

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **APPLETON THORN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Appleton Thorn, Warrington

LEA area: Warrington

Unique reference number: 111138

Headteacher: Mr R P Anderson

Reporting inspector: Mr J White  
17242

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> October 2001

Inspection number: 193640

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Arley Road Appleton Thorn Warrington
Postcode:	WA4 4RW
Telephone number:	01925 266764
Fax number:	01925 861737
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr L D Jessop
Date of previous inspection:	22 <sup>nd</sup> April 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17242	Jeff White	Registered inspector	Science; art and design; design and technology; physical education; equal opportunities; English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
13526	Richard Barnard	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23453	Carole Cressey	Team inspector	Mathematics; music; religious education; foundation stage	
18143	Bernice Magson	Team inspector	English; information & communication technology; geography; history; special educational needs	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is located in the village of Appleton Thorn, near to Warrington. The roll has risen since the last inspection but remains smaller than average: 142 (73 boys, 69 girls). Children are admitted into the reception class at the beginning of the year in which they become five; currently there are 14. In September 2000 over 30 pupils were admitted into Key Stage 2 because of the imminent closure of another school. About half of the current Year 6 were admitted in the last two years. Pupils are drawn mainly from the local area. Census data suggests potentially educationally advantaged backgrounds, for example, the percentage of adults with higher educational qualifications in the Appleton/Stretton Ward is much higher than the national average. Almost all pupils are white; only six are of minority ethnic heritage. Eligibility for free school meals is well below average. Twenty-four pupils are on the special educational needs register, a figure well below average. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly above average. Most children have attended a playgroup. The school has received a school achievement award for improvements in its results at age eleven in national tests.

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

Appleton Thorn Primary is a good school and has many more strengths than weaknesses. Standards in the vast majority of subjects are at least above average. Pupils behave very well, are keen learners and develop very good relationships. The teaching is good overall. The school has established a very good partnership with parents and they are very supportive. Good value for money is provided.

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

- Pupils achieve at least above average standards in almost all subjects.
- Teaching is good overall and very good in Year 1 and Year 2.
- Pupils behave very well and their keen attitudes and very good relationships have a positive effect on their learning.
- The school works very well in partnership with parents and they are very happy with their children's education.

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

- Junior pupils do not achieve as well in English as they do in mathematics and science.
- Pupils' progress in information and communication technology (ICT) is unsatisfactory.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance are not rigorous enough.

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

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

The school was last inspected in April 1997 and has improved well. Standards at the time of the last inspection were mainly average but are now at least above average in the vast majority of subjects. Since 1998 standards in the national tests have been significantly higher for pupils aged eleven. In the 2000 tests the school exceeded its statutory targets in mathematics and science. There is a higher proportion of good or better teaching. The key issues from the last inspection have been addressed in most respects. Most notably, provision for the youngest pupils is much better and is now good overall. Monitoring and evaluation of the school's work continue to be not thorough enough. In the last inspection pupils' behaviour was judged to be satisfactory, it is now very good. Assessment arrangements are now satisfactory rather than weak. Standards in ICT are not as good as at the time of the last inspection, mainly because pupils' do not have enough opportunities to develop skills within the whole curriculum.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	D	A	B	D
Mathematics	C	A	A	A
Science	D	A*	A*	A

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

The results show that since 1998 standards have risen significantly. The trend in overall performance has been above the national trend and in 2000 the school exceeded its statutory targets. The school's performance in science in 1999 and 2000 placed it in the highest five percent of schools nationally. The results also show that taking the three years together, pupils have made better progress in mathematics and science than they have in English. Because pupils did not perform as well as could be expected in the writing test the school sought to improve the teaching. The signs are that this was successful because in the most recent national tests the standards in writing have improved. Although the 2001 unvalidated results indicate that overall standards in English, mathematics and science were not as good as in 2000 the number of Year 6 pupils who took the test was very small. Comparison with the previous year's results needs therefore to be treated with considerable caution. Since 1998 standards in the national tests for pupils aged seven have been high in mathematics and above average in reading and writing. Best progress has been made in mathematics. Results in the most recent tests indicate that standards are being maintained. Any variability in the performance of seven and eleven year-old pupils from one year to another is because of the low numbers in the year groups. Standards in the current Year 2 and Year 6 generally reflect the test results and are above average in the vast majority of other subjects. Generally, pupils achieve well but progress in ICT is unsatisfactory. Children in the reception class are making good overall progress and should exceed many of the expectations for their learning by the time they join Year 1.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Attitudes are positive.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good overall and excellent in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils relate very well to one another and their personal development is very good.
Attendance	The attendance level is well above the national average.

The oldest pupils respond very well to their role in helping younger pupils in the playground. Pupils respond very well to the rewards for showing "citizenship".

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Very good	Good

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

Mathematics is taught very well in Year 1 and Year 2 and at least satisfactorily in the juniors. A key strength in the teaching is the development of numeracy. English, including literacy, is also taught very well in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6. Teaching of literacy in the rest of the juniors lacks confidence and was unsatisfactory during the inspection. However, pupils' work indicates that usually the teaching is better. Teaching is good or better in the vast majority of other subjects. Generally, the range of pupils' needs is met well. Key strengths in the good or better teaching include high expectations and clear explanations resulting in pupils' good learning. Whole class discussion is used well. Pupils acquire basic skills well, contribute confidently to discussions and are usually interested in their work. Good foundations are laid in the reception class especially in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and personal, social and emotional development.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is satisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is satisfactory. Some of the individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs lack clear enough targets for learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is good overall. Pupils' social development is promoted very strongly.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are well cared for. Arrangements for supervising and organising their outside break times, including the work of an adult play leader, are excellent.

Partnership with parents is very good.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management are sound overall with some important good features. The rapid growth in the number of pupils in the juniors has been managed well without any significant lessening of standards. There is no strategic planning beyond a year and leadership roles are not clearly defined.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Responsibilities are fulfilled satisfactorily.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The curriculum, teaching and learning are not evaluated rigorously enough.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used satisfactorily.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory overall. The range of books is too narrow and the library is too small. There are some gaps in the provision of resources for the youngest pupils. The governors apply the principles of best value well.

## 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>Parents are very satisfied with all aspects of the school's work.</li> <li>They feel the headteacher and staff are very approachable, their children like school, are expected to work hard and achieve good standards.</li> </ul>	No areas for improvement were identified.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

- 1 At the time of the last inspection standards at seven and eleven were above average in English and average in mathematics and science. Over the period 1998-2000, standards in the national tests for pupils aged eleven improved significantly in English, mathematics and science and the trend in performance was above the national average. Overall standards have been high and the school exceeded its statutory targets in 2000. Results in science in 1999 and 2000 were very high in comparison with all schools. Despite the need for caution because of low cohort sizes, it is clear that pupils have made better progress in mathematics and science than in English. The invalidated test results for 2001 indicate improved standards in writing. The apparent fall in overall standards needs to be treated with extreme caution because of the very low number of pupils that were in Year 6. Standards in the work seen in the current Year 6 are much better in mathematics and science than they were at the time of the last inspection. In English, they are broadly similar. In the tests for pupils aged seven, taking the three years 1998-2000 together, results have exceeded the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Overall standards have generally remained high when compared with those in all schools. In comparison with results in similar schools pupils have achieved best in mathematics and least well in writing. The unvalidated results in the most recent tests indicate similar standards. Standards in the work seen in the current Year 2 are much better in mathematics than at the time of the last inspection and are similar in English. Standards in science have improved. Throughout the school the effective implementation of the numeracy strategy has had a significant impact on standards in mathematics. Good teaching in science is largely responsible for the high standards.
  
- 2 Throughout the school pupils achieve well in speaking and listening because teachers provide plenty of opportunities to develop these skills. These contribute to the above average standards at seven and eleven. Whole class discussion is a feature of almost all lessons and helps pupils to develop good use of appropriate subject terminology. Because confidence grows as pupils become older, by Year 6 they use a good range of vocabulary and converse maturely with adults. Very good teaching of the literacy framework is helping pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 to achieve well in reading. In Year 2 standards are broadly above average. Pupils are developing good strategies to attempt unfamiliar words but also their reading progress is helped by the good partnership between teachers and parents. Achievement in reading is satisfactory in the juniors but the signs are that it is improving in Year 6. Standards in Year 6 are broadly above average. Although many junior pupils have advanced reading skills, including good understanding of what they read, they are not especially enthusiastic. The range of their reading and their knowledge of authors are not as broad as could be expected. An insufficient range of books restricts the breadth of their reading. The library is inadequate. Writing is taught well in Year 1 and Year 2 and consequently pupils are achieving well. Standards in Year 2 are above average. The teaching of writing in Years 3-5 lacks confidence and as a result pupils are not achieving as well as they could do. Teaching is good in Year 6 and the signs are that the overall average standard should improve.

