

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WILLOWS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Timperley, Altrincham, Cheshire

LEA area: Trafford

Unique reference number: 106294

Headteacher: Mrs H A Foster

Reporting inspector: Mr J Morris  
23696

Dates of inspection: 26<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> November 2001

Inspection number: 194476

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Victoria Road Timperley Altrincham Cheshire
Postcode:	WA15 6PP
Telephone number:	(0161) 980 7685
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Ward
Date of previous inspection:	6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> May 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23696	Mr J Morris	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology Physical education	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed?
9928	Mr A Dobson	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23081	Mrs C Waine	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage curriculum Art and design Religious education	How well are pupils taught?
28320	Mr R Willey	Team inspector	Special educational needs Equal opportunities Mathematics Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
27240	Mr A Hooper	Team inspector	English Design and technology Music	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Willows is an above average sized primary school, situated close to the village of Timperley in the Metropolitan Borough of Trafford. Forty-eight children attend the nursery part-time and there are 34 children in the reception year. There are 212 pupils, 110 boys and 102 girls, in Years 1 to 6. All of the pupils except two are of white ethnic origin and none has English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (one per cent) is below average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs (17 per cent) is broadly in line with the national average. Attainment on entry to the school is above average.

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

This is a very effective school. Standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science at age 11. Teaching and learning are very good. Leadership and management are excellent. This adds up to a very strong school ethos and very effective promotion of academic learning and personal development. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- Standards in English, mathematics, science and art and design are very high.
- Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school. Lessons are characterised by very high teacher expectations of work and behaviour and the pupils' excellent interest, involvement and concentration.
- The pupils' attitudes, values, behaviour, personal development and relationships are all very good and have a very positive effect on their learning and the very good school ethos.
- Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff are excellent and provide a very clear educational direction to the work of the school.
- The school provides very good learning opportunities for the children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 1 to 6.
- The school promotes pupils' personal development very successfully, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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

- There are no significant areas for improvement.

*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 May 1997. Improvement has been very good, overall. There have been good improvements in the guidance to help teachers in their planning and the role of subject co-ordinators. The pupils' library and research skills are very much improved. There have been significant improvements in teaching and learning and standards are higher. Leadership and management were previously very good and are now excellent. Value for money has improved.

## 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
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A	B	A	B
Mathematics	A	C	B	C
Science	B	B	A	B

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

Attainment on entry to the nursery is above average. Children achieve very well overall in the nursery and reception. Standards are well above average in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and personal and social development. They are above average in knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development by the end of the Foundation Stage.

This inspection found standards to be well above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science and above average in speaking and listening at the end of Year 2. Standards are well above average in writing, mathematics and science and above average in speaking and listening and reading at the end of Year 6. These judgements closely match the results of national tests in 2001 for both seven and 11 year-olds. The results for seven year-olds showed standards to be well above average in reading, writing and mathematics compared with all schools and above average compared with similar schools. The results for 11 year-olds showed standards to be well above average in English and science and above average in mathematics compared with all schools and above average in English and science and average in mathematics compared with similar schools. Standards have been consistently high since 1997 and the school's results have improved broadly in line with the national trend of improvement.

Pupils throughout the school achieve very well in English, mathematics, science and art and design. Achievement in all other subjects is either good or satisfactory. Standards in design and technology, geography, history and music in Years 3 to 6 are not as high as they are in other subjects. The school sets ambitious targets for the national tests, in negotiation with the Local Education Authority. It generally meets these targets, but did not do so in 2001. There were significant improvements in the performance of boys this year.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very positive attitudes to school. Children in the Foundation Stage quickly understand school routines and the need for rules. Pupils demonstrate great enthusiasm for school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good throughout the school. Lunchtimes and playtimes are orderly and happy. There is no evidence of disruptive behaviour in lessons and bullying is not a problem.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and adults and among pupils are very good. Pupils respond very well to opportunities to take on responsibilities. Pupils are very keen to help the teachers and each other.

Attendance	Attendance is well above average and punctuality is very good, so that lessons start on time.
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## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Sixty-six lessons were graded during the inspection. The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school and has improved significantly since the previous inspection, because there is now no teaching that is less than satisfactory and the percentage that is very good or better has increased substantially. There are no significant differences between classes, year groups or key stages.

Teaching in the Foundation Stage provides the children with a very good start at school. The children achieve very well, especially in their personal and social development and the key skills of literacy and numeracy, so that they are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Throughout Years 1 to 6, English and mathematics are taught very well, as are the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. A particular strength of the teaching is the very high expectations that teachers have of pupils' work and behaviour. In most lessons, teachers plan and deliver activities in ways which motivate pupils very well. Consequently, pupils are extremely interested and involved in lessons and their concentration and ability to work independently are excellent. The school meets the needs of all pupils very well.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a very good range of learning opportunities for all children and pupils, in accordance with the requirements and recommendations for the Foundation Stage, National Curriculum and national strategies for literacy and numeracy. The way that teachers link different subjects in their planning is a particular strength of the school's work.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs, paying due regard to the national Code of Practice. Individual needs are identified and provided for very well, so that these pupils make progress at a similar rate to their peers. The school is developing an overview of this provision to judge its effectiveness.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. The school promotes the pupils' moral, social and cultural development very well and their spiritual development well. The extensive system of rewards, for academic work and personal qualities, the wide range of opportunities for personal responsibility, and the effective use of educational visits and visitors, all contribute greatly to the pupils' personal development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are good procedures for child protection and to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. There are good procedures to assess what the pupils know, understand and can do and the teachers use this information very well in their planning.



The school has a very good partnership with the parents.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher provides extremely effective leadership to the work of the school and has been central in maintaining high standards during a period of staff instability. Other key staff, including some who have been appointed only very recently, carry out their roles very well and contribute significantly to the work and life of the school. The school's aims are fully reflected in day-to-day practice.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The school governors fulfil their responsibilities very well. They have a very good understanding of what the school does well. This is because most of the governors often spend time in school during the day.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school sets ambitious targets and has good systems to measure how successful it is in achieving them. The school improvement plan is a very good working document.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes very good use of specific grants in accordance with the stated purposes. Teachers, governors and administrative staff use modern technology very well to enhance the work of the school. Teachers make very effective use of support staff and learning resources.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good overall. The condition of the outside of the school building is poor and the playground and facilities for outdoor activities for children in reception are barely adequate. The principles of best value are applied well

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Of those parents who responded, over 95 per cent think that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• their children like school;</li> <li>• the school is well led and managed;</li> <li>• the teaching is good;</li> <li>• behaviour is good;</li> <li>• the school is helping their children become more mature and responsible;</li> <li>• the school expects their children to work hard and achieve his or her best;</li> <li>• they feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or a problem.</li> </ul>	<p>Of those parents who responded, 29 per cent think that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul> <p>Of those parents who responded, 18 per cent think that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their child does not get the right amount of homework.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views of the school, but does not share their concerns. Activities outside lessons and the provision for homework are good.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Attainment on entry to the nursery is judged to be above average, based on baseline assessment data and inspectors' experience. All children achieve very well overall in the nursery and reception. Standards are well above average in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and personal and social development and above average in knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development by the end of the Foundation Stage. This is because the teaching is to a consistently very high standard and the teachers have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum.
2. Standards are well above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science and above average in speaking and listening at the end of Year 2. Standards are well above average in writing, mathematics and science and above average in speaking and listening and reading at the end of Year 6. These inspection findings match the results of national tests in 2001 for both seven and 11 year-olds closely, although there are some minor variations. These differences can be explained by the different groups of pupils involved and the very good quality of teaching provided by the current staff. The results for seven year-olds showed standards to be well above average in reading, writing and mathematics compared with all schools and above average compared with similar schools. The results for 11 year-olds showed standards to be well above average in English and science and above average in mathematics compared with all schools, and above average in English and science and average in mathematics compared with similar schools. Standards have been consistently high since 1997 and the school's results have improved broadly in line with the national trend of improvement.
3. Pupils throughout the school achieve very well in English, mathematics, science and art and design. Achievement in all other subjects is either good or satisfactory. Standards in design and technology (DT), geography, history and music in Years 3 to 6 are not as high as they are in other subjects. There are planned developments for all of these subjects in the school improvement plan. A significant factor in the school's recent history has been a high staff turnover and it is credit to the headteacher and current staff that standards are as high as they are across the curriculum.
4. The school sets ambitious targets for the national tests, in negotiation with the Local Education Authority. It generally meets these targets, but did not do so in 2001. Careful analysis of pupils' performance in statutory tests in Years 2 and 6 and optional tests in Years 3, 4 and 5 is used to inform teachers' planning and identify areas for improvement. The effectiveness of the school's action can be exemplified by the significant improvement in standards in science at the end of Year 2 since the previous inspection and by the development of non-fiction books to promote more interest in reading for boys. The school has taken account of differences in the performance of boys and girls and there was marked improvement by boys in 2001. However, the variations in the results achieved by boys and girls have not been significantly different from the national picture. There is no significant difference in the attainment of groups of pupils as a consequence of disability, race or culture.
5. There are several significant factors which contribute to these standards. These are detailed throughout this report and are inter-related, but may be summarised as follows:
  - the very high quality of teaching and, in particular, the effective implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and the provision in information and communication technology (ICT), which further promotes the development of pupils' basic skills;
  - the positive responses of pupils throughout the school in lessons and at other times;
  - the very good learning opportunities and, in particular, the links that teachers make between the different subjects;

- the very high quality of leadership and management.
6. Progress of pupils with special educational needs is very good for pupils up to the age of seven. The majority of pupils on the special needs register achieve average scores in national tests at the end of Year 2. All pupils between seven and 11 make satisfactory or better progress. Over 80 per cent of these pupils make good or better progress and half of these make very good progress in English, mathematics and science. Independent educational programmes are currently being computerised. They are of a very high standard and a great improvement on the previous format. Targets set within these programmes are specific, realistic, often challenging and are measurable and attainable. The majority of independent educational programmes contain between three and five targets and most of these are literacy orientated. This restricted number of targets is more attainable and promotes pupils' self-esteem. Where targets are not met, they are sympathetically amended in order to make them more suitable. Independent educational programmes are reviewed regularly. Progress made by pupils with special educational needs was stated to be particularly good at the time of the previous inspection. This has been maintained and pupils make good progress, often very good progress, compared to their prior attainment. This is due to the quality of support afforded to pupils with special educational needs by all the teachers and by support assistants.

