in groups. They allocate jobs responsibly, recognising the best talents of each group member. In class discussions they ask pertinent questions of each other, and accept useful relevant advice from friends in workshop

reviews, improving their own skills and knowledge by so doing. Many pupils enjoy the freedom, which design and technology opportunities offer.

- 112 The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory, although during the inspection some good and very good teaching was observed. The teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge and teaching of basic skills is appropriate. The teachers plan topics well, building knowledge and skills systematically in order that pupils can progress in their learning. In the most successful lessons the teachers provide a realistic challenge, set appropriate targets and ensure pupils have adequate opportunities to research and review their work so that they are successful. Some teachers make good links between subjects so that the pupils can practice newly acquired skills in a different activity. Many pupils have good ideas and are developing well their ability to transfer acquired knowledge to new situations. For example the higher attaining pupils in Year 6 made good progress during a class debate using their scientific and mathematical knowledge of shapes and measure to determine the best structure to use to achieve an equal distribution of weight on their bridge. They compared their work to other well-known bridges, such as the "Runcorn Bridge" and recognised in their discussions the reasons why the engineers had chosen specific designs. However, in other lessons the teachers are too directive and there are few opportunities for pupils to experiment independently. In these lessons progress is satisfactory as pupils lack the interest and purpose in their work.
- 113 The curriculum meets National Curriculum requirements for each year group but is not sufficiently well planned to build on pupils' skills and give consistent progress throughout the school. Assessment arrangements are inconsistent across the school. As a result the current standards of each pupil are not always identified in order to set new targets for learning. There are also some inconsistencies and repetition in learning in topic projects, which does not ensure a continuous approach. A new scheme of work is gradually being introduced, and the coordinator is monitoring its' introduction to ensure that learning is progressive. The action plan for design and technology has identified the need to extend resources to match the development the scheme.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

- 114 The standards for 11 year olds are below average and their progress is unsatisfactory. At the previous inspection a better picture of average attainment and satisfactory progress was seen. For seven year old pupils average standards and sound progress has been maintained.
- 115 Relative strengths in the subject are:
- Sustaining younger pupils' interest and enthusiasm for geography through the use of a travelogue;
  - Appropriate links made between geography and other subjects.
- 116 Reasons for the weaknesses and the lowering of standards for the older pupils in the school are:
- There are not enough resources to teach effectively and progressively the important elements of the subject and particularly mapping and other fieldwork skills particularly for older pupils;
  - Higher attaining pupils are still not being sufficiently challenged;
  - The management of the subject is poor;
  - There are few opportunities to investigate the local area.
- 117 By the end of Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of places in the world through their travels with 'Barnaby Bear'. The value in this topic is that pupils' learning and interest levels are continued after school and during family holidays. Diaries are often kept of the visits made which are then shared with all the pupils and routes followed on maps. The recent focus in Year 2 on comparing the weather patterns and other features of their own area with a region in Mexico has been less successful. Because the pupils have not yet been given the opportunity to make any visits into their own immediate area to gain important knowledge and understanding, they are unable to make any meaningful comparisons with another area. In addition, the resources available on this region of Mexico are insufficient and do not provide the pupils with enough information for them to ask and respond to questions as well as they could.

Teachers provide some good links with other subjects, with the 'Barnaby Bear' theme extended into the history of holidays now and then and looking at the clothes Barnaby wears in the science topic on materials.