- 3 Apart from the implementation of the numeracy strategy, improved teaching and use of assessment have contributed to the improvement in standards in mathematics, which are high in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils throughout the school achieve well in their work in number, shape, space and measures. Very good progress is made in calculations and results in pupils working at a good pace. Pupils solve problems particularly well. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects such as handling data in science and geography. The good teaching in science has ensured that there are regular opportunities for scientific enquiry and good coverage of the required elements of the subject. Consequently standards in Year 2 are above average. Additionally, by Year 6 standards are also high because of good progress over time.
- 4 The above average standards in the majority of other subjects are largely attributable to good teaching. However, in almost all lessons, including the core subjects, pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour also contribute to their attainment and progress. Since the last inspection standards have been maintained or improved in the vast majority of non-core subjects. The most significant improvement is in standards in music at age eleven that were below average last time and are now above average. A suitable scheme of work for music has boosted teachers' confidence and as a result improved the teaching and learning. Standards in art and design at age eleven were also below average at the time of the last inspection. Although these have improved there is scope to improve them further by broadening the art and design curriculum. Although standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are average at age seven and eleven, pupils are not achieving satisfactorily because they have few opportunities to apply their skills within the whole curriculum. There was not enough evidence in design and technology to evaluate standards.
- 5 In much of the work, high attaining pupils achieve well because usually expectations in the teaching are sufficiently high. In the very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching the most able pupils were not challenged and therefore did not make the progress of which they are capable. Currently there is only one pupil with a statement of special educational needs (SEN) but in the last school year there were three. Individual education plans (IEP) for pupils with statements have achievable targets that are clearly identified and the plans are reviewed regularly to ensure that a good rate of progress is being achieved. The very good support in lessons ensures the current statemented pupil participates fully. The vast majority of other pupils with SEN make similar progress to their peers because the teachers are generally conscious of their needs that have been identified by school and national tests, and also by teachers' observations. Although a satisfactory register of SEN is maintained in line with the requirements of the Code of Practice, and each pupil's progress is reviewed annually, movement between the stages of the register is slow. The class teachers undertake more frequent monitoring of progress and they prepare, by and large, satisfactory IEPs. However, the IEPs' targets are often too broad to help the teachers assess the small steps made in improvement. The school is aware that it needs to make sure that two pupils with physical impairment consistently receive enough support and now needs to review whether all pupils are on the appropriate stage of the SEN register.
- 6 The overall good teaching in the reception class ensures children's good progress towards meeting or exceeding many of the expectations of them by the time they enter Year 1. However, their creative development is restricted by a lack of suitable resources for self-chosen activities. The work undertaken by Year 1 pupils when

they were in the reception class indicates that good foundations were laid for pupils' development especially in literacy, mathematics and scientific aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world.

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

- 7 Pupils' very good attitudes to school, behaviour, levels of personal development and attendance have a positive impact on their achievements. Standards have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their levels of attendance are very good, being above the average for primary schools.
- 8 Attitudes in lessons are generally good and pupils show good interest and concentration. For example, in a Year 4/5 art and design lesson their very good listening to the teacher's advice and their concentrated efforts enabled them to produce very good observational drawings of their own shoes. Attitudes in lessons deteriorate to unsatisfactory levels in a small minority of lessons in Years 3, 4, and 5 when the teaching fails to capture pupils' interest sufficiently. Pupils of all ages respond very well to extra-curricular activities; for example, well over 20 pupils from Years 1 and 2 regularly and avidly attend football coaching.
- 9 Behaviour is very good in assemblies and it is good in lessons. No bullying or aggressive behaviour was observed during the inspection or reported by pupils or parents. In the playground pupils' behaviour is excellent and results from their terrific response to the wide range of activities provided. There have been no permanent or temporary exclusions for the last two years, a figure well below average. Pupils have a very good sense of fairness and realise that their own behaviour has an effect on others. Their awareness of citizenship is a very strong feature of their personal development. An excellent example is the very keen attitude taken by Year 6 pupils in their role of assistant playleaders when they supervise younger pupils in developing their appreciation of a range of games and activities at playtimes. Children in the reception class have settled well in school and generally show a good interest in lessons. They behave very well throughout the day and relate well to older pupils.
- 10 Relationships are usually very good throughout the school. Pupils are polite, friendly and very helpful to other pupils and to adults. They work together very well in pairs and groups. For example, in an excellent lesson in physical education pupils in Year 2 co-operated safely as they used large apparatus.
- 11 Pupils' personal development is enhanced by their opportunities to raise money for a range of charities and to use their initiative. Two Year 5 pupils last year independently arranged a collection of stamps for the Blue Peter Appeal.

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

- 12 The inspection took place at the beginning of the autumn term. Several teachers were either new to the school or were adjusting to teaching what for them was a new year group. The quality of teaching is good overall. Much of the teaching is very good especially in Year 1 and Year 2. Teaching is better than at the time of the last inspection where no very good teaching was observed. Despite a small number of unsatisfactory lessons pupils' good overall progress over time indicates that in the vast majority of subjects they have been taught well. Junior pupils have not progressed as well in English as they have in mathematics and science and this

suggests there has been less rigour and confidence in teaching literacy. However, the teaching in literacy is good in Year 6 and should mean that pupils will make more rapid progress.

- 13 The vast majority of lessons in Years 1 and 2 and in the junior classes are well structured and provide suitable opportunities for whole class work in addition to pupils working individually and/or in small groups. Also in most lessons pupils of all abilities are suitably challenged by the work. The overall high standard reached in national tests is good evidence that high attaining pupils have been taught well.
- 14 Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are particularly taught well in Year 1 and Year 2. For example, Year 2 pupils' knowledge of letter sounds improved quickly because the teacher's effective use of tongue twisters excited their interest. In another very good lesson, Year 1 pupils made quick progress in number calculations because the teacher progressively made the counting in groups of numbers more challenging. An especially good feature of the teaching in mathematics throughout the school is the opportunity provided for pupils to apply their skills in other subjects such as geography and science. Pupils are given opportunities to write within a number of different subjects but opportunities to write at length and take sufficient account of audiences are not provided consistently in the juniors. In the two lessons observed in ICT the teaching was good and pupils improved their skills. However, throughout the school ICT is not taught often enough and consequently pupils are not making sufficient progress.
- 15 There are significant strengths in the good or better teaching. Expectations are usually high, teachers' explanations are clear and precise and pupils are helped to improve their skills, knowledge and understanding. Invariably these features lead to pupils' making good progress in their learning. In a good science lesson in Year 6 the teacher's clear explanations and careful introduction of new scientific terminology helped pupils to improve their knowledge of plants. In an excellent physical education lesson in Year 2 demonstration was used very effectively to help pupils improve their performance. Whole class discussion is used effectively in much of the teaching. For example, in the joint Year 4/5 class a discussion on different places of worship was well managed so that pupils were helped not only to talk confidently about their own experiences but also to develop their understanding of different forms of worship. Usually discipline is calm and effective and relationships are good. On those few occasions when teaching was unsatisfactory pupils were not managed well and they quickly lost interest because of a lack of suitable challenge.
- 16 Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are taught within the mainstream classes by their class teachers and are also sometimes withdrawn into small groups for help in literacy. On these occasions a classroom assistant teaches them. However, only a small number of pupils benefit from this support and, because their IEPs often lack precise targets for learning, the support is not always as focused as well as it could be. For pupils with a statement of SEN (only one at the time of the inspection) the quality of teaching and support is very good and the teamwork between the teacher and support assistant is effective. Pupils with SEN benefit from the good and better teaching in common with their peers especially where the teaching is well planned to meet the range of pupils' needs. In less successful lessons pupils with SEN are not only given the same task as everyone else but are not provided with appropriate resources to help them. As a result they become bored, lose interest and do not make progress.

- 17 The teaching in the reception class (Foundation Stage) is good overall. Especially good emphasis is given to the key areas of learning in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and personal, social and emotional development. The good teaching is ensuring that children are making good progress towards exceeding many of the expected goals for them by the time they enter Year 1. In creative development not enough appropriate resources are made available to ensure that children's learning is purposeful in their self-chosen activities. The samples of work from the reception year of the current Year 1 indicate that teaching of basic skills had been especially thorough. Good emphasis had also been given to the scientific aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world.