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

7. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection. The pupils' very positive approach to learning is a credit to the school and their parents.
8. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy school, a point confirmed overwhelmingly by parents and, during the inspection, in conversations with pupils. Pupils are proud to be at the school. They settle down quickly, are attentive and highly motivated to learn. Throughout the school, pupils show an extremely high degree of interest and involvement in their lessons. This is a reflection of the skill of their teachers planning lessons that are well focused and clearly presented with plenty of pace and variety. Pupils nearly always sustain their interest in learning for the complete lesson. This is particularly impressive in the two-hour science lessons for juniors (which is very unusual in primary schools) where pupils work very hard for the full period. Pupils take a clear pride in what they produce and appreciate the way their work is extensively celebrated on displays throughout the school.
9. Behaviour, including that of pupils with special educational needs, is very good. This fact is recognised by parents. Pupils know very well that high standards are expected at all times. They understand the rules well and think they are fair. Classrooms are quiet and conducive to learning. Movement around the school is very orderly. Behaviour in assemblies is very good and pupils are respectful during prayers. Lunchtime is a civilised social occasion with noise levels that allow easy conversation. Table manners are very good. Playtimes have a very happy and friendly atmosphere. No examples of oppressive behaviour were observed during the inspection and the pupils confirmed this is not a problem in the school. If an incident of bullying occurs, pupils express confidence in the teachers', and particularly the head teacher's, ability to sort out the problem speedily. There was one temporary exclusion from school last year.
10. The school places strong emphasis on good behaviour and taking responsibility for responding to situations in a positive and supportive way. Pupils are actively encouraged to be supportive of each other with classroom work, and at other times including during physical activities, outdoor activities and informal times, such as lunchtime and playtime. This enables pupils to work well together and develop very good relationships with their peers. The school has good strategies in place to help those pupils, who have difficulties behaving appropriately in classrooms, or, within their relationships, improve their behaviour.
11. Relationships in the school are very good. Pupils get on very well together and look upon the staff as people they can trust. They are very courteous and polite and make visitors feel very welcome. From an early age, pupils collaborate very well in lessons, working productively and helping each

other when appropriate. During lessons, they listen attentively and sensibly to each other's point of view. Pupils show a high degree of consideration for others. This was particularly noticeable in the way that pupils in Year 6 involved a physically disabled peer in their playtime activities.

12. Pupils show an extremely high level of initiative and responsibility. In classrooms, pupils take on the many extra duties available with real enthusiasm, for instance giving out books and collecting equipment. They usually tidy up without waiting to be told. They take homework seriously. Out-of-school activities are popular and well attended. Many pupils in Years 5 and 6 help in the running of the school, such as manning the office at lunchtime, running a bank and helping to organise playground games for younger pupils. Pupils in Years 2 to 6 are elected to a school council and play an important part in expressing ideas and making suggestions to the school's management and reporting back on planned developments. Pupils act very responsibly. For instance, they undertake research, using computers with the minimum of supervision. By the age of 11, pupils are developing into confident, sensible and interesting individuals.
13. Attendance at the school is very good and reflects the pupils' enthusiasm for school. The rate is well above the national average for primary schools. Unauthorised absence is negligible. Registration is prompt and efficient and lessons start on time.

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

14. Overall, the quality of teaching is very good and promotes very good learning by pupils. It has improved since the previous inspection, when it was good, overall. Most teaching was at least good and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. At the time of the previous inspection, the teaching was very good or excellent in just over one in ten lessons, whilst teaching in the current inspection reached this standard in over half of the 66 lessons observed. The school has improved the overall quality of teaching despite an extended period of disruption to staffing. Governors have chosen new staff very carefully and the headteacher and senior managers employ rigorous systems to check the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in the vital areas of literacy and numeracy.
15. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good, which is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, when it was good. The improvements have come about because of a carefully thought out curriculum for the children in the nursery and reception class, supported by relevant training for teachers. Teachers and nursery nurses have a very good understanding and knowledge of the needs and curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. All staff plan together and this is very effective in providing for the needs of all children, so that they make good gains in their learning across all areas of the curriculum. Great care is taken to ensure that children gain confidence in their early weeks at school and quickly learn classroom routines. Lessons are very interesting and teachers are imaginative in their use of resources to motivate pupils. Teachers are meticulous in ensuring that basic skills are taught well. For example, when teaching phonics they provide very clear models of speech and ensure that children pronounce letters and words correctly so that they find it easier to spell words when reading and writing. Expectations are very high and children respond well, working hard and behaving very well.
16. Teaching in Years 1 to 6 is very good, and similar proportions of very good teaching were seen in both key stages. However, most of the very good or excellent teaching in Key Stage 2 was in Years 5 and 6. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 has improved since the previous inspection and was at least good in 19 of the 20 lessons observed. There is also a higher proportion of good and very good teaching in Years 3 to 6. Teachers have very high expectations of the pupils and form positive working relationships with them. Teachers have a clear focus on helping pupils to learn the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT and teaching in these areas is particularly good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and plan interesting lessons to help pupils achieve as well as they can. They always share the learning targets for the lessons with pupils, so that the pupils have a clear understanding of what they are intended to learn. At the end of lessons, time is usually used well to share and consolidate what has been learned. Lesson targets are reviewed so that teachers know how much progress pupils have made in the lesson and pupils know just how well they have achieved. A very good example of this was observed in Year 6,

when pupils discussed what they had learned in a mathematics lesson on co-ordinates. The teacher then asked them how this might help them in their studies. Pupils were quick to identify that it would be useful in mapwork in geography. Teachers make very effective use of this knowledge to plan the next work to build upon what has already been learned, adapting their plans when they see pupils either encountering difficulties or accomplishing work with ease. Throughout the school, marking varies in quality, with the better examples including teacher comments that inform pupils exactly what they need to do next. Other work is marked simply, with a brief tick or congratulatory comment.

17. Lessons are very interesting and quickly gain pupils' interest. Teachers are enthusiastic and provide pupils with many opportunities to discuss their work, which they do with confidence, reflecting the teacher's own enthusiasm. They encourage all to take a full part in discussions and question pupils skilfully, often asking a pupil who has not put their hand up to provide an answer and then encourage, support and praise the pupil well. This approach is successful in developing pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. Teachers challenge pupils to think deeply and to explain their answers. For example, in a Year 1 lesson on measurement, pupils were challenged to explain why there were two different answers for the same object being measured. Generally, teachers set a lively pace in introductory sessions, making very good use of resources and involving pupils well. Pupils are motivated to work hard, no time is wasted and pupils complete a good amount of work. Teachers plan very well to make clear links between work in different subjects and incorporate ICT well in lessons in all subjects. This ensures that pupils develop their ICT skills progressively and apply them in work in a meaningful way. This was observed in literacy and numeracy and in independent research and investigation. For example, in a geography lesson on water, a Year 5 pupil researched information on the Internet, using very good literacy skills to identify the main points in the text and extend his knowledge. He was fascinated to discover some "stunning facts" about our use of water and shared these with the rest of his class, who were equally amazed. The teacher then made very good use of homework to extend all pupils' knowledge, when he asked them to keep a personal diary of water usage over the next week.
18. Planning and support for pupils with special educational needs and those who are less able, but not on the register of special educational needs, are very well organised. Learning support assistants work very closely with the teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator to help pupils work towards achieving the targets set in their individual education programmes. It is a strong, knowledgeable and very caring team. Most have gained relevant qualifications. Although there is no formal induction programme for new learning support assistants, they feel very well supported by the head teacher, teachers and colleagues. There is a good working relationship between teachers and learning support assistants. Individual educational programmes are accessible to the relevant staff. Learning support assistants are well briefed and report back to teachers regularly. The fact that most pupils with special educational needs make good or very good progress is testimony to the degree of support and encouragement that they receive from their class teachers and learning support assistants. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are allocated learning support assistant time in accordance with that identified in their individual education plans. When pupils are withdrawn for individual or small group work in literacy or numeracy, by support teachers and assistants, this invariably happens when their peers are studying the same subject.
19. Throughout the school, relationships between teachers, other staff and pupils are very good and promote pupils' self-esteem effectively. Teachers assume that pupils will concentrate on learning and that behaviour will be good. Pupils respond to this positive approach, work hard and behave very well. Where lessons are satisfactory rather than good, time is not used as effectively as it might be and introductions are not stimulating. As a result, pupils become a little restless, more adult time is used managing this behaviour and this slows down the pace of learning.
20. Parents are very positive about the quality of teaching. However, a significant minority expressed a concern about consistency in the provision of homework. The school has already taken action on this issue and provided further guidance to staff. Teachers' weekly plans are monitored weekly by the headteacher to check that the school policy is followed consistently in all year groups. Overall, the provision of homework is now good and is used effectively to support work completed

in lessons.

21. Separate activities and tasks are provided for pupils with special educational needs, particularly in literacy and numeracy lessons. Teachers know their pupils well, are very involved in setting individual targets and support pupils very well to ensure that targets are achieved. Pupils with special educational needs form very effective relationships with their peers, who often give very good support within class, and all adults. These pupils feel confident to contribute to discussions and teachers positively encourage their participation. This reflects the quality of the supportive ethos that pervades the school.

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

22. The quality and range of learning opportunities presented to pupils is very good. The quality of the curriculum is a strength of the school. The previous report stated that the school's curriculum was broad and balanced and met the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. This provision has been fully maintained and improved through very relevant links between different subjects. This contributes very well to a cohesive curriculum provision and maximises the effective use of curriculum time. This is a very strong feature of the school. For example, a geography lesson in Year 2 included aspects of and contributions to literacy, numeracy, art and design, history, DT and ICT. A strong emphasis on the promotion of thinking skills through relating subjects to topical events, challenging questions and fostering discussion is another key feature of the school's provision. For example, in a Year 6, lesson pupils were learning about world climates through a recent newspaper article about a stray seal. This promoted a lively discussion about the seal's native environment and its distress in warmer conditions. The school's curriculum is planned in line with the latest national guidance.
23. Time allocation to subjects is similar to most schools and individual teachers decide how the lesson time will be apportioned during the week to best suit the pupils in the class. Some subjects such as literacy and numeracy are taught daily, science and religious education are taught weekly and geography and history alternate in half-termly blocks. All pupils have full access to the school's curriculum and this reflects one of the school's main aims. The school has effectively implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Booster classes operate from January until May for targeted groups of pupils in Year 6 to raise attainment in English and mathematics. The new computer suite is effectively used and computers within classrooms are well used to support learning in most subjects. Provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is very good, fully meeting the requirements of the latest national guidance. The generally high quality of display enhances the curriculum effectively. The work of many pupils is incorporated in displays and this promotes pupil self-esteem effectively. All subjects are represented. Displays in key areas, such as the entrance and hall, are not as effective as elsewhere in the school.
24. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school has built on the good position identified at the time of the previous inspection. The new co-ordinator has made a very positive contribution in a short time and, already, significant improvements have been made. Individual targets that teachers and the special needs co-ordinator set for these pupils are concise and relevant to pupils' needs. Class teachers and classroom support assistants know the pupils well and make sure that they can take part in all lessons, preparing special materials if necessary. They are afforded every opportunity to take part in all school activities and have full access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Individual education plans are drawn up for pupils at Stage 1 and above on the special educational needs register. Targets set are nearly always attainable, realistic and well focused, with specified review dates. The special educational needs co-ordinator has been very recently appointed and is aware of her involvement in writing and monitoring the pupils' plans. The register is currently rather fragmented, but this will be rectified when the recently started computerisation is completed. The school is beginning to develop an overview of provision in order to judge its effectiveness. The register is well maintained and regularly up-dated.