- 118 By the time pupils are 11, their skills in fieldwork and enquiry are unsatisfactory because of a lack of visits, subject coverage and the shortage of resources. Pupils have insufficient understanding of how the environment is changing or how the physical features of the landscape affect the lives of people. Although mapping skills are beginning to be introduced into some classes now, the Year 6 pupils have had very little opportunity in their time in school to carry out any fieldwork or investigations and so their geographical skills are weak and their progress is unsatisfactory. For example, a group of pupils in Year 6 in planning a visit to a stately home decided they would need to take with them trekking poles and hiking boots. However, there are signs that recently, pupils are being given more opportunities to develop their skills in a more meaningful way. The Internet is used by a group of Year 6 pupils to plan a town trail and visit a national park, and Year 5 carry out a local traffic survey. Year 4 pupils were observed using a key to interpret the symbols on a local map and the scrutiny of work shows that there is a reasonable focus on helping pupils to learn about different places in the world.
- 119 Although the teaching observed in the lessons during the inspection was satisfactory throughout the school, the examination of past work and talking to pupils indicates that the teaching and learning for junior age pupils is unsatisfactory. Although individual teachers are now using published guidelines to help them improve their teaching, the shortage of resources is restricting what is planned for the pupils and the overall provision. In the lessons observed teachers are confident in giving information to the pupils but are not providing enough opportunities for them to investigate and learn important skills of enquiry. Progress is also affected by the over use of worksheets that have little relevance to teaching the skills of geography, but more about colouring in. Pupils in Year 5 are not challenged sufficiently by being asked to complete a simple crossword on facts about Mount Snowdon after watching a video. In particular this kind of activity provides few challenges for higher attaining pupils and gives them little opportunity to apply any intellectual effort to their work or make sufficient gains in their learning. The lack of challenge and over use of worksheets was also a weakness at the previous inspection and it has not improved. A very significant reason for the weaknesses already outlined is the poor management of the subject. The coordinator has had no opportunity to monitor any part of the provision and is unaware of the low standards for pupils aged 11, and the specific weaknesses in the subject.

## **HISTORY**

- 120 Standards in history are average throughout the school and have been maintained since the previous inspection along with satisfactory progress.
- 121 Relative strengths are:
- Improving progress by using educational visits;
  - Helping to develop literacy skills appropriately.
- 122 Although there is less focus now on using commercially produced work sheets in a few classes than in the past, there are other weaknesses that are preventing the pupils from achieving as well as they could in their learning. These areas are:
- A lack of resources prevents pupils finding and interpret information about the past;
  - Unsatisfactory management of the subject.
- 123 By the time they are 11, pupils have built up a satisfactory knowledge of the features of past societies and significant periods in history. Although they are still asked to colour in work sheets in a few classes, they are also given the opportunity to research for information from a limited range of books and computer programs. Because of the shortage of resources however, the pupils' experience of enquiring and finding answers about the past is very limited. It is noticeable how the quality of the pupils' work improves significantly after a visit to a place of historical interest. In Year 6, after their visit to Wigan Pier, the pupils used the information they had gained to take part in a Victorian day at school and to write in some good detail about the ways of life at that time. However, few

comparisons were made with life today apart from looking at education. English is promoted well and writers such as Charles Dickens are used to help pupils express and extend their own personal ideas of the age. Apart from the use of a few time lines, mathematics is not widely used in history.

- 124 By the age of seven, pupils have developed some knowledge and understanding of the lives and events of people long ago and make a reasonable distinction between the past and the present. For example, through learning about Florence Nightingale, pupils recognise some of the changes and conditions in hospitals over time. Unfortunately the shortage of resources results in too many worksheets simply being coloured in to show for example the differences between holidays now and then. This type of activity lacks sufficient challenge or opportunities for pupils to make gains in their learning. However, in Year 1, a good supply of old and new toys, mostly brought from home helped the pupils to begin to answer questions about the past. None of the pupils are at the stage of asking questions to pursue an historical enquiry further and time lines are not used to help the pupils to begin to understand how long ago events took place and how long they lasted.
- 125 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory through the school. Most teachers have an enthusiasm for the subject and try to bring it alive for the pupils through visits and making meaningful links with other subjects where they can. After a visit for Year 4 to an exhibition of Tutankhamun and the treasures of the Pharaohs, pupils made their own jewellery, masks and papyrus. In other topics, such as the Greeks and the Vikings, the shortage of sources of information for teachers and pupils to use becomes very apparent in the low level tasks pupils are asked to complete. This does little to strengthen their knowledge, understanding or interest in history or help them to become active and effective enquirers. There are also few local visits to help pupils to understand the cultural and social history of their own area.
- 126 There is insufficient management of the subject and a lack of monitoring that prevents a whole school approach to improvements. The coordinator is unaware of the strengths and weaknesses in history and how the subject should develop.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