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

- 18 The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The school has adopted the literacy and numeracy strategies successfully; the numeracy strategy is proving very successful in raising standards. Good emphasis is given to the teaching of the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The inspection indicates that, although there are no significant gaps in the curricular provision for other subjects, the lack of monitoring of the curriculum results in some repetition in pupils' work. The senior management team is now planning how to ensure better continuity in pupils' development of subject knowledge and skills and is considering more closely the allocation of time to individual subjects. The headteacher and governors are also aware of the need to review the weekly teaching time in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, which is currently below the nationally recommended levels.
- 19 Since the last inspection, improvement in the planning of the curriculum has been satisfactory. Teachers make good efforts to develop links between schemes of work in all subjects. For example, in history, junior pupils enhanced their skills in design and technology when they made replicas of Tudor houses. Good provision is made for pupils' personal and social education and excellent consideration is given to the development of citizenship both within and outside lessons. Health education is taught appropriately as part of the science curriculum. A good range of extra-curricular activities enriches pupils' learning opportunities. Sporting and musical activities are arranged each term and sometimes involve specialist trainers. Residential visits to the Lake District and the Yorkshire Dales are offered to pupils in Years 5 and 6. Links with the community are good. Many good efforts are made to involve friends of the school, local villagers, and senior citizens in school activities. At Christmas pupils invite the senior citizens into the school for a Christmas party, concert and bingo. An annual firework display on the village green involves the school and most residents of Appleton Thorn. Also, the school and the village join together to celebrate the annual "Bawming the Thorn" ceremony when pupils dress in red and white costumes to perform a series of traditional dances and songs around the Appleton Thorn tree.
- 20 Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Pupils with SEN receive the National Curriculum alongside other pupils in their peer group and most make good overall progress. As required by the national Code of Practice there is a register of pupils with SEN. For any pupil with a statement good IEPs are prepared with the help of outside specialist agencies when required. These plans identify small but

achievable stages of progress and help to ensure the pupils' entitlement to the National Curriculum. Regular reviews of progress are arranged. Currently there is only one pupil with a statement of SEN and he is being very well supported. IEPs for other pupils are often not specific enough about what learning is expected. Consequently it is more difficult for teachers to assess achievement in precise terms.

- 21 Good links have been established with the feeder high school and also with the local nursery and playgroup. The school participates in a series of induction arrangements for the pupils in Year 6, which provides good preparation for secondary education. Children about to start in the reception class visit school with their pre-school leaders and also with parents. Links with university teacher training institutions are good and the school welcomes student teachers in school on occasions.
- 22 The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Social development is promoted very effectively, especially by the very good arrangements for pupils to be involved in citizenship activities with awards given monthly for outstanding achievement. The excellent provision for playground activities permeates the whole school and encourages pupils to play co-operatively together. Good provision is made for social and moral development and pupils are developing good awareness of the differences between right and wrong. Pupils have good opportunities to appreciate their own cultural heritage. They visit historical sites, National Trust properties, museums and art galleries as part of the school's programme to enrich the curriculum. Some provision is made to help pupils respect and understand the traditions, cultures and beliefs of people from different cultures. For example, they study aboriginal art and the major world faiths. However, preparation for living in a diverse society is no more than a satisfactory feature of the provision for cultural development. Pupils' spiritual development is fostered satisfactorily. Although time for reflection and spiritual awareness is a feature of collective worship, and religious education makes a good contribution, spiritual development rarely occurs in other lessons.

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

- 23 Pupils are well cared for and standards have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils' personal development is monitored well; in particular, the headteacher knows his pupils and their backgrounds very well. A key issue arising from the last inspection was to ensure that there were suitable arrangements for child protection. These now accord with locally agreed guidelines and staff have received appropriate training. The school's health and safety procedures are very effective in identifying potential issues and these are dealt with promptly. The accommodation is clean, tidy and secure.
- 24 Good behaviour is promoted very successfully. The use of praise and rewards has a very positive impact on improving pupils' self-esteem and behaviour. The delight observed on the face of a reception pupil during a "rewards" assembly reflected very well the success of this policy. Rewards for achievement in relation to citizenship are a strong feature. The school's appointment of an adult playleader is a very successful initiative and has been welcomed by pupils and parents. The excellent range of activities and the supervision at playtimes, organised by the playleader, supported by a very willing band of assistants from Year 6, have a very positive impact on pupils' behaviour. In addition, the very positive attitudes shown towards

pupils with physical impairment, by fully including them in all activities, is a fine example of the school's very positive approach to social inclusion.

- 25 Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very effective and contribute well to the very high overall levels of attendance.
- 26 Good pastoral care is provided for all pupils on the SEN register. Care and support for the current pupil with a statement of SEN is especially good and it is clear this applied also to pupils who have recently left the school. With good levels of sensitive and supportive intervention provided by a good team partnership of staff these pupils are able to act as valued members of the school community. For all pupils assessment arrangements are satisfactory and the needs of each pupil are identified accurately. However, insufficient attention is given to the preparation of pupils' IEPs.
- 27 Assessment of all pupils' attainment and progress has improved since the last inspection and is satisfactory. A range of assessments takes place including assessment of pupils in their first term in the reception class, the use of statutory and non-statutory tests and assessments as part of subject schemes of work. Teachers are improving their knowledge of levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science and samples of work are kept which illustrate the different levels achieved. In English and mathematics test results have been analysed to identify where pupils need to improve and subsequent action has been taken. For example, writing was given sharper focus in the teaching and as a result standards in the most recent tests for eleven-year-olds improved. Test results are also used appropriately to identify where additional support is needed, for instance, for those pupils needing booster and additional literacy lessons. Test results are also used to help set whole school targets for English and mathematics. Although the assessments provide useful information about pupils' attainment and progress the headteacher has recognised that the whole school procedures are not sufficiently cohesive to help teachers ensure that they are helping pupils to make maximum progress. The full range of assessment information is insufficiently used to track pupil's progress over the school year and across the key stages. As a result the school cannot always identify with sufficient rigour where pupils have made gains in their knowledge and understanding and where there are significant gaps. The assessment information is not used to set individual targets for pupils and to make them aware of them.

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

- 28 A very good partnership has been established with parents and has consolidated well the links described in the previous report. Parents are extremely positive in their views of the school. In the pre-inspection meeting and parental questionnaires they were full of praise for the school and had no significant areas of concern. In particular, they feel their children enjoy coming to school and are expected to work hard. They also consider that behaviour and teaching are good, the headteacher and staff are approachable and the school is well led. Inspectors agree with the parents' views.
- 29 The very positive relationships between parents and staff have a very good impact on pupils' attitudes to school. Parents are well involved in their children's education by supporting homework, ensuring their regular and prompt attendance, helping in school activities and supporting the Parent Teacher Association. Parents receive



good information on their children's progress in annual reports, which also feature very good comments on areas for personal development; for example "needs to develop more confidence in his own ability" and "can recognise appropriately how his behaviour affects other people".

- 30 In general, the school's partnership with parents of pupils with SEN is reasonably effective. It has been good for any pupils who have had a statement of SEN. For other pupils informal meetings with parents are good. Although these arrangements may have worked well in the past when the school was smaller, there are now not sufficient formal systems to ensure that parents have the opportunity to be fully involved in a joint home school partnership.
- 31 Newsletters provide very good information about the life of the school, especially the termly class information sheets that provide parents with very helpful advice on homework and areas their children will be studying.

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

- 32 In the last two years several changes have affected the leadership and management. The imminent closure of another school resulted in a considerable increase in the number of junior pupils. The headteacher no longer has part time responsibility for teaching a class and there is now a deputy headteacher. Half of the teaching staff have joined the school over this period. The rapid growth in numbers has been handled smoothly and parents have commented positively on how the headteacher's leadership has ensured that the essential character of the school has not been unduly affected. Overall standards in pupils' attainment and progress are better than at the time of the last inspection. There have been substantial improvements in the accommodation.
- 33 The headteacher has established an open and very positive partnership with parents who have indicated to the inspection team their considerable satisfaction with their children's education. Community links are also promoted well. A key strength of the school is the promotion of pupils' personal development. The headteacher and staff know pupils well and relationships are very good.
- 34 The headteacher acknowledges that in several respects he is still adjusting to a different leadership role. The deputy headteacher is a very recent appointment and his and the headteacher's role are not yet defined clearly enough so that staff can be aware of the division of responsibilities. The recent forming of a senior management team is a positive feature.
- 35 The governing body fulfils its statutory duties satisfactorily in most respects but should ensure that information to parents on religious education and the right of withdrawal from daily worship is included in the brochure for parents. Many of the governors have had training in their role and are keen to become more fully involved in overseeing the school's work. Their knowledge of the school's work is sound and gathered largely by informal contact with the school. Where possible they visit the school and also help in classrooms. They discuss their visits in governors' meetings but no written record is kept of their views on what they have seen. The governors acknowledge that they have no systematic approach for monitoring and evaluating the school's work. They oversee the school development plan and in co-operation with the headteacher ensure that annual objectives are costed appropriately. The plan is a useful tool for guiding the school's development over the course of a year.

However, it does not look beyond a year so the priorities for the school's future direction are not clear. Financial control is efficient and the governors apply the principles of best value well. A good example is the formation of a governors' working party to consider the most effective way of spending forthcoming funds for ICT development. The school's strategy for performance management is good and suitable targets have been identified for the headteacher and staff.

- 36 Monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum, teaching and learning have been ad hoc and the headteacher and subject co-ordinators have therefore not been fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses in order to help shape future direction. However, the headteacher and deputy have recently produced a timetable for monitoring the school's priorities to be undertaken during this academic year.
- 37 The accommodation, staffing and learning resources are adequate overall but there are some weaknesses. The range of fiction and non-fiction books is too narrow and restricts the breadth in pupils' reading. The library is too small and as a consequence is under-used. The sound quality in the hall is poor and it is difficult for pupils to hear adults clearly. In the reception class, the supply of constructional equipment and resources for creative development is insufficient.
- 38 The headteacher and governing body give satisfactory consideration to the provision for SEN and statutory requirements are met. School documentation provides satisfactory information for parents. A link governor for SEN meets termly with the SEN co-ordinator to discuss the present arrangements and identify any weaknesses that need to be resolved. The co-ordinator recognises the importance of her role and seeks to give good support to teachers and classroom assistants. However, in the last school year the co-ordinator had no non-teaching time during the school day to monitor provision. As a result there are aspects of the school procedures that have not been addressed. There is some confusion between the teachers and the co-ordinator about their respective roles. The school has not always acted quickly in seeking help from outside specialist agencies and in acting on any recommendations made.