25. Good provision for health education and drugs awareness is incorporated within the aspects of the science curriculum and a developing personal, health and social education programme. Support materials from several commercial schemes have been adopted as a basis for a whole school programme, to be reviewed annually by the school governors. The school nurse is involved in the delivery of the drugs awareness programme.
26. A good range of extra-curricular activities is provided for all pupils, but mainly for those above the age of seven. As well as a range of sports activities, including football, cricket and lacrosse, there are clubs for choir, recorders and a bird watching club for nine to 11 year-olds. A French club is planned to start in January 2002. The range is restricted by the non-availability of the school hall each day. The after-school activities club, which operates five days a week, caters well for pupils whose parents are working and is valued by both school and parents. All these activities make a very good contribution to the development of personal and social skills and contribute significantly to learning in music and sport particularly. Parents are very appreciative of this provision. Music clubs contribute to the spiritual and cultural aspects of school life. The curriculum is enriched by many visits to places of interest related to topics studied and this is a good feature. These have included Eureka in Halifax for science, Tatton Hall for Victorians in history and Bridgewater Hall for music. A residential visit to the Robin Wood Activity Centre for pupils in Year 6 provides a very good range of outdoor activities, environmental studies and links with many other subjects and makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development.
27. The school has satisfactory links with the community. There are links with a local bank, rugby league and lacrosse clubs and with a number of charities. Many contacts with commerce and industry are of short duration and often end as a result of withdrawal by the organisations. The banking link is, unfortunately, to be lost soon, as a result of the bank's withdrawal. The school has many visitors and visiting groups during the year, which contribute to all aspects of the curriculum. There are visiting artists and authors, rugby league, football, lacrosse and netball coaches and parents and grandparents talk to classes about caring for babies and life in wartime. Cycling proficiency tutors work with pupils in Year 6.
28. Provision for equality of opportunity is good. The policy document is closely matched to current legislation and Local Education Authority guidance and is reviewed annually. Policies are effectively implemented throughout the school. All pupils are afforded full and equal access to the curriculum. The withdrawal of small groups of pupils from assembly for musical tuition was the only area of concern identified during the inspection. Different, appropriate tasks are set in English and mathematics to match the different abilities and needs of different groups of pupils. Extra-curricular activities are open to both sexes and to all pupils from the age of seven. Teacher questioning and allocation of jobs within the classroom show no bias towards gender, ability or ethnicity. Pupils are not deprived of opportunities for educational visits on the basis of cost. The occurrence of racial or gender based incidents is very rare and, when they do occur, they are promptly and seriously addressed. Pupils with special educational needs receive structured support and individual educational programmes are of very good quality.
29. The school has established good links with other schools. There is a computer partnership with a local secondary school with technology college status. Sixth form pupils from local grammar schools visit for community service. Teachers from the secondary phase visit to observe lessons. A good primary to secondary transfer and induction programme is in operation for pupils in Year 6. There are staff visitors from the secondary school as well as a parents' evening prior to transfer. There are induction days and curriculum days for pupils in Year 6. Transfer arrangements are very well organised.
30. The school promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well and this reflects the judgement in the previous report. This provision is a strength of the school, reflecting the values expressed in the school's aims and having a strong influence on pupils' learning.
31. Evidence from assemblies and lessons indicates that good provision is made for pupils' spiritual development. There are regular well-planned, whole-school assemblies and the weekly theme is



often carried over into lessons. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupil participation and reflection in some assemblies. Much thought is given to assembly content in order to promote interest. In one assembly pupils enjoyed the inclusion of a buzzer device to test people's steadiness of hand. The idea was used well to illustrate the notion of perseverance in the story of Robert the Bruce and the spider. Opportunities for spiritual development are not confined to assemblies. Religious education creates many opportunities. Pupils visit churches and a synagogue in the area and express their feelings articulately in response to religious music. Children in reception and pupils in Years 1 and 2 sang 'grace' in their classroom prior to lunch. In a geography lesson in Year 5, a pupil working on the computer was amazed by the notion of dinosaurs using the same water as we do today. In the same lesson, pupils began to realise the true value of water by reflecting upon the uses they could make of a small amount of water provided in a jug.

32. Provision for moral development is very good. There is an extensive system of rewards and this is not exclusively academic. Team points and 'compliments' reward pupils for effort, achievement, good behaviour and good deeds. Individual success contributes to a whole class tally that is displayed on a chart in the school hall. Pupils clearly know the difference between right and wrong. Older pupils set a very good example and have frequent contact with younger pupils. Children in reception learn to share and to play together. Some classes have discussion time where self-esteem is often a focus and moral issues are discussed well. Pupils also develop an understanding of citizenship through discussions and their support of charities. The developing personal and social education is well promoted by the new deputy head, including encouraging the use of group discussions in the form of 'Circle Time'.
33. Provision for social development is very good. Pupils in Year 6 assist in the daily running of school through a structured programme of responsibilities. Head boy and girl, team captains, road safety officer, running the school bank, attending classes of younger pupils during wet breaks, preparing the hall for assembly and staffing the school office during lunch-times are among the wide range of jobs undertaken by pupils. Pupils carry out responsibilities in the school library and computer suite and assist lunchtime assistants by organising playground games for younger pupils. They enjoy helping teachers at playtime and lunchtime. Pupils accept such responsibilities willingly and discharge their duties commendably. Pupils from each year group are involved in the school council. Pupils at all stages of the school learn to care about their environment and value the people within it. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated and take a full and active role in the life of the school. Pupils co-operate well and partner and group work is a regular feature of lessons. Pupils respond well to situations that require initiative and research and behave maturely when working without direct supervision. Pupils support each other well and show tolerance, respect for and understanding of the feelings of others.
34. Provision for cultural development is very good. Visits and visitors enhance pupils' cultural development greatly. History contributes well to an understanding of past cultures. Younger pupils learn about their school environment, whilst pupils in Year 6 study the geographical significance of contrasting locations through a residential visit to Robin Wood. Pupils in Year 2 learn about the past through role-play during a visit to Tatton Hall. Pupils learn about famous artists such as Modigliani, Klee and Picasso and examine and reproduce mosaics from Roman times, masks and figurines from Aztec times and food from different parts of the world. They hear music from other ages and cultures. They learn something about other faiths, beliefs and traditions through religious education lessons and visits to different places of worship. Pupils enjoy a rich variety of experiences that develop their cultural awareness very well.

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

35. The good levels of care seen at the previous inspection have been maintained. The bold statement on the back cover of the prospectus '*This is a happy school*' sums up the school very well. The school is a friendly community where pupils are looked after well at all times. The headteacher has a high profile around the school and knows all the pupils by name. All staff treat the pupils as individuals and listen to them with consideration and respect. Supervision is very good and adults

do not shout at the pupils. Staff provide very good role models. Parents are right to have confidence in the school providing a safe and secure environment.

36. Procedures for child protection are in place and working effectively. The responsible person has been trained and staff are regularly reminded of the school's procedures. Health and safety issues are treated seriously. The premises are formally inspected termly and the governors conduct an annual inspection. All equipment is checked for safety. There are termly fire drills, although emergency evacuation procedures would be more secure if the autumn term fire drill was conducted as early in the term as practical. There is a good level of qualified first-aid cover and correct records are kept of all accidents. Safety is stressed when appropriate in lessons, such as science and physical education.
37. Procedures for monitoring attendance are good. The computerised registers are well kept and information can be accessed very quickly. The headteacher inspects the registers regularly. Absences without reason are followed up rigorously.
38. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very effective. Very high standards are expected and achieved within a regime that is friendly and considered fair. Rules are kept to a minimum, the emphasis being on personal responsibility. Good behaviour is positively recognised by awarding house points in lessons, giving of certificates at Friday assemblies and an appearance on the 'unsung heroes' board at the entrance to the school. Good records are kept of all significant incidents of inappropriate behaviour. There are very clear procedures to deal with bullying. Incidents are fully investigated and parents informed. The procedures follow a 'no blame' philosophy and give fellow pupils considerable responsibility for supporting both the victim and the bully. The procedures appear to be very effective. Assemblies and class discussions are used when necessary to reiterate the school's attitude to bullying. Bullying is not a problem in the school. Racism is not tolerated and is not an issue.
39. The school supports pupils' personal development well. Good work is praised and pupils are often asked to show their work to other teachers. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to show initiative and to take extra responsibility. Achievements both in and out of school are celebrated at Friday assemblies. The headteacher and the teachers know the pupils well and, although the monitoring of personal development is generally informal, the section on personal qualities in pupils' reports is of good quality.
40. Procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs are in place and effectively used. The school places a strong emphasis on identification at the earliest possible stage. Staff are aware of the Code of Practice and school policy documents for special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into the caring environment of the school. The school has procedures in place when identifying pupils who may have a special need, either physical or within learning. When a concern is first raised, either by the parent or class teacher, the pupil is monitored. If necessary, the pupil is placed on the appropriate stage of the school's special needs register. Pupils requiring specialist help with speech therapy, physiotherapy or with a specific learning difficulty, have the necessary support and guidance provided. The school uses this specialist help well and classroom assistants, when and where available, support pupils in line with the specialist guidance between reviews.
41. The deputy head-teacher is the co-ordinator in overall charge of assessment. He has been responsible for organising records with all the relevant statistical information. The priority has been to set up a manageable system that all members of staff will find accessible and useful. Both pupils and parents are kept informed about individual and group targets and these are reviewed regularly. The records and exemplar material for mathematics, English and science are firmly in place. The school is now developing systematic procedures for the non-core other subjects. Very good procedures have recently been introduced in ICT. Procedures in the other subjects are satisfactory overall but systems do not currently inform teachers' planning as effectively as they do in the core subjects. There are some good individual examples of assessment being used to inform teachers' planning and the best examples of these are very good. In the Foundation Stage classes, there is very effective monitoring and recording of academic progress. The procedures for

monitoring pupils with special educational needs are also very good.

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

42. Parents have a very high opinion of the school. It has a good reputation locally and is oversubscribed. Parents particularly like the way the school is led, the good teaching and the good behaviour in the school. They also commented very favourably on the high expectations the school has of their children, the good progress they make and the way the school helps them to become responsible. Parents find the staff very approachable and report overwhelmingly that their children like school. The inspection team endorses all these positive views. Some parents have concerns about homework. The inspectors judge that the provision of homework is good and is in accordance with the guidance leaflet sent to parents. Some parents would like more extra-curricular activities. The inspection team judge that the range of activities outside the classroom, including school clubs, education trips and a residential visit, is good.
43. The quality of information for parents is very good. The prospectus, the governors' annual report and the many guidance leaflets are all interesting, useful and easy to read. An annual workshop on either literacy or numeracy helps parents to understand how these subjects are taught and enables them to be more involved in their children's learning. Parents are well informed each term of future work, homework routines and school clubs. The three formal opportunities a year for parents to meet their children's teacher is a better arrangement than in most primary schools. At these meetings, which are timed to be convenient for working parents, very good information is given on their children's progress, including their current targets. In between meetings, parents with concerns can easily meet their children's teacher and the headteacher any day without an appointment. Pupils' reports are of good quality and easy to read. Parents with children in the juniors are kept well informed of the National Curriculum levels that their children are working at in English, mathematics and science and this allows parents to monitor progress effectively. In some reports, the targets for development are not specific enough to enable parents to be fully involved in the children's learning.
44. Parents are informed immediately if the school has a concern about individual pupils' learning. The special educational needs co-ordinator, class teachers and learning support assistants are involved in parental liaison to provide support and guidance. The school has effective relationships with parents of pupils with special educational needs. Parents know who the special educational needs co-ordinator is and teachers make regular contact with the parents of pupils who have individual education plans to review the targets that have been set.
45. Parents have a major impact on the work of the school. A very large number of parents help in the school every week. This help is very well organised and is making a significant contribution to the pupils' learning, particularly in developing their reading skills. A parent helper produces 'Willows World', a chatty and informative school newsletter. The Parents Teachers' Association (PTA) is active and highly successful in organising events and raising money. Last year the PTA raised around £8000 to enhance the school's facilities. Governors who are parents are very familiar visitors to the school, particularly during school hours. They and the other governors have a good feel for what is going on in the classrooms, which ensures that planned developments are closely related to raising standards even higher. Overall, the school has succeeded in producing a very effective partnership with parents to the direct benefit of pupils' learning.