- 127 Standards in information and communication technology for pupils aged 11 are broadly average. The standards are similar to those reported in the previous inspection.
- 128 Relative strengths include:
- A new computer suite used effectively to promote satisfactory learning in a cross-curricular manner;
  - Positive attitudes of pupils who enjoy learning.
- 129 The area for improvement, already addressed in the school's planning is:
- To ensure staff are fully trained in the teaching of information and communication technology.
- 130 The new computer suite has been in operation since the start of January 2001. Staff throughout the school are now using this good facility in planning their lessons, which are of a satisfactory standard. Teaching is satisfactory overall and this ensures that basic skills are learnt and consolidated appropriately at all levels. In the suite, pupils of all ages learn to access individual programs and to use the 'internet' appropriately for retrieving information. Lessons are planned to capitalise on this feature of learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 research a national park website to discover facts about the region, supplementing their work in geography well. In Year 4, pupils begin to develop the use of databases and spreadsheets in order to record their work on pulse rates in science. Other pupils use the machines for word processing, or for research in history, for example.
- 131 While many pupils have computers at home, they use these mainly for games, and a large number do not have printers. Pupils enjoy their work in the computer suite and are eager to learn new skills and techniques. Their current skills of logging-on, retrieving information, using control devices, saving information and editing are appropriate for their age. Many pupils offer good explanations for using spreadsheets and databases, and they print out their work for inclusion in their files in other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an

additional language generally make good progress in lessons. They work alongside other pupils, and take turns to type on the keyboard or control the mouse. Good social skills in learning to share and in collaborative work are beginning to occur.

132 Over time, progress is generally satisfactory for the majority of pupils. Teaching is satisfactory currently, and staff acknowledge that they are just keeping pace with developments and changes, a fact verified by the inspection. There is staff training due next term, when it is hoped to extend skills and so raise the rates of learning. Currently, the work being done in the computer suite is adequate to allow satisfactory progress in basic skills development, and in the use of other facilities such as spreadsheets, control and the Internet. However, there is little evidence of work being matched to the existing levels pupils have reached, so that in lessons, some faster working pupils have to wait until others catch up. The school is aware of this, and hopes to use the planned training to explore ways of overcoming this problem.

## MUSIC

133 Standards are above average when pupils reach the age of 11. This is an improvement since the last inspection, with music teaching and music-making currently being a strength of the school.

134 The strong features include:

- good teaching which inspires pupils and helps them make good progress;
- good use of resources in lessons;
- well above average levels of singing;
- good levels of community involvement.
- very good subject coordination and leadership.

135 The one area for improvement:

- increase the use of information and communication technology within the subject.

136 Teaching is good overall. Staff are competent and informed. They use technical language well to ensure pupils have the correct vocabulary and know how to use it appropriately. Pupils in Year 6, for example, describe and explain rhythm and tempo appropriately. Staff lead by example – they conduct and sing, and encourage pupils to join in and give of their best. Pupils follow these clear leads, gaining great enjoyment out of their lessons, which they describe as fun. Pupils talk readily about particular lessons that have inspired them, such as singing songs they have learnt, or investigating the hammer action of the piano in producing sound. As a result, subject knowledge is good. Pupils know the names of great composers and many of their works, because they have been taught to appreciate and understand these aspects in lessons and assemblies. Older pupils speak with confidence about instruments of the orchestra and how different families of instruments make their sounds.