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

- 39 The governors and headteacher should:
- (1) Improve junior pupils' achievement in English by:
    - ensuring that they have regular opportunities to write for different audiences;
    - increasing the variety of books to give pupils more choice in their reading.Paragraphs: 2, 14, 37, 52-3
  - (2) Improve pupils' progress in ICT by ensuring that they have regular opportunities to develop their skills within the whole curriculum.  
Paragraphs: 4, 14, 53, 63, 75, 89-94

- (3) Ensure that the curriculum, teaching and learning are monitored and evaluated rigorously. Paragraphs 18, 35-6, 41, 66-7, 73, 82, 88, 90.

### **OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL FOR INCLUSION IN THE ACTION PLAN**

- Review provision for SEN to ensure requirements are being met and improve IEPs.  
Paragraphs: 5, 16, 26, 38
- Ensure the school development plan looks beyond a year.  
Paragraph: 35
- Provide better resources to help the youngest children's creative development.  
Paragraphs: 6, 17, 37, 41, 47, 49
- Review the weekly teaching time.  
Paragraph: 18
- Improve assessment further and set targets for individual performance in the core subjects.  
Paragraphs: 27, 56, 67, 73

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	40
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	7	20	7	5	0	0
Percentage	2.5	17.5	50	17.5	12.5	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	142
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	24

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	35
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	2.3
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	8	7	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total	-	-	-
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	93 (93)	100 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total	-	-	-
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (100)	100 (100)	93 (100)
	National	85 (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 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	10	7	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total	-	-	-
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (80)	94 (80)	100 (100)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total	-	-	-
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (80)	88 (70)	100 (80)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. Results for boys and girls are omitted where there are less than eleven pupils in either group

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	-
Black – other	-
Indian	3
Pakistani	-
Bangladeshi	-
Chinese	-
White	123
Any other minority ethnic group	-

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.3
Average class size	23.7

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

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	72

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	291,730
Total expenditure	284,356
Expenditure per pupil	2,032
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	7,374

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	142
Number of questionnaires returned	68

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	28	0	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	59	35	3	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	59	40	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	53	3	0	4
The teaching is good.	72	26	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	47	4	0	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	82	18	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	24	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	43	54	1	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	66	31	1	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	38	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	44	4	3	3

## **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**

- 40 The provision for children in the foundation stage is in the reception class. At the time of the inspection the children had been in school for only four weeks and the priority of the class teacher was to ensure that children were happy and settled into the routines of school life. Since the previous inspection the provision and teaching have improved considerably. The curriculum is now based on the appropriate areas of learning and provides the children with broad and balanced experiences. A wide range of challenging first hand experiences are provided to promote the early learning goals expected of children when they enter Year 1. Relationships with parents are very good and initial assessments of the children are shared with them. The staff work well as a team.
- 41 The attainment of most children entering the reception class is above what is usually found for children of this age. This is confirmed by the school's initial assessments. Teaching is usually good and has a very positive effect on children's learning. Particular emphasis is placed on developing children's learning in literacy and mathematics. Most children achieve well in relation to what they know and can do on entry to the reception class. As a result they will exceed many of the expected early learning goals by the time they begin Year 1, in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. Most of the goals in creative development will be met but a lack of suitable resources is restricting children's choice, exploration and imaginative play. Although staff use questions, comments and observations well to extend learning and to assess children's progress the lack of a record of progress towards achieving the early learning goals makes it difficult for them to identify any gaps in the learning.

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

- 42 Children's personal, social and emotional development is given a high priority and this ensures children make good progress and are on target to reach the early learning goals well before the end of the reception year. The staff's praise and encouragement are effective in promoting children's positive behaviour and their general personal development. The very good relationships with parents are particularly effective in helping to develop children's positive attitudes to school.
- 43 Children enjoy coming to school and happily leave their parents and carers at the start of sessions. Well-planned activities and careful explanations help them to understand the need for rules and routines. Already most children show confidence and an eagerness to learn. They work hard to improve their skills of reading, writing and number work. When engaged in structured activities they work with considerable concentration. This has a very positive effect on the rate of learning of early literacy and numeracy skills. Children usually work well together in twos or small groups sharing ideas and reinforcing and extending their learning. Resources are not sufficiently well organised or available to extend children's independence and occasionally they become restless and are not gainfully occupied.



## **Communication, language and literacy**

- 44 The teaching of communication, language and literacy is good and this ensures children make good progress and will reach the early learning goals well before the end of the reception year. Children are encouraged to become good listeners and enjoy stories, rhymes and music. Structured play activities, shared experiences and planned formal activities provide good opportunities for children to develop their speaking skills. Confidence in speaking is developed as the children tell their teacher and friends 'their news' or predict what might happen in a story. Children use language well to negotiate roles and invent their own dramatic situations in the 'home corner' or when playing with small toys. Children hold imaginary telephone conversations with 'family members' or create their own 'Thunderbird' adventure. A child skilfully adopted the role of 'mummy' as she sent another child off to the music area as a way of successfully removing him from the home corner. Staff sometimes miss opportunities to interact with children on these occasions to extend their vocabulary and clarify their thinking. Well-structured teacher-directed activities help children to recognise familiar letters, sounds and words to help them to develop their early reading and writing skills. Many high attaining children already identify simple rhyming words in familiar nursery rhymes. Children explore sounds, letters and early writing through an interesting writing table and message board in the home corner. A scrutiny of work completed in the previous year indicates that most children make good attempts to write independently before they reach Year 1. Although only in school a few weeks children are making very good progress in learning to recognise and write their names. Most children now recognise their names and most make very good attempts to write them independently. High attaining pupils write them accurately with well-formed capital and small letters. A comfortable well-stocked book corner promotes a love of books and children are learning to handle books with care. Children choose books for themselves and are already developing confidence in 'reading' stories from memory or with the help of pictures. Appropriate elements of the literacy strategy are implemented for children in the reception classes and this has a positive effect on their achievements.

## **Mathematical development**

- 45 The teaching of mathematics has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. This ensures children make good progress and are on target to reach the early learning goals well before the end of their reception year. The reception class provides a wide range of activities to promote mathematical understanding. Through well-planned topic work children explore number, pattern, shape and measurement. They join in with the teacher and count up to 20 confidently. Interesting games and activities in the home corner encourage children to recognise and write numbers correctly. They look up telephone numbers in the home corner to ring the 'doctor' or 'dentist'. Most children already recognise numbers to 10 and make good attempts to write them accurately. A scrutiny of the previous year's work indicates that well before they enter Year 1 most children can add and subtract to 10 and record the operation formally. Good emphasis is placed on developing appropriate mathematical language. Children consider size, shape and position when playing with small world toys and recognise simple shapes as they make their own shape pictures using triangles, circles, squares and rectangles. Good questioning from a visiting adult helped children recognise the need for accuracy in weighing out 110 grams of ingredients in order to make gingerbread. Appropriate elements of the numeracy strategy are implemented and this has a positive effect on children's achievements.

## **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

- 46 The teaching of knowledge and understanding of the world is good particularly in the scientific aspects of this area of learning. This ensures children make good progress and are on target to reach the early learning goals before the end of their reception year.
- 47 Children are developing a good understanding of the world around them. The natural curiosity of young children is enhanced as staff encourage them to talk about their discoveries and experiences. A well-planned lesson developing children's knowledge and understanding of their sense of smell involved children in smelling a wide range of different items. A scrutiny of the previous year's work indicated children develop very good observation and recording skills and much of the work was well within Level 1 of the National Curriculum for science. Children learn about the passage of time through celebrating birthdays, talking about the days of the week and the changing seasons and weather. A respect and understanding for other ways of life is developed well through imaginative religious education lessons involving children in recreating a Jewish wedding. Children develop their skills of cutting, folding and sticking and model making through teacher directed activities. However, unavailability of waste materials for children to create their own two and three-dimensional models restricts their independence and creativity. The computer is a popular choice and many children are becoming confident in using the mouse and using different CD-ROMS to support their learning in mathematics, language and literacy. Children's understanding of designing and making is limited through a lack of sufficiently challenging construction toys. Staff are not always available to interact in these valuable learning experiences to extend skills and ideas further.