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

46. The headteacher provides extremely effective leadership. In the past two years there has been a considerable staff turnover due to teachers leaving for promotion or family reasons. It is to the considerable credit of the headteacher that high pupil standards, academically and personally, and a strong sense of school community have been maintained during this period of staff instability. The school has a very strong ethos and its aims are fully reflected in day-to-day practice.

47. Other key staff, including some who have been appointed only very recently, carry out their roles very well and contribute significantly to the work and life of the school. There are co-ordinators for all subjects except art and design and most carry out their roles with enthusiasm and professionalism. The recently appointed deputy headteacher has quickly settled into this role and his other responsibilities, including co-ordination of the curriculum, assessment and PE. At the time of the inspection, there was a very strong sense of stability and teamwork among the staff and school community as a whole. Governors, teachers, classroom support staff, mid-day supervisors and after-school club organisers all presented themselves as a committed and united team.
48. There are very good arrangements for the monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching. The headteacher, headteacher and Key Stage 1 co-ordinator monitor all teachers' plans half-terminally and observe all teachers once a term each. Local Education Authority personnel have carried out additional monitoring. Co-ordinators monitor the planning in their subjects. Other opportunities for teachers to observe colleagues have arisen and are being developed through the very good arrangements for performance management. There are very good arrangements for the induction of all new staff to the school, with appropriate additional support for newly qualified teachers provided by the school and Local Education Authority. The outcomes of the performance management process, priorities in the school improvement plan and specific funding, such as New Opportunities Funding for ICT developments, are all closely tied together in the school's programme of staff development.
49. The school benefits from the support of a very committed and enthusiastic governing body. The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities very well. They have a very good understanding of what the school does well and identify accommodation issues as a significant area for improvement. The governors meet frequently as a full body or through the various sub-committees, with the finance and general purposes committee meeting at least twice a term. All of these meetings have clear agenda and are properly minuted. A very significant factor is that most of the governors often spend time in school during the day. There are effective governors with specific responsibilities for literacy, numeracy, ICT and special educational needs.
50. The school has very good procedures for self-evaluation and monitoring its performance. Ambitious targets are set for the national tests in English, mathematics and science. The school improvement plan is a very good working document for managing change. Very appropriate priorities are identified and for each target careful consideration is given to the time and resources needed, including staff training.
51. Financial planning is very good. The school makes very good use of specific grants and budget allocations, such as Standards Funds, New Opportunities Funds and funding for pupils with special educational needs. The current budget is being very carefully managed, whilst the school awaits planning permission for a new building for the reception children and improvements to the outdoor facilities for all the children in the Foundation Stage, to which the school will have to make a substantial contribution. Teachers, governors and administrative staff use modern technology very well to enhance the work of the school. Teachers make very effective use of support staff and learning resources during lessons and other activities.
52. The special educational needs co-ordinator has been in post since September 2001. The headteacher acted as co-ordinator since the post fell vacant last year. The school is aware that the current policy document dated 1997 needs review in the light of the new Code of Practice. The policy does afford clear guidance in procedures for identification and support for pupils on the special educational needs register. The newly appointed co-ordinator is currently employed for two and a half days a week. She knows the school well and is experienced in supporting pupils with special educational needs, even though this is her first appointment as co-ordinator. She is currently taking stock of the school's current provision and is already improving the quality of individual educational programmes and addressing re-organisation of the register. Ninety per cent of the co-ordinator's time is devoted to supporting pupils in the classroom. The head teacher, in the acting role, provided good and effective support and guidance to all staff and assistants during the last school year.

53. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good overall. The library has been stocked with a high proportion of non-fiction books as part of the school's strategy to raise boys' interest in reading. The marked improvement in the boys' test results in 2001 strongly indicates this to be a very effective measure. Resources in the Foundation Stage are very good overall, although they are better in the nursery than reception. The school is currently improving the appearance of the hall by providing very good quality storage for physical education (PE) and music resources, which were previously kept in the room which is now the small ICT suite. The appearance of the interior of the school is much enhanced by some very high quality displays in the classrooms and main corridor. Displays in the library, immediately inside the school entrance, and the school hall are not to such a high standard and do not reflect what visitors find elsewhere. The condition of the outside of the school building is poor and the playground and facilities for outdoor activities for children in reception are barely adequate. The principles of best value are applied well.
54. The school was last inspected in May 1997. Improvement has been very good overall. There have been good improvements in the guidance to help teachers in their planning and the role of subject co-ordinators. The pupils' library and research skills are very much improved. There have been significant improvements in teaching and learning and standards are higher. Leadership and management were previously very good and are now excellent. Value for money has improved and is now very good.

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

**There are no key issues for action**

#### **Minor issues**

55. The headteacher and governors should now:
- (1) Improve the accommodation, as and when finances allow, by:
    - developing the provision for outdoor play for children in the reception year;
    - resurfacing the main playground;
    - repairing the exterior of the building.

(paragraphs 53 and 58)
  - (2) Raise standards in design and technology, geography, history and music in Years 3 to 6 by completing targets as stated in the current school improvement plan.

(paragraphs 3, 96 – 99, 100 – 105, 106 – 110 and 117 – 121)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	67
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	7	28	22	9	0	0	0
Percentage	11	42	33	14	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	24	246
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	44

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	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	11	22	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	11
	Girls	22	22	21
	Total	32	32	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (97)	97 (97)	97 (94)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	10	11
	Girls	22	19	22
	Total	31	29	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (97)	88 (94)	100 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	20	15	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	15	19
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	27	26	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (80)	74 (70)	86 (90)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	17	17
	Girls	12	12	13
	Total	28	29	30
Percentage of pupils	School	80 (77)	83 (80)	86 (80)

at NC level 4 or above	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)
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*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*



### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	212
Any other minority ethnic group	2

*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)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.6
Average class size	32

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

Total number of education support staff	3.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	97.5

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	12

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	10.5
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

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	500571
Total expenditure	479593
Expenditure per pupil	1790
Balance brought forward from previous year	12507
Balance carried forward to next year	33665

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate =39%

Number of questionnaires sent out	295
Number of questionnaires returned	115

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	34	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	43	3	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	44	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	36	17	1	3
The teaching is good.	63	35	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	43	8	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	24	2	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	36	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	46	47	4	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	69	29	2	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	64	32	2	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	32	25	4	13

**Please note that the responses to some questions may not total 100 per cent because some parents left all options blank.**

## **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**

56. Overall provision in the Foundation Stage is very good. This a strength of the school, as it was at the time of the previous inspection, with evidence of clear improvement since 1997. There are 48 children in the nursery, attending on a part-time basis. Children are admitted at the start of the school year following their third birthday and they transfer to reception classes, at Willows and other schools, at the start of the following year. There are currently 34 children in the reception year, the six oldest being taught in a mixed age class with Year 1 pupils. There is a good programme to introduce children to the nursery and for transfer to the reception class. Most children enter nursery with attainments that are above average for their age. They make very good progress throughout the Foundation Stage and, by the end of the reception year, attainment is well above average in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development. It is above average in knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. Children achieve very well because of very good teaching and the rich range of learning experiences provided.
57. Since the last inspection, provision has improved through the thorough introduction of the new Foundation Stage curriculum in both classes. Excellent leadership has involved all staff in planning together to create a stimulating curriculum which provides well for the needs of all the children, including those with special educational needs and those who are more able. Those children taught in a mixed-age class are well catered for and great care is taken to ensure that they receive an appropriate curriculum, based upon the same topics as other pupils in their class. They join their own age group for outdoor play and for the teaching of phonics. The quality of teaching and learning is now very good and promotes very high standards. High quality teamwork between teachers and nursery nurses creates a highly stimulating and effective learning environment for pupils. Staff are very knowledgeable about the curriculum and their pupils and plan exciting lessons, making very good use of time and resources. Teaching of the basic skills of communication, literacy and numeracy are particularly well taught. Staff constantly assess the children and use their detailed information very well in planning to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. Their imaginative use of very good resources engages children's attention and motivates them to concentrate deeply for extended periods.
58. The accommodation is generally good, but the outdoor nursery area is small and the reception class has no secure outdoor area or large play resources. Staff in the reception year plan very carefully to ensure that children have a worthwhile range of play experiences, such as ring games or ball games, on a daily basis. Children visit the nursery outdoor area each week to use large play equipment there. There are advanced plans to add a reception classroom to the nursery, which will provide a much larger outdoor area and more resources. Very good assessment procedures are in place which record achievement and teachers use this information well to plan the curriculum and set targets for individual children. Each class has a different system of recording, but there are plans to review this and provide a common system for recording children's achievement.

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

59. Children achieve very well and attainment is well above average. Most are likely to exceed the levels expected for their age by the end of the reception year. This reflects skilful teaching. All staff constantly encourage children to feel confident about what they can achieve. Children enjoy coming to school, form very good relationships with staff and other children and behave very well. They quickly learn classroom routines and begin to accept responsibility for themselves and others. For example, when they arrive at school, nursery children find their own names and post them into a registration box to record their attendance. All children take responsibility for their personal hygiene and put on aprons independently when working with paint and water. They work co-operatively and collaboratively in various activities. For example, children in the nursery share

the outdoor climbing frame, tricycles and balancing equipment and children in the reception class work in pairs when taking part in a quick-fire phonics session. Children listen attentively to adults and concentrate well to complete tasks. Staff create a secure, calm and purposeful atmosphere by their consistent, supportive but firm manner and encourage children to play well together and be considerate to others.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

60. By the end of the reception year, children achieve very well and attainment is well above average, with most exceeding the levels expected for that age. Children interact well with others, speak confidently and take turns in conversation. Children in the nursery listen carefully to stories and rhymes and begin to learn letter names and their sounds in very well taught practical phonics sessions. Work in the reception class builds well on this and children refine their listening skills, identifying letter sounds within words. For example, they learn to listen for the final sounds and enjoy practising their skills in phonic games and on the computer. Staff provide very clear models of speech so that children learn to pronounce letter sounds and words correctly. They take every opportunity to extend and enrich children's language. For example, in the reception class, children sharing the Bear Hunt story were encouraged say how they thought the bear was feeling when he was alone on a beach. They identified feelings such as lonely and sad and one child suggested that he could feel ashamed because he had been mean to somebody. Children make a very good start on the school reading programme and attainment is well above average. They know that print carries meaning, start at the beginning of a book and turn pages. They know which is text and which is the picture and all know some common individual words. The more able children know a good number of words and use their phonic skills effectively to spell out others.
61. Children in the nursery learn early mark-making skills, using a good range of materials in the writing area. These are built on well in the reception class and children learn to write and form letters with increasing accuracy. As they move through the reception class, children gain confidence in writing sentences and the more able begin to use capital letters and full stops correctly.