137 Lessons are well planned so that pupils get plenty of opportunities to perform, to sing, to listen and to compose. This good variety helps to widen pupils' experiences so that their overall knowledge and understanding progresses well. By age seven, pupils are generally above expected levels of performance and musical appreciation. As they mature, teachers build well on prior learning so that skills develop well. Most pupils, for example, are able to sight read by age 11, which is a skill rarely seen in all pupils of that age. Many compose and play simple melodies from memory or by reading scores. Teachers make sure that all pupils are exposed to a wide range of music, which includes classical, folk and popular music. As a result, there is a wide appreciation of the application of music as part of the school culture.

138 Teachers provide pupils with many opportunities to play and to perform. Lessons contain ample time for pupils to select and play tuned and untuned percussion instruments, for example. In Year 5, for example, a dozen pupils played accompaniment to the combined singing of two classes and created a very good level of harmonious sound. Boys and girls join in equally. The strong choir rehearsal contained as many boys as girls, proving the success of teachers in establishing a healthy culture for musical performance within the school.



- 139 Singing is well above average by age 11. With good opportunities for practice, the school has produced a level of singing that is very good. Diction is clear. Phrases are sweetly crafted; melody lines are clear and both high and low notes reached correctly. The 60 strong choir, representing 15 per cent of the school as a whole, and over 30 per cent of Years 4, 5 and 6, from which members are drawn, makes a strong contribution to the quality of the overall singing. Effectively trained, hymns and songs are practised regularly and to a high standard. In classes, pupils sing in two, three and four parts.
- 140 There are many frequent performances within the community and further afield by groups of musicians from the school. Regular productions take place within the school, sometimes to mark special events such as the singing at the dedication of the Millennium Frieze, for example, or in productions such as 'Mary Poppins'. The choir performs in local events such as music festivals. Members of the choir please the local community with singing at church coffee mornings, or in the retired people's home nearby. Special events such as Harvest festival are celebrated with musical performances. On visits to Liverpool Anglican Cathedral, the choir members will gently break into song, performing unaccompanied hymns. Pupil's active involvement in such a wide variety of events is instrumental in helping them make the good progress they achieve, and the high standards that many of them reach.
- 141 The subject is very well led and managed. The coordinator leads by example, inspiring not only pupils but colleagues as well. This results in many staff having increased confidence when teaching, so that pupils learn well throughout their time at the school. The enthusiasm of the subject leader has established music as a central strength to the work of the school for the benefit of pupils, parents and the local and wider community.
- 142 So far, there has been minimal use of information and communication technology in music making. The coordinator is currently attending training in this area, and the school hopes to find ways of incorporating technology more into teaching and learning.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

- 143 By the time pupils leave the school at the age of 11, their standards in physical education are average, maintaining the standards found at the time of the last inspection. At that time dance was a strength, but although dance is covered during the year, none was observed during this inspection. The teaching of gymnastics was said to be unsatisfactory. Considerable improvements have been made and the teaching of gymnastics is now good and standards have improved to a satisfactory extent.
- 144 The strengths of the subject are:
- The quality of teaching;
  - The pupils' enthusiasm, attitudes and interest and the way they appreciate the efforts of others;
  - The sporting extra-curricular activities for pupils aged seven to 11.
- 145 The area for improvement is:
- The role of the coordinator and the policy for the subject;
- The school is aware of this and the subject appears in the Curriculum Development Plan for 2002.
- 146 The quality of teaching is good, and one very good lesson was seen. Lessons are planned effectively and basic skills are taught well, enabling pupils to make good progress in their learning. Pupils are invited to demonstrate their actions in such a way that even those who are less able feel valued. In many lessons, pupils were asked appropriate questions to reinforce their understanding. In a lesson in Year 4, for example, links were made with mathematics when learning directions and turns, and science. When asked why their hearts were beating faster, pupils knew that oxygen was needed to provide energy and to use muscles. Praise is given when deserved and areas for improvement noted. Having pointed out the good movements made by a pupil, the teacher asked, 'What could he have done to jump even higher?'