## **Physical development**

- 48 The provision for physical development has improved considerably since the last inspection and is now good. Effective teaching ensures the majority of children meet the early learning goals well before they move into Year 1. Children's natural exuberance and energy are catered for well. A very well planned and imaginative outdoor play area provides children with daily opportunities to develop their physical skills. There is a good range of wheeled toys which children manoeuvre well, avoiding other children and obstacles. A topic on their bodies helps children develop an understanding of the importance of exercise to ensure good health. Structured physical education lessons promote their development further. In the lesson observed children developed good spatial awareness, control and imagination as they responded well to their teacher. Most displayed suppleness and agility as they become more aware of their own bodies. Good teacher intervention encourages children to improve their skills of running and jumping and as a result they make good gains in their skills in a short time. Emphasis is placed on developing children's independence and skill when handling tools and malleable materials and they are becoming competent as they handle a variety of tools and materials safely and with care.

## **Creative development**

- 49 Overall, teaching to promote creative development is satisfactory and children are on target to reach many of the early learning goals by the end of their reception year. Children enjoy a satisfactory range of experiences in art, music and

imaginative play. They enjoy singing rhymes and explore instruments to develop an understanding of loud and quiet sounds. There are planned teacher-directed activities to develop children's understanding of colour, shape and pattern. However, these activities lack sufficiently challenging resources and are sometimes too limiting and over-directed by the teacher. The learning is therefore not always sufficiently purposeful. Materials such as paint, sand and water are not regularly available for children to explore on a regular basis. As in the previous inspection there are still insufficient materials available from which children can choose to create their own designs, pictures, models and collages. Resources to develop children's imagination further are often unsatisfactory. For example, there is a distinct lack of dressing up clothes and good home corner equipment and furniture.

## ENGLISH

- 50 Standards in the national tests for pupils aged seven and eleven, in comparison with all schools nationally, have remained at least above average over time. Variations in results between successive years are largely explained by the low cohort sizes. Results in the most recent tests indicate that further improvement has been made because of the school's increased attention to developing pupils' writing. Although standards are on an upward trend, pupils do not achieve as well as they do in mathematics and science especially in the juniors. Also, at age eleven, standards have not compared well with those in similar schools. The inspection finds that in the current Year 2 standards are above average in speaking, listening, reading and writing. In Year 6 standards are above average in speaking, listening and reading, and average in writing.
- 51 Throughout the school good progress is made in speaking and listening. However, the school has no policy or scheme of work for this element of the curriculum to ensure that opportunities are presented in a systematic way. When pupils begin the National Curriculum many explain their ideas in a small group, listen well to each other and use appropriate vocabulary. Pupils in Year 2 readily answer questions, make good efforts to offer suggestions, or describe their own experiences to the whole class. For example, in an ICT lesson many were willing to explain to the class group the various processes needed to open a computer program, enter or delete information, and save their work in a file. By the age of eleven pupils listen well to each other, have a good range of technical terms at their disposal and use mature vocabulary in discussions. They willingly enter into discussions with a wide range of adults and express their ideas confidently and eloquently. The annual Shakespearean play performed each summer for pupils, parents and friends of the school provides a good opportunity for the oldest pupils to demonstrate their speaking skills. These dramas also give all pupils a good introduction to the works of William Shakespeare, and many pupils describe with enthusiasm the various strands of the plot of "The Tempest" or "The Merchant of Venice."
- 52 Progress in reading is good in Years 1 and 2 and is aided by the good parental partnership with the school. In Year 1, many pupils begin the National Curriculum having good pre-reading skills and many are already able to read a simple text. During the year they improve their skills in building sounds and learn to read a more difficult vocabulary. They are beginning to identify fiction and non-fiction material. By Year 2 many pupils are happy to read a more complex text aloud in front of the whole class. For example, in a geography lesson several pupils shared the task of reading the story of "Katie Morag on the Isle of Struay" and others followed the story

text keenly joining in with the story when asked. More than three-quarters of Year 2 are reading confidently at expected levels and many are achieving better standards. However, few can describe a favourite story or name a favourite author, although most knew traditional tales such as “The Three Bears” or the story of “Sleeping Beauty.” Most junior pupils have made satisfactory progress over time but it is improving in Year 6. The majority of pupils are reading at least in line with expected levels and many have more advanced reading skills. They are reasonably fluent and expressive in their reading and have adequate library skills. Their comprehension skills are good. They research for information in books or in CD-ROMs. However, pupils’ general knowledge about books is not as good as could be expected, given their capabilities. Few can name more than one author and there is a general lack of enthusiasm for reading. Although throughout the school pupils make satisfactory or better progress in literacy lessons, the insufficient range of structured and non-structured fiction books is limiting progress in their personal reading. Also, the school library is not adequate to develop their wider reading skills.

- 53 Progress in writing is good in Years 1 and 2, satisfactory in Years 3-5 and good in Year 6. The youngest pupils enjoy writing tasks and are eager to produce their best work. They persevere with their handwriting and achieve a good printed script by the age of seven. Some pupils with better pencil control are also making a good effort at a joined cursive script. In Year 1 pupils recognise letter sounds and symbols and at least two-thirds of the class are confident to write independently. At least a quarter of the class construct several sentences sequencing events accurately. By Year 2 many more pupils write unaided, and with a good degree of accuracy in their spelling of the more commonly known words. Those pupils who are more skilled in writing are beginning to consider the needs of the reader. For example, in describing a picture created in information and communication technology, one pupil wrote a good narrative account to explain about the planet Venus, whilst another pupil created an imaginary story about “iced treasure”. The story began very creatively with “This is my colourful world. It is my secret place.” Junior pupils continue to write for a range of audiences. They learn about correct grammatical sentence construction and rules of punctuation. They practise writing beginnings and ends of stories and consider plots, settings, and characterisation. However, there are insufficient opportunities for them to write at length and often they write without carefully considering the purpose, organisation, or choice of vocabulary, in order to provide the reader with a vivid and lively account. Pupils show a satisfactory interest in writing but few are enthusiastic or enjoy playing with words to create the best effect. Cursive handwriting styles are now in line with expected levels. The most effective teaching provides good opportunities for sustained writing so that pupils learn and practise how to plan, draft, create and evaluate their own work. As a result they improve both the organisation and the style of their writing. In these lessons good opportunities are provided for pupils to write for different audiences by using other subjects of the curriculum. For example, in Year 5, in a history lesson, pupils wrote a newspaper article to describe the first Greek Games in Olympia in 776 BC. By Year 6 most pupils have sound understanding of grammar and punctuation and write for a reasonable range of audiences. They have produced good work in comparing different adaptations of a story. When inspired by very good teaching they perform well. In a very good lesson, they developed their understanding of personification as they constructed a poem about a stormy night. They suggested imaginative vocabulary and also used dictionaries and thesaurus well. Throughout the school there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use ICT in developing their literacy skills.

- 54 The quality of teaching during the inspection was consistently very good in Years 1, 2 and 6. In the two lessons seen in the two mixed aged classes in Years 3-5 the teaching was unsatisfactory; however, a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning suggests that it is usually better. Most teachers teach basic skills well and their subject knowledge is good. In the very effective lessons teachers plan thoroughly for pupils of differing ability. They have high expectations of all pupils, give precise explanations of lesson objectives and indicate clearly the qualities of good achievement. Activities are well structured and varied and lessons have a good pace. In the unsatisfactory lessons teachers are less confident in teaching the National Literacy Framework. Consequently there is a lack of rigour in the learning and activities are often disjointed. There is an over-reliance on the use of commercial worksheets and workbooks, which, although matched appropriately to the age of these pupils, do not give sufficient challenge for those who are high attainers.
- 55 Pupils with SEN make similar progress to their peers. The pupil with a statement of SEN receives good support towards achieving his individual targets. Other pupils, all in the junior classes, who are identified with particular needs in reading and writing receive good support in reading and comprehension in small withdrawal groups or in-class help. However, their individual education plans in reading and writing lack sharply focused objectives to enable their needs to be targeted more precisely. In writing there are too few additional resources available to ensure that their learning is always successful.
- 56 The subject is led and managed by a newly appointed co-ordinator who is still seeking to gain an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. There is little monitoring of teaching and learning and too limited use has been made of statutory or optional assessments in order to set targets for pupils' improvement, or to track their progress. However, there has been more focus on improving pupils' writing. The school is committed to improve standards further, and is keen to provide a more positive focus for this subject.

## **MATHEMATICS**

- 57 The standards achieved by pupils aged seven and eleven are well above those found nationally and similar to the standards reached in the 2000 tests which were well above the average for all and similar schools. Although there are as yet no national comparisons results in the recent 2001 tests indicate a similar picture of continuing high standards. By the age of seven and eleven the majority of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and make good progress over time. Since the previous inspection attainment at both seven and eleven has improved considerably. The improved standards are due to the positive impact of the National Numeracy Strategy, improved assessment procedures and improved teaching. The overall trend over time is one of sustained improvement.
- 58 There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support from class teachers and support staff. This support enables them to take a full part in mathematics lessons and to make good progress enabling them to achieve standards similar to their peers.