### **Mathematical development**

62. Children achieve very well and their attainment is well above average, with most on course to exceed the level expected at the end of the reception year. Children make very good gains in their learning because of the very good teaching and interesting numeracy experiences provided. Children in the nursery learn number rhymes and play counting games, including some on the computer. They enjoy using a wide range of practical equipment to count, sort and order numbers and experiment with water and sand to gain an early understanding of capacity. In the reception class, children engage in a very good range of practical activities, which are well matched to their needs. They count beyond 20 and, by the time they leave the reception class, most children are confident in working with numbers up to 20. Staff provide many opportunities for children to count and apply their mathematical skills in other activities. For example, in the café they apply their counting skills when using money to pay for their meals. They continue to work on measurement and shape and staff again provide a very wide range of attractive and good quality equipment to involve them in learning for themselves in both direct teaching and choice activities.

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

63. Children enter nursery with a sound range of general knowledge and make good gains in their learning. Attainment is above average, with most on target to exceed the level expected by the end of the reception year. Children have good opportunities to experience work in many areas, including science, DT and ICT and links with literacy and numeracy are good. For example, the children experiment with colour, using a good range of materials, such as acetate sheets, to observe what happens when they mix two or more together. They draw simple maps, learn about their own bodies and healthy eating. Children study animals and plants and make some visits to support their learning. For example, they visited Blackpool Zoo when studying wild animals. They

learn about the differences between the seasons, observing what happens to the weather and to plants and animals as the seasons change. For example, they observe the autumn colours of leaves and know that some animals, such as hedgehogs hibernate for winter.

64. In ICT, children learn to use the arrow keys to move characters, letters and numbers about the screen. They know the parts of the computer and use the mouse and the keyboard confidently. Lessons are very well planned and the very good teaching and positive relationships enhance children's knowledge and understanding. Staff take every opportunity to develop children's language in activities to enrich their vocabulary and deepen their understanding.

### **Physical development**

65. Children achieve well and most are likely to exceed the standards expected when at the end of the reception year. They show increasing control of their movements and awareness of space and use tools and equipment with increasing skill. Careful planning provides good opportunities for all children to experience work, both indoors and outdoors, in physical education and games activities, despite the lack of outdoor space and resources for the reception class. Children move with confidence as they balance and use wheeled toys and a climbing frame. Children in the nursery learn to hold pens and pencils correctly when learning to form letters and numbers and this is built upon well in the reception class. They learn to manipulate materials, such as when rolling and cutting dough and to use simple tools, such as scissors. Staff demonstrate techniques well and ensure that children hold their tools correctly, giving them confidence to try for themselves. Children in the reception class show increasing dexterity when they work with pencils, crayons, paintbrushes and as they roll, squeeze, push and kneed malleable materials.

### **Creative development**

66. Children achieve well and attainment is above average, with most on course to exceed the standards expected by the end of the reception year. Children are encouraged to express their feelings in all areas of their learning through the use of art materials, music, dance, and imaginative play. They develop an eye for detail and a growing sense of colour through mixing paint. Many opportunities are given for children in both classes to develop their skills, using a range of materials. For example, children used autumnal colours they had observed in nature in their observational pictures and leaf prints, using paints, crayons and pastels. They also use three-dimensional materials, such as clays and recycled materials to make models, such as hedgehogs. Children recognise familiar songs, nursery rhymes and jingles and sing them in unison with enjoyment and natural exuberance, sometimes accompanying themselves with percussion instruments. Their very good spoken language is used well in the role-play areas in both classes. These are changed on a regular basis to maintain children's high levels of interest and motivation and enhance understanding of the current topic.

## **ENGLISH**

67. Pupils achieve very well in English throughout the school. This judgement is based on evidence from the results of national tests and inspection evidence. The results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests in both reading and writing showed that the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 were well above those seen nationally and above those in similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher than expected Level 3 in this age group was also higher than the national average. Results, based on average points scores, achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 were well above the national average and above those in similar schools. Again, pupils in this age group achieved a well above average percentage at the higher than expected Level 5. Also, on the basis of average points, pupils in Year 6 achieved very well in comparison with the performance of seven-year olds in similar schools in 1997.
68. Pupils achieve well in speaking and listening both at seven and 11 years of age. Overall, in Years 1 and 2 most pupils make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening through opportunities in the teaching of the Literacy Hour. By Year 2, most pupils show increasing confidence in speaking. By the end of Year 6, more able pupils use standard English fluently, for example when

talking about their reading books. The majority of pupils are becoming skilled in answering and asking questions and they listen attentively to instructions, stories and the contributions of others. During the inspection, teachers regularly took opportunities in subjects other than English to encourage pupils to increase their vocabulary and their use of spoken English. There are displays that feature the vocabulary for subjects such as mathematics, science and ICT and this type of material is consistently used to increase the literacy skills of pupils. Teachers provide good role models for pupils to follow in valuing and respecting the ideas and opinions of both pupils and adults. Learning support assistants make an effective contribution to the good progress of pupils with special educational needs. They clarify questions, explain new vocabulary and encourage pupils to offer answers.

69. Standards in reading are well above national expectations in Years 1 and 2 and they are above average in Years 3 to 6. The majority of pupils read well enough to make sense of texts that are appropriate for their age and retell stories or the main points of non-fiction extracts. Younger pupils are beginning to develop skills that help them to read the text. Pupils in Year 2 use a variety of strategies to work out words that they find difficult, such as splitting up the word, sounding out the letters and gaining clues from the illustrations. They are clear about the difference between an author and illustrator and fiction and non-fiction. Most pupils in this age group talk confidently about authors and books that they like. Among older pupils, all know how to use their knowledge of the alphabet to locate texts and most were clear about how to use a contents page or an index. They were also able to use ICT to find information both from CD-ROM and the Internet. In Year 6, pupils name authors and most talk about the text in more than a literal way, finding evidence from the text to support their opinions. The range and quality of texts available is much improved since the last inspection. Pupils mostly enjoy reading and many belong to public libraries, reading both fiction and non-fiction texts for pleasure. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress as a result of the support for reading.
70. Evidence from the provided sample of pupils' work and lesson observations show that pupils achieve very well in writing throughout the school. Standards are well above average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Most pupils in Years 1 and 2 make consistently good progress and have clear and well-formed letters, but only a small proportion use joined up writing. In Years 3 to 6, this progress is maintained, especially in Years 5 and 6. The work set covers all areas of the National Curriculum programmes of study and the tasks are often designed to give an opportunity for all pupils to write more ambitiously. Pupils write for a range of different purposes, sequence their ideas appropriately and the majority use punctuation accurately. The more able pupils organise ideas into grammatically correct complex sentences, which are arranged in paragraphs and show an increasing understanding of speech and question marks. They write imaginative stories and make good progress in developing punctuation and spelling skills. In the work provided, there were imaginative play-scripts using the 'Harry Potter' stories as a basis. Pupils also wrote very lively short descriptions in the style of Charles Dickens, showing a good understanding of the author's stylistic mannerisms. Pupils are taught to follow planning structures and learn to organise their writing effectively. The planning of lessons takes account of the needs of the more able pupils and provides them with challenging work. Teachers' planning also identifies work suitable for pupils with special educational needs and these pupils make good progress.
71. The school has a policy of promoting literacy across all subjects of the curriculum. There are good displays in virtually every classroom that feature specific vocabulary for subjects such as mathematics, geography and history and, in most lessons, teachers make a point of encouraging pupils to use appropriate subject vocabulary. In music lessons pupils use terms such as 'rhythm', 'pulse', and 'beat' confidently and these are reinforced by the teacher as appropriate. There are plans to develop this even further. Much of the good practice seen during the inspection was the result of the effective planning of individual teachers.
72. Teaching is good throughout the school. Teaching seen during the inspection was always at least satisfactory, with many lessons that were good or very good. In an excellent Year 2 lesson, pupils were taught about vowel combinations in a clear and interesting way and absorbed a lot of grammatical vocabulary through the teacher's well planned approach. In a lively Year 6 lesson on writing a news report the teacher set a very good pace and made good use of a variety of

strategies that kept pupils thinking about the subject matter. The activities challenged all pupils, including the most able. All teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly, making regular comments to encourage and instruct and most give effective pointers for improvement. However, this is not always the case and the co-ordinator needs to ensure that all colleagues follow this good practice. Lesson targets are generally shared with the class so that the pupils are all clear about what they will be learning. Praise is used well to show pupils that their work is valued and to encourage higher standards. Relationships are good and teachers generally manage behaviour well. As a result, pupils work hard, show interest and sustain concentration well. The subject makes a good contribution to the moral and social development of pupils.

73. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator monitors teaching and learning in all classes and scrutinises samples of work in each year group. There is a good system of assessment and the data gathered impacts very effectively on the planning of the subject. This helps to ensure consistent progress in Years 1 to 6. Since the last inspection, the library provision has been greatly improved. The library is now well stocked and is in a central position accessible to all. It is an attractive and welcoming space and is used well. In choosing books for the library the school acknowledged the educational research that shows boys prefer non-fiction to fiction and the ratios of these genres in the library reflects this. The computerised retrieval and loan system is extremely 'user-friendly' and the volunteer Year 6 librarians find it easy to operate.

## **MATHEMATICS**

74. Attainment at the time of the last inspection was above national average throughout the school. Inspection findings indicate that levels of standards are now well above national averages for pupils at the ages of seven and 11. This represents a significant improvement.
75. Standards achieved in the 2001 national tests at the end of Year 2 are well above the national average and standards achieved at the end of Year 6 are above the national average, based on average points scores. Results are well above those achieved in similar schools at the end of Year 2 and above at the end of Year 6. The high levels of pupils' achievements are reflected in the quality of work examined. This indicates that pupils in Years 2 and 6 are achieving well above national averages. The proportions of pupils achieving the above expected Level 3 at the end of Year 2 and Level 5 at the end of Year 6 are above average. Pupils achieve well and take great pride in what they produce. Presentation of work is very good by pupils up to seven and in Years 5 and 6. The trend in results is well above the national trend for seven year-olds. The trend is less consistent for 11 year-olds, but there was significant improvement in results this year with boys doing much better than previously. Over the past two years, the school has successfully implemented the National Numeracy Strategy.
76. Pupils entering school have a good level of mathematical skills, including good number recognition and a sound mathematical vocabulary. By the age of seven, pupils are developing secure number skills. Mental arithmetic skills and strategies for mental calculation are being developed well. There is good coverage of the mathematics programmes of study for number, shape, space and measures with an appropriate emphasis on the development of number skills. Pupils complete a good amount of work. There is a good balance between worksheet and freer work and this aids the development of literacy and presentational skills. This is a good feature. Less able pupils sequence numbers up to 100, order numbers and have a basic understanding of place value to 100. They add coins to a value of 10p and understand the concept of halves. Pupils make good progress in relation to their attainment on entry to the school and pupils' achievements are well above national standards.
77. By the age of 11, most pupils have a sound grasp of multiplication tables to 10, multiply four digit numbers by two digit numbers, add and subtract decimals up to two decimal places and understand long division. They have a good understanding of lines of symmetry, rotational and reflective symmetry, area, volume, ratio and proportion. They have a secure grasp of fractions, decimals, percentages and the inter-relation of all three. Less able pupils round numbers up and down to two decimal places, use co-ordinates appropriately and multiply three-digit numbers by two-digit numbers. There is a very good focus on mathematical vocabulary and pupils use terms



such as “inverse operation” and “negative axis” with confidence. Opportunities for pupils to apply mathematical skills and pursue investigations are good and exceptionally good for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Here, pupils are continuously challenged by the nature of the tasks set and by the quality of the teacher’s questions. Consequently, pupils’ mathematical thinking and reasoning is of a very high order. This is a very good feature.