- 147 The pupils enjoy their physical education lessons. They are thoughtful and considerate and help each other, often unasked. Apparatus is put out and back carefully and sensibly by even the youngest pupils. The pupils try hard and all want to improve. Many are keen to demonstrate what they have learned. Great enthusiasm was shown in all lessons, and particularly during games of rounders.
- 148 A good number of staff give of their time to provide extra-curricular sporting activities for pupils aged seven to 11. These include football, netball, rounders, 'tag' rugby, cricket and athletics. They are attended by a large number of enthusiastic pupils.
- 149 The area for improvement, already recognised by the school, is to develop the role of the coordinator so that she has a direct influence on the subject. At present she does not monitor teachers' planning and there is no relevant up to date policy.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

- 150 Standards at both the ages of seven and 11 are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for pupils of these ages. These are similar standards to those found in the last inspection.
- 151 The strength of this subject is:
- The teaching of the Christian faith throughout the school.
- 152 The areas for development are:
- To increase the knowledge and understanding of pupils of a range of other faiths;
  - To ensure that the locally agreed syllabus is delivered evenly to every class, in order to raise standards further.
- 153 Teaching and learning in religious education is satisfactory overall throughout the school. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that pupils learn Christian stories and about events in the Christian calendar. For example, pupils in Year 3 have re-told the story of the Last Supper and of 'The Plagues of Egypt'. Likewise, pupils in Year 4 have learned about Moses in the bulrushes. They increase their knowledge of the Christian faith during lessons through a variety of interesting activities. During lessons in Year 5 about Ascension Day there was a good blend of information and discussion. One teacher opened the lesson by singing a hymn about Jesus rising, and as a result, pupils were immediately engaged in the subject. Later, ideas flowed freely between the teacher and the pupils during a story about the Ascension, enabling pupils to consider the views of others. In a parallel Year 5 class, the teacher held a discussion in which the pupils and could explore their ideas about difficult words such as 'soul' or 'spirit'.
- 154 Younger pupils often gain spiritual awareness and develop morally when stories are told. During the last part of a lesson seen in Year 1, pupils listened to a story about a sheep that was being teased by his friends. Pupils understood that being teased is an unpleasant feeling. Such lessons contribute to the harmony that exists between pupils and also between pupils and adults in the school. Sometimes an appropriate prayer is said or sung at the end of lessons, which provides a moment of thought and togetherness for the group. Pupils show interest in most lessons. They listen respectfully during assemblies and answer questions readily. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in lessons. Throughout school, teachers make effective links with literacy, telling stories, showing pictures and emphasising the meaning of words.
- 155 Assemblies are held daily, separately for each key stage and are satisfactory on the whole. Music played at the start of assembly gives pupils time for quiet thought. There are periods for reflection and prayer. In one assembly for older pupils, the teacher told the moving story of the challenge for a blind person climbing a mountain giving the pupils the opportunity to reflect on this. Resources for the subject are satisfactory, with some books relating to other religions in the library.
- 156 The first area for development, recognised by the co-ordinator, is to widen the pupils' knowledge of other faiths. The locally agreed syllabus stipulates the teaching of one other religion apart

from Christianity for pupils aged five to seven years, and two other faiths for pupils between the ages of seven and eleven years. This is only just beginning to take place. In a lesson in Year 2, pupils were shown some artefacts associated with Judaism. They looked at a model of the Torah, for example, and learned that a synagogue is a place of worship for the Jewish faith. Pupils in Year 6 could describe how they had visited a synagogue in Manchester, and how they had developed their knowledge of Judaism through this. In their books, pupils in Year 6 have only a brief reference to Islam. The coordinator is currently reviewing the subject. She has redrafted the policy, and the scheme of work is being updated.

- 157 The second area refers to the way the time for religious education is spread throughout the school. Although the total time allocation is adequate, there is a half term in Year 3 when no religious education is taught. In Year 6 it is taught alternately with personal and social education. This lack of continuity is having an adverse effect on pupils' learning and progress.