- 59 By the time pupils enter Year 2 they have a very good knowledge and understanding of basic number work. They are very skilled in using number and are excited by what numbers can do. They make very good progress in calculations and high attaining pupils add and subtract to 100 effectively. Mental strategies are of a very high standard and pupils confidently add and subtract 10, 20 and 30 to and from 100. High attaining pupils are learning to record their calculations in a formal way and learning is extended as they use their knowledge of number bonds to add and subtract more complex numbers such as 11. Low attaining pupils are confident in using numbers up to 50 and often beyond. In the juniors the planning of work builds very successfully on pupils' previous learning. By the time pupils enter Year 6 they have made very good progress in understanding multiples, factors and place values and are very accurate when using the four rules of number. High attaining pupils understand percentages, fractions and decimals and can add and subtract to one decimal place. Pupils of all attainment levels use their knowledge of multiplication tables and fractions to solve challenging problems involving money.
- 60 Throughout the school, pupils benefit from a wide range of well planned activities and experiences, which support very effectively their learning in work involving shape, space and measures. Pupils in Year 1 are learning to use accurate terminology when measuring, comparing, ordering and recording their heights. As they progress through the school pupils confidently use a range of measures. High and average attaining pupils in Year 6 show a very good understanding of rotational symmetry and co-ordinates and understand how to calculate perimeters, areas and volume using simple formulae accurately. All pupils know how to apply their mathematics knowledge to solve practical problems.
- 61 Numeracy skills are used effectively to develop pupils' understanding of data handling. Pupils in Year 1 make and interpret simple pictograms showing the colour of their eyes. By the age of eleven most pupils interpret graphs, charts and diagrams very well to explain findings and results.
- 62 Pupils almost always present their results in very organised way and are encouraged to always explain clearly the strategies that they use to arrive at an answer. Across the school teachers place considerable emphasis on ensuring pupils understand and use precise mathematical vocabulary when answering questions or discussing their work. Problem solving is given a very high profile and is a feature of most lessons.
- 63 Pupils have very good opportunities to use, consolidate and extend their mathematical skills in other subjects. For example, in an effective geography lesson in Year 1, pupils created a tally chart and graph to record information about transport. Although there is an increasing use of ICT to help pupils' learning in mathematics it is not sufficiently challenging and is not used as much as it should be.
- 64 Throughout the school pupils' attitudes towards the subject are good and in Years 1 and 2 they are very good. Pupils across the school work for extended lengths of time, enjoying the challenge of difficult tasks and responding with an eagerness and enthusiasm to the complexities of mathematics. Such approaches have a very positive effect on the progress and standards pupils achieve.
- 65 The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and often good or better. In Years 1 and 2 teaching is always very good. Teachers are implementing the

numeracy strategy with rigour and enthusiasm and enjoy the structure and precise learning which the strategy affords. They use a variety of methods to teach mathematical skills, including very effective whole class mental sessions and fast moving question and answer sessions which assess the pupils' understanding and extend their thinking. Lessons have a very good pace and challenge pupils to complete difficult tasks in good time and to a very high standard. In Year 1 and 2, mathematics is seen as exciting and resources are used creatively to capture pupils' imagination and interest. In the juniors, pupils' fascination with 'Harry Potter' and all things magical is used very effectively to extend pupils' understanding of mathematics. 'Magic number' displays encourage pupils to explore the endless possibilities that numbers can have. Relationships are good and encourage pupils to 'have a go'. The best of lessons leave pupils enthusiastic about mathematics and excited about the untold possibilities of what numbers can do.

- 66 The work in mathematics is well planned to take account of pupils' different levels of attainment. Assessments are built into the planned work and most teachers are very knowledgeable about the level of attainment pupils are working at. The marking of pupils' work is satisfactory and includes some general comments on where pupils have gone wrong. However, most pupils are unaware of precisely what they need to do to improve their work even further to reach higher levels.
- 67 Co-ordination of the subject is effective. Careful attention is now given to analysing the statutory test results to identify strengths and weakness in the curriculum in order to raise standards across the school further. However, assessments and test results are still not sufficiently analysed to track individual progress and set individual targets for pupils to ensure that all pupils achieve their full potential. There are some opportunities for the monitoring of teaching and learning across the school but this is spasmodic and is not a regular feature of the co-ordinator's role.
- 68 The curriculum for mathematics is good and enables all pupils to have equal access to the subject. Resources are good.

## **SCIENCE**

- 69 Standards have improved considerably since the last inspection largely as a result of good teaching. Standards in the tests for pupils aged eleven, in recent years, have been consistently very high when compared with all schools nationally. Over the three years 1998-2000 there has been no significant difference between the average scores for girls and boys. Very good progress has been made and results are high in comparison to those in similar schools. The apparent fall in standards in the unvalidated results for the year 2001 needs treating with great caution because of the very low number of pupils who took the test. The current pupils in Year 6 are maintaining high standards. In 2000 the school assessed standards for seven-year-olds as average compared to those of other schools nationally. Standards have improved and are above average in the current Year 2. A scrutiny of pupils' work throughout the school indicated that progress over time has been very good including for pupils with SEN.
- 70 The inspection took place at the beginning of the autumn term and therefore much of the completed work of Year 2 pupils' was from their time in their previous year group. Good work has been undertaken in life processes and living things, materials and their properties, and physical processes. Pupils are acquiring above average scientific knowledge and have had frequent opportunities to undertake

scientific enquiry. Most pupils are aware of differences between living and non-living things, label parts of a plant clearly and write about what plants need to grow. They have recorded their observations of the growth of seeds over time and recorded their results in tabular form. High and average attainers have accurately named different materials and described their differences clearly. Knowledge of pushes and pulls has developed well. Low attaining pupils complete basically the same range of work as other pupils and make good attempts to write about experiments in their own words. A good start has been made in the current work in Year 2. In a good lesson pupils showed above average knowledge of animals and their young. They talked very well about human growth and shared photographs of themselves as babies with the rest of the class. In a good lesson in Year 1 pupils developed their understanding of senses as they explored a range of different objects. They are achieving well in recording their work in pictures and simple writing. They have accurately labelled a computer image of a human face.

- 71 Pupils' current work in Years 3 to 5 and their work in their previous year groups indicates at least above average standards in all the required areas of science. In a good lesson in a predominantly Year 5 class pupils tested the functions of a range of muscles in the human body and accurately recorded their results. A good link was made with mathematics as pupils measured the movement of the muscles. The current Year 6 pupils' work, when they were in Year 5, includes regular opportunities for scientific enquiry. Investigative work has been thorough, for example, in reversible and irreversible change and separation of materials. Pupils use scientific terminology well and record their findings in line graphs and diagrams. High attaining pupils often give very good explanations and interpretations of their findings. Pupils' current work indicates that they are developing very good knowledge of life processes and living things. For example, in a good lesson many talked knowledgeably about how plants make their own food including clearly explaining how minerals are taken from the soil.
- 72 The quality of teaching is usually good and most pupils achieve consistently well. Teachers' explanations are clear and knowledge is imparted well. The pace of learning is often especially brisk particularly when teachers put a time limit on pupils' work. A good example was in Year 6 where a timed writing task was linked well to previous discussion on plants and kept pupils on their toes. Often in whole class discussion teachers' questions not only capture pupils' interest but develop their learning. In a good lesson in Year 2 pupils enthusiastically responded to the teacher's well focused questions about babies and human and animal growth. The teacher very effectively used photographs of himself to show how a person changes over time. In the good teaching discipline is effective and pupils' good attitudes and behaviour contribute well to their achievement. On the one occasion when teaching was unsatisfactory discipline was weak and as a result pupils' behaviour deteriorated. Expectations of pupils' work are generally high and have undoubtedly contributed to the high standards achieved by the age of eleven. However, there is scope, especially in the middle part of lessons, to challenge high attaining pupils even further particularly in enabling them to explore their own ideas for scientific enquiry. Good support is given to a pupil with a statement of SEN to ensure he participates fully in lessons and completes his work.
- 73 The recently appointed deputy headteacher has responsibility for science and has acknowledged the need for assessment information on pupils' progress to have more influence on the teaching.