78. Pupils’ progress is good overall. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, and often very good progress in comparison with their prior attainments. Progress is enhanced by the teachers’ constant re-enforcement of number facts and mathematical vocabulary whenever the opportunity arises. This is a very strong feature in the introductory mental work during lessons. ICT is beginning to have a positive impact upon standards in data handling.
79. Pupils have a very positive attitude towards the subject. They are keen to answer questions and show sensitivity when incorrect or inaccurate answers are given. Pupils enjoy explaining the strategies they have used to solve mental tasks posed by their teacher. They concentrate well and sustain interest. Pupils work collaboratively, often in pairs, and support and help each other well. They work hard and demonstrate an enthusiasm for the subject. Pupils in Year 6 responded very enthusiastically to challenging questions from the teacher about co-ordinates and quadrants. The activities were very challenging for all ability groups, calculations were accurate and the lesson proceeded very well. Behaviour is very good in about eight out of 10 lessons. Most pupils enjoy the subject and respond enthusiastically to the challenges set.
80. Teaching is very good throughout the school. It is always good and often better. Over half the lessons seen were very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen in the seven lessons observed during the inspection. Lessons are consistently very well planned, resourced and delivered at a brisk pace. The high quality of questioning promotes very enthusiastic responses from pupils and very good learning. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and tasks set for pupils are realistic, but challenging. Evidence from pupils’ books supports the judgement that teaching in mathematics is very good overall.
81. Teachers often share the lesson objectives with pupils and return to them at the end of the lesson to discuss what has been learned. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and this is reflected in the high quality of questioning and very good use of relevant vocabulary. This promotes very well focused thinking amongst pupils. In a lesson in Year 5, words about co-ordinates were taken from the numeracy display and used by pupils on a board grid. Pupils selected ‘co-ordinates’, ‘x and y axis’, ‘grid’, ‘vertical’ and ‘horizontal’ and were able to define them and explain why they were chosen. Teachers have a good understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy and constantly challenge pupils’ thinking. They require explanations about the strategies that pupils use, quick and accurate response and expect a high work rate. Teachers have high and realistic expectations of pupils’ work and behaviour and this is reflected in the pupils’ motivation and sustained concentration. Homework is set weekly. Work is marked consistently and comments are positive. Comments designed to improve presentation or challenge pupils’ thinking are effectively and frequently used in the books of older pupils. The individual educational programmes for pupils with special educational needs are used effectively by teachers to structure pupils’ work to meet their specific mathematical targets.
82. The subject has a well-organised, well-qualified and effective co-ordinator who has held the post for six years. A very good system of subject assessment has been introduced, which is detailed and very well structured. This complements the testing and data analysis already in place. The school is able to determine strengths and weaknesses with more confidence and this has led to the establishment of individual target setting. Pupil’s targets are made available to parents on a termly basis. Assessment files are detailed and regularly up-dated. Monitoring of pupils’ progress is very good. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching and, although this has not taken place this term, will resume this monitoring during the spring term. She sees teachers’ planning and pupils’ work and sets targets for the subject. Governors visit and observe numeracy lessons. Governors are impressed by the impact of the Numeracy Strategy. Resources are good, used well by teachers and carefully used by pupils. Good links with other subjects, and particularly with ICT, are now being developed. The co-ordinator gives a good lead in the subject.

83. Teachers have worked very hard since the last inspection and have improved provision and the quality of teaching. They have been very successful in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy.

## SCIENCE

84. Pupils achieve very well throughout the school. Standards are well above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. These inspection findings are based on lesson observations, examination of pupils' completed work and a discussion with the headteacher, as the co-ordinator was absent. They match the results of teacher assessments of seven year-olds and the results of the national tests for 11 year-olds in 2001. Standards at the end of Year 6 have been consistently above the national average since 1997 and the school's results have improved broadly in line with the national trend of improvement. Results in 2001 show a significant improvement because half the pupils achieved the higher than expected National Curriculum Level 5. Standards are much higher at the end of Year 2 than they were at the time of the previous inspection and they are at a similar level at the end of Year 6.
85. Pupils in Year 2 have a very good understanding of scientific procedures and conventions for their age. They are beginning, for example, to make predictions, carry out an experiment or investigation and to compare their findings with their predictions. They are developing a good understanding of simple electrical circuits. There is a good emphasis in their workbooks on presenting work in different ways for different purposes such as using graphs, tables and labelled diagrams. Pupils are learning how to lay out a scientific report, for example an investigation into how vehicles move down ramps.
86. Pupils in Year 6 complete a good amount and range of work. The standard of presentation is frequently high and, on occasions, extremely high. For example, pupils draw and label force-meters very accurately and neatly. Nearly all pupils in Year 6 hypothesise well, but a few have a less well-developed understanding of how a conclusion arises from comparing their hypotheses with the outcomes of an investigation or experiment. In the current Year 6 class, all are likely to achieve a National Curriculum Level 4 by Easter 2002 and about half of them should achieve Level 5. Pupils throughout Years 3 to 6 make good progress in science and this accelerates in Years 5 and 6.
87. Six lessons were seen during the inspection. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall, within a range from excellent to satisfactory. Many teachers choose to teach science through very long lessons in the afternoon, sometimes as long as two hours. Such long lessons are unusual in primary schools. There is substantial evidence that this is a successful strategy in this school. This is because the lessons are very well planned and teachers present activities in ways that are highly motivating to the pupils. Relationships are very good and a good pace is maintained. Pupils are enthusiastic and hard-working and their interest and involvement are often exemplary, being sustained throughout these long sessions. Consequently, pupils make clear gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills.
88. In the very best lessons, the teachers use questions extremely effectively to check the pupils' understanding and extend their thinking. The teacher's use of praise at the end of the Year 6 lesson was warranted and made specific reference to the pupils' developing understanding of fair testing. In a Year 2 lesson, all pupils learnt how to make and test a simple switch in an electrical circuit. A more able pupil included the sentence, "to make a switch it has to be metal touching metal", in his written report. This lesson and others featured the good use of ICT to support the focus activity. Very good support enabled the less able pupils to succeed at this task. Examination of pupils' work shows that marking varies from satisfactory to very good. In the best examples, teachers make frequent helpful remarks that acknowledge pupils' developing understanding and hard work and indicate what they need to do next. In the less successful examples, the teacher does no more than show the pupils that she has looked at the work by ticks or brief comments.

89. It is not possible to make a reliable judgement on the quality of leadership and management in science because the co-ordinator was absent. The co-ordinator is new to this responsibility since September 2001. However, an interview with the headteacher and examination of the co-ordinator's management file indicates that the co-ordinator is very enthusiastic about, and has made an extremely good start in, this new role. She has already produced a detailed development plan for the subject and monitored teachers' plans, adding her own annotations. For example, she has drawn attention to links with ICT. There are very good procedures for assessment.

## ART AND DESIGN

90. During the inspection, only a Year 6 lesson could be observed. Judgements are supported by the examination of pupils' previous work and discussions with pupils and the temporary co-ordinator. Standards are well above average at the end of Years 2 and 6 and pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are more able, achieve very well. This is a significant improvement on the average standards noted at the time of the previous inspection. The improvement has occurred because the school took strong action on the points noted at that inspection, particularly about the study of famous artists. This aspect is now taught in great depth and gives pupils a very good understanding about how they might develop and apply techniques in their own work. They now also have greater choice in the selection of their own resources.
91. Pupils develop their skills and techniques well through the use of a very good range of media and materials. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are introduced to the work of well-known artists, such as Modigliani, and produce pictures in their styles very successfully. At the end of Year 2, pupils develop their work in a topic through various media. For example, after learning about Modigliani, they draw and paint portraits in his style and develop this in three-dimensional pictures of a very high standard, using paper sculpture and paint. Some pieces of work provide opportunities for pupils to co-operate in pairs or small groups. For example, Year 1 pupils created pictures of Willows School, using modelling materials, paint and wools and combined them into a class mural. Pupils create pictures, using ICT, such as pictures in the style of Mondrian.
92. Work is built on well in Years 3 to 6, so that pupils refine and develop their techniques. By Year 6, pupils have very good observational drawing skills and awareness of pattern. They use a wide range of materials and a variety of textures when creating their pictures and sculptures. For example, pupils study how actions, such as running, change the shape of the body. They experiment in representing this through drawing, painting and paper collage, producing single pictures and a series of pictures to show the change. They gain a very good understanding of how famous artists used techniques, media and colour to express their feelings to their audience. For example, pupils used colour sensitively to create paintings in the style of Paul Klee and boldly to represent Georgia O'Keefe's style. In the Year 6 lesson observed, pupils studied Picasso's Guernica and noted how he represented the horrors of war. They then went on to apply what they had learned in their own pictures, using similar techniques in portraying Cortes's invasion of the Aztec lands. They are very perceptive in identifying significant detail and their very good speaking skills and rich vocabulary make a notable contribution to their learning. They make good use of computers to research famous artists and works of art on the Internet and in producing their own pictures. Pupils produce interesting and effective collages and patterns, using fabrics and weaving and printing techniques. They design and make fabrics and enhance these by the use of embroidery stitching onto the detail of the pattern.
93. The quality of teaching is very good. Although only one lesson was observed, the wide range of evidence from displays, pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with pupils supports this judgement. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and understanding, which they use to plan stimulating learning opportunities. Lessons are very well planned and prepared with clear learning targets, which are shared with the pupils. Teachers' give clear instructions and guidance to help pupils to improve and apply their artistic skills, although sketchbooks are not used as often as they might be as a record of pupils' progress. Pupils know what it is that they are expected to learn about and are very enthusiastic about their work. They have very good attitudes, listen carefully to teacher guidance and suggestions and concentrate to complete their work to a high standard. They worked very well together in the lesson seen, such as when discussing the finer points of a painting. Teaching about famous artists is particularly good and teachers and pupils become involved in productive discussions that make pupils think deeply and ask 'What?', 'How?' and 'Why?' an artist has created a particular work of art. Teachers make very good use of ICT in lessons and this also motivates pupils well.
94. Work makes a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They learn about the work of great artists such as William Morris and Paul Klee and express their feelings about wider experiences, such as the futility of war. There are many opportunities to

study and discuss the work of other cultures. For example, pupils in Year 2 study the work of contemporary African artists. Work is very well displayed in the corridors and classrooms, but it is a shame that it is not more prominent in public places, such as the entrance hall and main hall.

95. The subject has been very well led and managed since the previous inspection, but the co-ordinator has left. The school plans to appoint a new co-ordinator for the next school year. Meanwhile, the good scheme of work and management by the headteacher is maintaining the high standard of provision. There is no system of assessment, but this is being introduced over the next two terms. Resources are good and easily accessible to all staff.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (DT)**

96. In the last inspection, pupils' work at seven and 11 years of age was judged to be satisfactory. In the current inspection the picture is much the same. Younger pupils generate ideas and plan what to do next, based on their experience of working with materials and components. They use pictures and words to describe their designs. They select appropriate tools, techniques and materials and use tools to assemble and combine materials and components in a variety of ways. Pupils have made glove puppets and used cutting, measuring and joining skills to assemble these before decorating them. In this age group, pupils have also made toys that use eccentric cams and models with split pins as pivots to create movement. They recognise what they have done well as their work progresses and suggest things they could do better in the future.
97. Little teaching of design technology in Years 3 to 6 took place during the period of the inspection. Taking into account the work seen in pupils' books and on display, available records and interviews with pupils, standards at the end of Year 6 are in line with those seen in many similar schools. Pupils in Year 3 have used construction kits to make working models. They have also designed, made and evaluated sandwiches. A Year 4 project on making money containers showed that pupils are able to use appropriate vocabulary in written descriptions and labelled sketches to communicate the details of their designs. This project helped pupils to be aware of constraints that need to be considered when designing a product. Pupils in Year 5 have made working lighthouses that link well with work in science. An attractive display of Year 6 work featured cakes that pupils had designed, cooked and then evaluated. Pupils are not, however, exposed to a sufficient range of techniques and tools to maximise their acquisition of skills. They evaluate their designs by identifying what is working well and what needs to be improved. They are also able to make step by step drawings that show the process of realising their design. However, by the age of 11, they do not generate alternative designs for their projects or choose the most suitable final design from a given selection.
98. Teaching is satisfactory overall. All the teaching seen was satisfactory or better. In a good lesson for a mixed Year 1 and 2 class, pupils thought about appropriate strategies for producing a place mat suitable for a blind person. They considered the effect of different textures and incorporating scented materials into the place mat. In this lesson, pupils talked about how they would make their mat and practised their sewing skills. They made drawings of the designs that would be on their mats and could talk about how they might improve their designs. In a lesson for older pupils who had been set a design challenge, they were able to talk lucidly about their own plans and how they might meet the challenge. They were also able to foresee possible shortcomings in their designs, but did not always have enough knowledge of physical structures to work out ways of improving their designs effectively. In both these lessons, the pupils co-operated in small and large groups and listened attentively to ideas from all in the group. The subject makes a good contribution to the social development of the pupils.
99. The subject co-ordinator has been in post since last year and leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has adopted the national exemplar scheme of work and has chosen appropriate topics for each year group. There are resources kept in a central location, but the space is shared with other departments and this does not encourage teachers to use them. Although the resources are of satisfactory quality, the variety and amount of them are not sufficient for pupils to experience a sufficiently wide range of making experiences. The co-ordinator has limited, but satisfactory, knowledge and understanding of the National Curriculum

levels and how they relate to the projects in the scheme of work. The recording and monitoring of pupils' progress is still not fully in place, but there are plans to rectify this in the near future. There is a good photographic record of pupils' work that can be used as exemplar material. ICT is sometimes used to support pupils' learning. For example, pupils downloaded a recipe for tortillas from the Internet. However, this is an area that is under-developed. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to this subject. The school has purchased appropriate tools, for example, scissors and bench-hooks, that enable left-handed pupils to participate fully.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

100. Attainment at the last inspection was stated to be good throughout the school. This has been improved and is now very good by the end of Year 2. Standards have been maintained at the previous good level for pupils at the end of Year 6. Scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils and teachers confirm these findings. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in all learning activities and make at least good progress.
101. Pupils in Year 1 carefully observe their surroundings and make simple maps to record features in the locality. They look beyond the immediate area and explore a mountain landscape through a Barnaby Bear story. Reception and Year 1 pupils considered the footwear Barnaby Bear would require for the rough terrain. Pupils produced very careful designs for his boots that demonstrated a good understanding of suitability for purpose. The lesson forged very good links with DT. Pupils in Year 2 build on this experience well. They explore more distant locations and compare and contrast these with their own. Pupils become increasingly aware of the world beyond Manchester through work about an island home, living by the sea and life in a Mexican village. In a Year 2 class, pupils cooked tortillas, made Aztec figurines and masks and retrieved information about Mexico from their classroom computer. The lesson was a rich collection of inter-related subjects very well fashioned to the geographical theme. This approach makes a significant contribution to the cultural development of pupils. This is a very good feature. By the end of Year 2, pupils achieve very well in the subject.
102. By the end of Year 6, pupils have sufficient skills to carry out their own research, using ICT, books, globes and maps. For instance, they used all these resources to find out about the significance of water supply in different parts of the world. They are aware that people can damage as well as improve the environment and relate this to changes in the local environment. In discussions, pupils show good awareness of conservation and express concerns about pollution caused by traffic, factories and litter. They are keen to learn and enjoy looking at maps and, especially, taking part in field studies. Pupils' knowledge of contrasting locations is very well developed. They develop an understanding of cause and effect and how other subjects inter-relate within this. For example, they appreciate the effects of Tudor exploration and its impact upon mapping and trade. The inter-relation of subjects is well developed and is a strong feature of learning across the whole school.
103. Teaching and learning are very good. Five lessons were observed during the inspection. Teaching was very good in three of these and it was excellent in one. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. All lessons are very well planned and resourced. Lessons are delivered at a brisk pace and teachers have very good subject knowledge and high expectations. Teachers challenge pupils' thinking. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils were reflecting upon the predicament of a seal who had strayed a long way from its natural home. As an introduction to work on world climate this was very effective and related well to topical issues in the press. It focused pupils' attention on the need to consider contrasting locations and the suitability of different environments for the support of different plants and animals. In a Year 5 lesson, groups of pupils were given various measures of water and asked how they could use it. Very good questioning increased pupil awareness of the value of water and the impact that a shortage might have. For example, "Is there enough to clean the car, fill the washing machine or clean your teeth?" Pupils enjoy their geography lessons and respond enthusiastically to the challenges set. They enjoy researching information, using maps, atlases and globes and learning about places very different from their own. Teaching, overall, is very good and this represents an improvement since the last inspection.

104. Leadership and management are very good. The curriculum co-ordinator has been in post since the beginning of the school year. He is enthusiastic about the subject and supports colleagues well in the effective cross-curricular approach adopted by the school. The policy document and scheme of work are being reviewed appropriately during the current year. As a result of the review, whole-school assessment procedures, not currently in place, will be devised. The school does not have a subject portfolio. Subject monitoring does not include lesson observations, but this is planned for. The co-ordinator sees teachers' planning and examples of pupils' work. Planning is good throughout the school and effectively covers all aspects of the subject required by the National Curriculum. Resources are adequate for subject delivery, accessible and used well.
105. Development since the last inspection has been good. The very good and excellent teaching observed in Years 5 and 6 has yet to impact upon standards and this augurs well for future subject development.

## HISTORY

106. By the end of Year 2, pupils' knowledge and understanding in history are very good when compared with national expectations for their age group. Pupils recognise the distinction between the past and the present. They understand why things were different in the past and how they differed from today. As a result of their visit to Tatton Hall, pupils in Year 2 know about significant differences in the role of children at different times. The role-play aspect of the visit made a vivid impression and aided their understanding of the nature of children's lives during Victorian times. They know that people wore different clothes from what is worn today and they understand the differences in people's expectations of children's roles. They learn about people who have made a difference to others' lives, such as Louis Braille, Robert Scott and Neil Armstrong and the impact that they have made.
107. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average overall and pupils have developed very good research skills. For instance, pupils in Year 6 examine various sources of information related to their topic on the Aztecs. They distinguish between primary and secondary resources from an assembled collection of artefacts, books, photographs and web-site materials. They are developing a good subject vocabulary. They understand terms such as "contemporary", "evaluate" and "sources of information". Pupils in Year 6 show a good knowledge of different eras in history and have a good understanding of chronology. They ask relevant questions about the past and make good use of books and computers to research answers to these questions. Good use is made of opportunities to write in the subject and pupils' books show a good range of well-presented writing.
108. Teaching and learning were good in the two lessons observed. Overall, teachers' planning is good and they use resources effectively. Tasks are challenging and promote pupils thinking well. Probing questions, as to how and why things are, stimulate good discussions within groups as well as in whole-class situations. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and use this to plan interesting activities for pupils. In a Year 3 lesson about Viking longboats the teacher assembled a range of texts and pictures, utilised pupils' good reading skills to access information and challenged their thinking with 'why' and 'how' questions. Pupils found the activities challenging, interesting and thought provoking. As a result, they worked with sustained concentration, often independently. Teachers are enthusiastic about history, relate the subject well to other curriculum areas, particularly to the development of literacy skills, and challenge pupils' thinking continually. The enthusiasm engendered is reflected in pupils' attitudes. Pupils enjoy the subject and the challenges it presents and produce work of a consistently good standard. Levels of co-operation are good between pupils, reflecting teachers' high expectations of sharing and support. History makes a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development.
109. The co-ordinator has been in post for one year. She is enthusiastic about history and affords good leadership. The policy document and scheme of work are currently under review as part of an overall humanities review. The review is to address assessment as no formal assessment procedures are in place currently. The co-ordinator monitors planning and sees pupils' work in books and on display, but has not yet had opportunities to observe colleagues teaching. Display

of pupils' work in history is generally good. The school has no portfolio of work, although the co-ordinator has collected examples of pupils' work over the past year. Resources are adequate, but the co-ordinator is keen to develop these and, in particular, the collection of artefacts. The co-ordinator spends available funding prudently in order to maximise its effect.

110. The school is building on the subject strengths identified at the last inspection. Standards have improved, links with other subjects have increased and the quality of teaching has improved pupils' thinking and research skills.