## **ART AND DESIGN AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

- 74 Only one lesson was observed in art and design and none in design and technology. There was not enough evidence of pupils' work to evaluate standards in the latter subject. Judgements on standards in art and design were based largely on pupils' work on display; the school has no system for collecting sample of pupils' work. Standards at age seven and eleven are in line with expectations for pupils' ages. At the time of the last inspection standards were similar for seven year-olds but below expectations for eleven-year-olds. Standards have improved because a suitable scheme of work guides the teaching.
- 75 Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall and they undertake work in a reasonable range of media. There is very little evidence of three-dimensional work. Computer art programs are in use but ICT is generally under used. Pupils in Year 1 have made careful use of pencil crayons. Self-portraits show careful observation and good pencil shading. Composition in Year 2's work is satisfactory and maps have been drawn accurately. Pupils' drawing of vehicles, prior to work in design and technology, show good observation. Pupils in the joint Year 3 and Year 4 class have satisfactorily illustrated their work on Romans and completed colourful mosaic pictures. There are good examples of observational drawing in the joint Year 4 and Year 5 class and useful work on perspective. In the only lesson seen, pupils in the latter class showed good technique in drawing shoes. Teaching was good and the lesson had clear objectives. Good help was given to pupils in improving their drawing skills. Pupils' work in Year 6 is stimulated by an effective display of the work of various artists. Some of pupils' still life observations, drawn with oil pastels, are good. Good attempts are being made to use sketchbooks as a medium for developing pupils' ideas.
- 76 The co-ordinator for art and design also has responsibility for English and inevitably this has taken precedence. The co-ordinator is hoping to raise the profile of the subject by promoting more three-dimensional work and use of textiles. Her action plan includes collecting evidence of pupils' work in different skills. There is no co-ordinator for design and technology. Teachers' planning indicates that the subject is taught and requirements are met over time.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

- 77 Standards are above the nationally expected levels for pupils at the age of seven and eleven. Since the last inspection standards have improved by seven and been maintained by eleven. Throughout the school pupils make good progress including those with SEN. During the inspection no geography teaching was observed in the junior classes. A total of two lessons were observed in Year 1 and Year 2. Other evidence was gathered from discussions with pupils, and a scrutiny of their work and teachers' planning.
- 78 Geography is taught in conjunction with history as part of a humanities programme of alternating topics. A nationally recommended scheme of work has recently been introduced and ensures that pupils successfully cover all the requirements of the National Curriculum. Additional activities and fieldwork visits have been added to the scheme to provide pupils with a further good range of opportunities to explore physical and human geography in practical situations. Since the last inspection the school has increased its fieldwork equipment so that a good depth of activity can be undertaken on these visits.

- 79 By the age of seven pupils have a good understanding of the physical and human features of their local environment and give their views on how to improve recreational activities for children. They understand the importance of protecting their local environment and describe in good detail the problems of pollution and disease. They talk knowledgeably about how the foot and mouth disease has created problems for farming communities and recognise the changes that are occurring in farming methods as a result. In both Year 1 and Year 2 pupils have good mapping skills. In Year 1, pupils have drawn maps of the local village and identified their home street, shops, the church and local amenities. In Year 2, many pupils have drawn maps of the "Isle of Struay" taking the key features of the community from a school storybook. They confidently use terms such as "mainland" or "valleys," and identify best forms of traffic for an island community. Very good links are made in both year groups with mathematical skills. In Year 1, pupils undertake a survey of their own transport arrangements to school each day and then record their results in a tally chart and block graph. In Year 2, pupils make very good progress in learning about grid referencing to create a map of their own that includes grid references with three digits and places the key features of the "Isle of Struay" community in an exact map reference.
- 80 By the age of eleven pupils have good geographical knowledge and skills. They can name major countries and cities of the world and place them accurately on a world map. They have a good understanding of natural disasters and participate in a detailed discussion to determine their ideas of best practice to overcome the consequences of problems associated with the ozone layer, earthquakes, tornados or volcanoes. They have a good knowledge of the water cycle and relate their knowledge to problems caused by climatic changes in several continents. A good study of the Katse Dam in South Africa identified the good effects of water drainage for farming that have been created by the development of this dam. Pupils then evaluated these changes and identified the detrimental effects for those families affected by the flooding of their land. They began to realise that political decisions taken for the good of the whole community need sensitive and careful attention so that human tragedies do not occur. In Year 5, in another good study on life in a Tibetan community in Ladakh, the pupils considered the physical and human geography of the area and made a good comparison with their own local community and the nearby town of Warrington. The study encouraged the pupils to gain a better understanding of agricultural and industrial change and also helped them to have a better appreciation of the traditions, customs and practices of people living in communities in other parts of the world. Residential visits to the Lake District and the Yorkshire Dales provide good first-hand experiences to build knowledge of contrasting localities in the British Isles.
- 81 Teachers have good specialist knowledge and provide a good range of activities including practical work, which interests and excites the pupils. The quality of teaching was good in the lessons seen. The teaching had good pace, activities were exciting and varied, and all pupils were suitably challenged. A classroom assistant gave good support to a pupil with a statement of SEN and ensured he achieved as well as his peers.
- 82 The co-ordinator for the subject is committed to maintaining the good range of curricular experiences provided. She is working to improve assessment of pupils' progress in order to ensure the systematic development of knowledge and skills and avoid repetition in the work in the mixed aged classes.

## HISTORY

- 83 Standards in history are above expectations for pupils' ages and have been maintained since the last inspection. Throughout the school pupils are making good progress and show a keen interest in their history lessons. This includes pupils with SEN. Pupils of all abilities participate in a varied range of appropriate activities that include good opportunities for historical investigation. As part of the humanities curriculum history is taught in a cycle of alternate topics alongside geography. As a result no history teaching was observed in Year 1 and Year 2. Three lessons were observed in junior classes. Evidence of standards was also gathered by a scrutiny of pupils' books and teachers' planning, and discussions with pupils.
- 84 In planning topics, the school makes good use of a nationally recommended scheme of work for history and supplements this by a good range of fieldwork visits and history workshops to enrich pupils' historical studies. Very good attention is given to ensuring that the pupils have a good understanding of their own local historical heritage, especially with the annual contribution made by the older pupils to the village festival of "Bawming the Thorn."
- 85 In Years 1 and 2 pupils show a developing understanding of the passage of time. In Year 1 they describe in good detail past events in their own lives, from their time as a baby to the present day and sequence them accurately. They talk about the lives of their parents and grandparents and explain some of the differences compared with their own childhood. By Year 2 pupils understanding of chronology has improved further and they have good recall of past events, experienced or read about in books that have taken place in their lifetime. For example, they talk about the death of Princess Diana, the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Queen Mother and the recent catastrophe in New York. They are developing a good sense of empathy and many are beginning to have some understanding of cause and effect on jobs, transport and finance.
- 86 Junior pupils' work builds effectively on the understanding and skills developed in Year 1 and Year 2. Pupils study topics on local history, British and European history and world events. During the inspection the youngest pupils in this key stage were studying "Invaders and Settlers" and they talked with good accurate detail about the differences in the life style of Celts and Romans. A recent visit to a history workshop in Chester has given them good first-hand experience of the lives of soldiers in the various armies. They described the cumbersome nature and weight of the armour worn by Roman soldiers and compared this with the simpler garments worn by the Celts. Many pupils are developing a good ability to make their own judgements based on a study of primary and secondary sources. For example, in a good lesson in Year 4 most pupils recognised that the difficulties in wearing Roman armour not only made soldiers strong but also contributed to the decision to make Roman roads as straight as possible. Older pupils are studying the lives of ancient Greeks and in a good lesson in Year 5 pupils successfully identified the differences in the lives of individuals in Athens and Sparta. High attaining pupils appreciated why these governments existed and compared them with governments around the world today. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a clear understanding of the importance of historical enquiry and make good use of available books and CD-ROMs to increase their understanding and support their historical enquiry. All pupils have a good understanding of time. They describe time trails and place events in Roman, Tudor and Victorian Britain accurately. They talk with enthusiasm about a study of

Britain since the 1940's, and describe the differences in appearance and clothing of people in each decade.

- 87 Although the teaching observed was good in only one lesson and satisfactory in the other two, junior pupils' good progress and above average attainment indicate that usually the quality of teaching is better. In the good lesson on ancient Greeks the teacher showed good subject knowledge, made good use of historical sources and gave clear explanations of different forms of government. As a result of the good teaching pupils made good overall progress in their historical understanding.
- 88 The subject co-ordinator has only recently taken on the role and is still developing her understanding of the work undertaken in each history topic. She has recognised the need to improve assessment and recording of pupils' progress so that the pupils in mixed aged classes will receive an appropriate curriculum, which systematically develops their skills and knowledge.

### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

- 89 Standards are in line with nationally expected levels for pupils at ages seven and eleven. Since the last inspection standards have declined as a result of insufficient hardware to allow pupils regular access to computers and because of a lack of software resources available to pupils for use in other subjects.
- 90 Pupils' overall progress is unsatisfactory. Although they have good knowledge of the uses of computers appropriate to their age there are insufficient opportunities for them to develop their skills within the whole curriculum especially in word processing, data handling and research techniques. Additionally, a lack of assessment of pupils progress results in work that does not build upon what pupils' already know and can do. There are too few planned opportunities for teachers to introduce and develop new computer skills despite some occasions when pupils work well individually and in small groups with a teaching assistant. Only two ICT lessons were seen during the inspection, both in Year 2. The teaching showed good subject knowledge and basic skills were taught well. Good links were made to other methods of recording information so that pupils could see the benefits of using computer techniques.
- 91 By the age of seven pupils use the computer to generate and communicate their ideas in words and pictures. They use the mouse with confidence and know the positions of the keys on the keyboard. They explain how to open a file, fill a picture, save words and pictures to file and print out information showing good skills of sequencing of the tasks involved in each process. Pupils have been introduced to the techniques of using a digital camera and, with the help of their teacher, they have made a profile of themselves including taking a photograph of them with the camera. All pupils are improving their mathematical skills of computation using games to practice number bonds and coin recognition. Many pupils are beginning to appreciate the use of the Internet to research for information through the good support given by parents at home.
- 92 By the age of eleven most pupils can word-process their work and change the style and font of their writing successfully. They can write articles, stories, and reports using columns or full-page texts. They are able to research for information skilfully and confidently, using the mouse and cursor key to scroll through the information contained within a CD-ROM program. Pupils have a good understanding of the

various programs available on the computer. For example, they can explain the relevance of the recycle bin although few have undertaken this task independently. There are few opportunities for pupils to use spreadsheets although most interpret the information contained through this method of recording. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the World Wide Web sites they have visited with their parents in the home. A few pupils have attempted to create a web page of their own. Most pupils have some understanding of uses of e-mail and some have used this facility to pass messages electronically.