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

111. Pupils achieve well throughout the school and standards are above expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. This is because of the high quality of the teaching, very positive pupils' responses and very good use of the ICT suite and computers in the classrooms. These judgements are supported by the examination of pupils' work on display around the school, in their files on the computer and in the co-ordinator's portfolio. A good range of work was seen across the National Curriculum programmes of study, although work in control and modelling is less well-developed than other aspects. Pupils throughout the school are making good or better progress in developing knowledge and understanding of word-processors, databases and graphics programmes. Pupils in the upper juniors make further gains in the use of spreadsheets, CD-ROM and the Internet.
112. Pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of basic ICT skills. They know the different parts of a computer and their functions. Pupils know how to turn computers on and off, log on, open and close files and move through menus correctly. During the inspection, pupils in Year 2 learnt how to use the 'shift' and 'return/enter' keys to re-organise a block of text into a list. They clearly understood how this resulted in a form of text that was easier to read than the original. Good use has been made of a computer programme to complement the very good art and design work based on Modigliani and Mondrian.
113. No direct teaching and learning was seen in Year 6. However, substantial evidence was seen of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills through the examination of completed work and ICT activities in other subjects. Pupils have used a scanner and knowledge of the computer's operating systems to use a photograph of their class when they were in reception as the screensaver on their class computer. Individual pupils have used a spreadsheet and word-processor to produce a timetable for the ICT suite and labels for PE equipment and the school library. Pupils have downloaded photographs from the Internet and added text to create a collage following the events of September 11 in New York and Washington. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have had some experience of sending e-mails to classmates, using text and pictures, but their skills in this aspect of ICT are relatively under-developed. All pupils in Year 5 have a very good understanding of the basic features of a database and, during the inspection, learnt how to carry out a search using 'AND' and 'OR' commands.
114. Five lessons were seen during the inspection. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. It was excellent in a Year 5 lesson, very good in lessons in Years 2, 3 and 4 and good in another Year 2 lesson. Lessons are very well planned and organised. In Year 4, for example, good use was made of the classroom computer to demonstrate the focus task to the whole class before moving to the ICT suite. Pupils in Year 4 made significant gains in understanding how to create geometric shapes and use the colour-fill tool of a graphics programme. With good support from the teacher, pupils in Year 3 made substantial gains in understanding and solving complex problems using a simulation programme. The pupils understood that they had to work out the effect of changing variables systematically and nearly all of them resisted the temptation to make random guesses. Pupils worked extremely well with a partner in this lesson and others.
115. The ICT suite is big enough for only half a class to work directly on the computers at a time. A particular strength of the lessons seen was the very effective way that the teachers provided paper tasks for the rest of the class that were directly related to the work going on in the ICT suite. The



pupils' extremely mature attitudes to learning meant that they made significant gains in their learning through these activities and, in some cases, did this largely unsupervised. For example, pupils in Year 5 completed a task answering questions on data cards about the solar system while their peers worked on database activities in the ICT suite. Teachers make very good use of the available programmes in the ICT suite and classrooms. Good use is made of the Internet and CD-ROM in many lessons in other subjects, including literacy, numeracy, geography, history and religious education. Pupils are confident and enthusiastic and were observed carrying out research at break-times.

116. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subject. Teachers use the national exemplar materials and very good quality commercial materials in their planning. The co-ordinator monitors the teachers' plans very effectively and uses available time very effectively to develop and manage the resources and, occasionally, work alongside colleagues in lessons. Very good procedures for assessment and recording have been developed by the co-ordinator, using Local Education Authority materials, and all teachers have started to use these this term. The co-ordinator is developing a good subject portfolio containing examples of pupils' work in each year group and examples from the National Curriculum in Action web-site to help teachers in their planning and assessment. All pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 have individual files on the computer network. National funding has been used very well to develop resources and staff skills and to pay for half-a-day a week's technical support from a local secondary school. A member of the governing body with ICT skills is working on a school web-site, using the co-ordinator's ideas.

## MUSIC

117. Taking into account the evidence from lessons, discussions with pupils and staff and available records, pupils aged seven reach standards above those expected for their age, while 11 year-olds reach the expected standards. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about the difference between pulse and rhythm, and demonstrate various rhythms using percussion instruments. They also read simple notation confidently and maintain a rhythm while other pupils are playing a different one. This helps them to become aware of texture and patterning and about how sounds can be made in different ways. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils were planning a 'sound-scape' inspired by listening to 'Mars' from Holst's suite, 'The Planets'. They were developing their compositional skills by devising simple notations that would enable them to repeat their performances. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils distinguished between high and low notes and used actions to signal changes of pitch. In a whole-school singing practice, pupils sang in tune and maintained a vocal part while other groups were singing different notes.
118. Pupils have an evident sense of enjoyment in music making. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 respond well in music lessons. They evaluate their own and others' work well, talking about ways to improve performance. Pupils work well together in small and large groups and the subject makes a good contribution to the social development of pupils. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 also enjoy music. Throughout the school, pupils express their likes and dislikes of various types of music and some recognise different instruments and use appropriate vocabulary to describe the sounds they make.
119. Teaching and learning are good overall. During the period of the inspection, the music lessons seen were all satisfactory or better and half were very good. There are some lively and well-planned lessons for the pupils in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, pupils have good opportunities to develop composing skills and evaluate their performances.
120. Many pupils learn instruments, for example recorder and guitar. A visiting music teacher takes the guitar lessons. There are recorder groups and choirs, which enrich the musical life of the school. The choir takes part in school nativity plays and other musical productions, including a local music festival every year. Musicians, including a percussion ensemble, a string group and a recorder player have visited the school and performed for pupils. Older pupils attend the Halle Orchestra's Children's Concerts and visits to other musical events are organised. Music is used as a stimulus for other artistic areas, and pupils have written imaginatively as a response to a

piece of music. Pupils also listen to and appraise examples of music from other cultures.

121. Leadership and management are good and assessment procedures are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is a music specialist and is aware of the difficulties experienced by non-specialist teachers of the subject. The school uses the national exemplar scheme of work and planning for the subject is clear. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when the lack of a comprehensive scheme of work was noted. The co-ordinator attaches importance to making it clear to all teachers what pupils should achieve in each unit of the scheme of work. The resources are adequate for effective teaching and are kept in a central, accessible location. Pupils with special educational needs are supported appropriately and have full access to this area of the curriculum. The use of ICT is under-developed.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)**

122. Pupils achieve well throughout the school and standards are above expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Pupils in Year 1 move well in response to music and are developing balance and self-control. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have ball skills that are at least in line with expectations for their age, with a good number of pupils in Year 2 doing well in very challenging throwing, bouncing and catching activities. In a lesson involving pupils in Years 4 and 5, pupils responded very well to challenging paired tasks, using bats and balls. Pupils in years 5 and 6 have individual skills that are above expectations, such as those associated with passing to a team-mate and dodging an opponent and a very good understanding of rules and fair play.
123. Seven lessons were seen during the inspection involving pupils in all year groups. The quality of teaching and learning was very good overall, being very good in three lessons, good in three lessons and satisfactory in one. Lessons are very well planned and prepared. All lessons are well structured with a warm up, a good variety of activities and warm down. Most lessons feature good opportunities for pupils' to evaluate their own and others' performance. Pupils are interested and involved and try hard. Lessons are generally timetabled for a good length of time and conducted at a brisk pace, so that a lot gets done and pupils' skills are consolidated and developed. Where the teaching was below the generally very high standard, teachers did not give pupils sufficient opportunities to evaluate their own and others' performance. This was seen in a Year 3 lesson developing skills for football and netball and Year 1 dance lesson.
124. The school's links with the local community make a particularly strong contribution to pupils' progress in PE and their social development. Pupils in year 5 and 6 improve their skills in team games greatly, as a result of input by coaches from nearby lacrosse and rugby league clubs. Sessions in both these sports were observed during the inspection. Pupils were enthusiastic and highly involved in skills development and team building activities in rather adverse weather and ground conditions. Their class teachers provided good support to the visiting coaches. Several pupils have links with the lacrosse club outside school, as do individual pupils in cross-country and ice-skating. There are good arrangements for swimming instruction at a local pool and the vast majority of pupils achieve the national target of being able to swim 25 metres by the end of Year 6. Work on the forthcoming Commonwealth Games in Manchester is making good links with geography, history, ICT and personal and social education.
125. Leadership and management are good. The very recently appointed co-ordinator has a good knowledge of the subject and there is a very good subject action plan, which becomes a high priority in the school improvement plan in the spring term of 2002. Time for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching and learning, initially in gymnastics in Years 2 and 6, is built into this plan. Teachers make good use of the national guidelines on PE and commercial materials in their planning. There are good resources, including some high quality resources for games and athletics, which have been recently purchased. At the time of the inspection, the resources were being re-organised in new cupboards in the hall.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)**

126. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 achieve well and standards are above those outlined in the locally agreed syllabus. The school has maintained the standards in Year 6 noted by the previous inspection and improved those in Year 2. These judgements are based on lesson observations, discussions with pupils and the subject co-ordinator, a scrutiny of the scheme of work and pupils' books. Improvements have been brought about by the full implementation of a detailed scheme of work and the provision of a good range of resources for world faiths. A much greater emphasis has been placed on developing pupils' understanding and this is very well promoted through class discussions.
127. At the end of Year 2, pupils understand the concept of belonging, such as to their school or family, and know that there have to be rules by which communities live together. They understand that some people and places are 'special' to them and to other people and talk about how they might make their special people happy. Pupils learn about stories in the Bible, such as The Prodigal Son and The Good Samaritan and they empathise with the father and discuss "What is a true friend?" Pupils also have good knowledge of Judaism and understand the importance of certain festivals, such as Hanukkah, in Jewish life. They learn that the Menorah is a symbol of light and compare this to the significance of light in Christianity, considering Christmas lights. They offer explanations about the use of fairy lights and suggest that it represent the Christmas star, which offered guidance to the Wise Men and shepherds. Pupils' good oral skills enable them to discuss and think carefully when explaining their views and feelings.
128. Year 6 pupils understand some of the basic beliefs of Christianity and other world faiths and the customs associated with them. They discuss in depth just how belief affects the way people live and examine their own beliefs and values. They continue to build on their work on Christianity and how it has changed the lives of many people, such as Nicky Cruz, a former American gangster. They also widen their studies of Judaism and visit a local synagogue to enrich their understanding of artefacts and places that are special to Jews. Their study of world faiths is extended to include Sikhism, Islam and Buddhism. Pupils learn about the lives of leaders of world faiths, such as Guru Nanak, and books and artefacts that are special to believers.
129. The quality of teaching is good overall and pupils make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of different religions, and in their spiritual understanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons carefully, with clear learning targets that are shared with their pupils. Teachers use questions well to encourage all pupils to take part in class discussions, ensuring the participation of as many pupils as possible and enhancing speaking and listening and thinking skills. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and those who are more able is also good, because teachers plan work that is very well matched to their needs. Teachers take every opportunity to link what they are teaching to other subjects, particularly to oral skills, literacy and ICT. For example, pupils in Year 2 study Christmas lights and the most able write a 'dear diary' letter to report their feelings as shepherds on the hillside above Bethlehem. Average ability pupils write descriptive sentences about Christmas lights and less able pupils draw Christmas lights and write labels and simple sentences. Year 6 pupils write biographies of famous faith figures in literacy lessons and pupils in Year 5 study Victorian Christmas customs and how these have changed over time because of changes in society and its attitude to religion. As well as this link to the class history topic, pupils also use the computer to research on the Internet, applying their very good literacy and research skills to select appropriate information. Pupils adopt very good attitudes towards the subject and take part in discussions confidently, which promotes their learning well. They are interested in finding out about the beliefs and values of others and listen to the ideas of others with respect. Pupils are very well behaved and co-operate willingly with each other and their teachers.
130. The subject is managed well and a good action plan gives clear guidance of how it is to be improved in the immediate future. A portfolio of pupils' work is being collected and an appropriate system of assessment is being introduced. Provision is enhanced by the involvement of local church leaders and visits to places of worship. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the faith studies and in depth discussions.