- 93 Pupils enjoy developing their ICT skills. They are keen to improve and listen attentively to teachers and other adults. They take turns, work co-operatively and help each other sensibly. Behaviour is good in all lessons. They show good levels of concentration and independence in their learning. Pupils welcome the opportunity for additional time to work on computers at lunchtimes and break times and they maintain the good behaviour patterns shown at other times of the day.
- 94 The school has identified the development of ICT as a current priority area of school improvement. With the help and support of the governing body and parents new initiatives are planned for introduction during this school year. A new scheme of work has been introduced and an action plan prepared to purchase further hardware and software. The teachers are going to undertake specialist training as part of a national initiative, so that they gain in confidence.

## **MUSIC**

- 95 The standards achieved by pupils aged seven and eleven are above those expected nationally. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress during their time in school. This represents considerable progress since the last inspection, particularly at age eleven where standards were below national expectations and legal requirements were not being met. The school's success in raising standards has been due to the implementation of an effective scheme of work that covers all the elements of the music curriculum. This has raised staff confidence and increased their subject knowledge resulting in improved teaching and learning.
- 96 Music makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual and personal development and adds to the quality of assemblies and worship. When incorporated into the assembly the playing of an appropriate piece of music creates a reverent atmosphere for reflection and worship and has a calming effect on pupils. Songs and hymns are challenging and pupils sing with enthusiasm and clarity and are able to sustain a steady pulse. Singing is well taught and pupils are encouraged to sing with accuracy, expression and articulation as they rehearse new hymns for important celebrations such as harvest.
- 97 By the end of Year 2 pupils show a good understanding of musical ideas as they sing and play unpitched percussion instruments to accompany challenging songs. Year 2 pupils sing particularly tunefully. For example, they use their voices very expressively when singing a song about the sea. With considerable delight they respond sensitively to the evocative music, swaying in time to the music and using their voices well to recreate the atmosphere and sound of the sea. Pupils display a good sense of rhythm as they explore different ways of playing instruments to create the desired mood. Clear precise instructions from the teacher are followed

with enthusiasm as pupils work hard to improve their skills of performance. They show an increasing confidence and a good grasp of dynamics and phrasing.

- 98 In the juniors the teaching helps pupils to build progressively upon their earlier skills. In their singing pupils use an understanding of notation, melody and descant to improve their singing skills further. Pupils in Year 6 use musical vocabulary accurately when talking about their work and in answering questions posed by their teacher. Singing is controlled and well pitched and pupils' diction is clear. They make good progress in playing instruments and are developing considerable skills in composition. For example, pupils collaborated well to create a variety of tunes with a pattern of three metres. High attaining pupils responded well to the challenge and produced interesting and innovative waltz tunes showing maturity and a very good understanding of timing. Good teaching ensures pupils have opportunities to reflect on their work and to evaluate their own and other's compositions in order to make improvements.
- 99 The teaching observed in Year 2 was very good and it was good in Year 6. Good provision is made for those pupils with special educational needs and ensures they take full part in the music lessons and achieve standards similar to their peers. The lessons were well structured and the work was challenging. Pupils were given very clear strategies to improve their skills. They were encouraged to think as 'musicians' and to use correct musical terms. Pupils enjoy lessons and this has a very good impact on the standards they achieve by the age of seven and eleven. In the one other lesson seen pupils' interest was not captured, because of the teacher's lack of confidence, and pupils did not behave appropriately.
- 100 A small number of pupils benefit from the specialist teaching of brass instruments and piano lessons. These are provided out of school time by the music co-ordinator, governors and volunteers from the community. The well-supported school choir and recorder group are involved in school and community performances. These activities make a positive contribution to the quality of teaching and learning and provide pupils with good opportunities to extend their creative skills.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

- 101 Three lessons were observed in gymnastics and one in swimming. No other physical education activities were observed. In the lesson in Year 2, standards were above expectations for pupils' age and in the lesson in Year 6 they were in line. At the time of the last inspection standards were in line with expectations in both year groups. Swimming was observed in the Year 4/5 class and standards were good. The school reports that usually all or the vast majority of pupils swim unaided for at least 25 metres by the time they leave the school.
- 102 In an excellent lesson in Year 2 pupils performed a good range of movements in simple sequences as they moved confidently on and off medium and large sized apparatus. Many showed good control of their bodies and all worked safely. A key feature of the excellent teaching was the emphasis on improving pupils' performance. Demonstration was used very effectively with a precise focus on what to do to improve skills such as jumping on and off apparatus. Pupils made discernible gains in their learning. Good support was given to a pupil with a statement of SEN to ensure he listened to and followed instructions appropriately. Discipline was also very calm and measured and consequently all pupils worked

quietly and safely. In Year 6 a few pupils showed good control and poise as they performed a range of gymnastic movements including rolls, balances and bridges. However, most pupils' movements were satisfactory and often did not improve because of a lack of concentration and effort. The teaching was satisfactory overall but a good feature was the attempt to improve pupils' performance. Pupils needed more advice on how to set out and clear away equipment. In the good swimming lesson pupils were suitably organised into three ability groups and were actively involved. Swimming instruction is good and is ensuring pupils make good progress. Especially good attention is given to survival skills.

- 103 The curriculum for physical education is supported by activities outside school hours including football, tennis in the summer months, cross-country and swimming galas. Players from Warrington Wolves rugby club work with pupils during the school day.
- 104 The subject co-ordinator also has responsibility for mathematics and this has dominated her time. A suitable scheme of work guides the teaching but the co-ordinator recognises that a procedure for assessing and recording pupils' progress is now needed.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

- 105 Since the last inspection the school has further improved the quality and provision for religious education. By the ages of seven and eleven pupils' attainment is now above the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
- 106 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop a good understanding of the beliefs and traditions of Christianity and Judaism. The importance of celebrations, homes and family, friendships, different faiths and cultures are developed well. Pupils' own experiences are built on effectively to develop a deeper understanding of Bible stories and the life of Jesus. For example, in Year 1 the Ten Commandments are linked very effectively with the need for school rules. Older pupils learn about the significant events in the life of Jesus. In a very good lesson in Year 2 pupils' understanding of what makes a good friend was developed very well to deepen their knowledge of the life and work of Jesus and his disciples. Pupils made very thoughtful responses when asked to 'brainstorm' why friends were special. An exploration of their own experiences provided a very good foundation to enable pupils to develop an understanding of the calling of the twelve disciples. Pupils in Year 2 are aware that prayer is a way of communicating with God and lessons end with a time for quiet reflection.
- 107 By the age of eleven pupils' understanding of other religions and faiths has developed further. They know about the customs, symbols, festivals, holy books and buildings of major religions. Important festivals such as Eid, Divali, Hanukah and Christmas all play an important part in helping pupils to develop their understanding of the different traditions and religions. Visits, visitors and relevant artefacts, such as the Torah and Qu'ran, bring the subject alive for pupils and develop a mature respect for Islam and Judaism. Comparisons and contrasts are made between aspects of different faiths and traditions. As in Years 1 and 2 pupils' own interests and experiences are used very effectively to develop an understanding of deeper religious ideas. An effective lesson in Year 6 began with pupils exploring their own special place. Their very thoughtful responses ranged

from 'a field where I keep my horses' and 'my bedroom because its mine and everything in it is mine', to 'my Mum's grave'. Very sensitive teaching encouraged pupils to share their most precious thoughts. This led them very well into an understanding of how Muslims viewed the Ka'bah and the importance attached to visiting the Holy City of Mecca.

- 108 Pupils are encouraged to consider the effect that religion can have on people's lives. Upper juniors discussed with considerable maturity the role of religion in the recent events in New York. They separated the views of a minority of Muslims from those held by the majority and used their knowledge and respect for Islam to back up their arguments. Pupils show interest and enthusiasm for their work in religious education and in both key stages the discussions and reflections on religious issues make a very important contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- 109 Teaching is never less than good and occasionally very good. A scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils and staff indicate that there is a systematic approach in the teaching which ensures that pupils' knowledge and understanding are developed well across the school. Pupils are challenged to consider the effect that religion might have on their own or people's lives. There are good opportunities to compare different world religions and to gain a deeper insight through quality resources, visits and visitors. Whole school assemblies make a sound contribution to pupils' religious education.
- 110 The co-ordinator has had responsibility for the subject for only a short time. However, she is very much committed to high standards and making the subject enjoyable for staff and pupils.