

INSPECTION REPORT

VICTORIA ROAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Runcorn

LEA area: Halton

Unique reference number: 110992

Headteacher: Mrs A M Burnett

Reporting inspector: Mr A J Dobell
10373

Dates of inspection: 10th - 13th June 2002

Inspection number: 195083

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Sir Kenneth Green
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
10373	Mr A J Dobell	Registered inspector	Mathematics Music Physical education	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
19558	Mr M Hammond	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23319	Mr V J Leary	Team inspector	Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage Science Information and communication technology Geography History	
7958	Ms G Lewis	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Religious education	How well does the school care for its pupils?
12641	Ms P Lyseight-Jones	Team inspector	Equal opportunities English as an additional language Art and design Design and technology	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school serves a well-established community on the outskirts of Runcorn. The socio-economic levels of the school's pupils and their learning skills when they enter the school have declined in recent years. They are now below those normally found overall, although they cover a broad range. There are 317 pupils on roll aged from four to 11 and the proportions of boys and girls are broadly similar. The school is larger than the average primary school. There are two classes in the Reception Year and in Years 1 and 2 and three classes for Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6. Most pupils come from the immediate area, but some parents bring their children to the school from some distance away. Housing is a mix of rented and privately owned accommodation.

Less than two per cent of pupils come from minority ethnic communities. This is below the national average as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language (1.25 per cent). Forty three pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals and, at 13.6 per cent, this is broadly average. Sixty four pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs and, at just over 20 per cent, this, too, is close to the national average. No pupils have statements of special educational needs. The nature of special educational needs includes specific learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties and speech and communication difficulties. The proportion of pupils leaving or joining the school during the course of the year is low, but there is some evidence that it adversely affects attainment. Class sizes in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2 are well below the national average, while class sizes in Years 3 to 6 are well above the national average. However, there is no evidence that this is adversely affecting attainment.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. By the time they leave the school, pupils attain standards which are at least at the national average and evidence from the inspection is that attainment is improving throughout the school. The quality of teaching is good overall and most pupils learn effectively. Progress in learning is good in Reception Year and Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory but improving in Years 3 to 6. The headteacher, very well supported by her colleagues and the governing body, provides effective leadership rooted in a concern for good standards of behaviour and attainment. Given the improving levels of attainment throughout the school and the good progress made since the school's previous inspection, the school gives good value for money in spite of its above average unit costs.

What the school does well

- Good quality teaching overall results in effective learning for most pupils.
- Pupils' very good attitudes to school mean that relationships are very good and most pupils behave well.
- The school values all pupils so that there is good equality of access and opportunity and all pupils have the chance to be included in all that the school provides.
- Very good systems for assessing pupils' progress are now in place and the school is using these with increasing success to raise attainment.
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs in Years 1 and 2 and good provision elsewhere.
- The school is held in high regard by parents and the local community.
- The headteacher, very well supported by her deputy, her colleagues and the governing body, is providing very effective and purposeful leadership.

What could be improved

- The accuracy of pupils' work with regard to spelling and number and consistency across the school in requiring pupils to correct unsatisfactory work.
- The provision for pupils' personal development.
- The use of the time available for learning in art and design, design and technology and religious education in Years 3 to 6.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school's first inspection was in June 1997. Since then, there has been good progress overall. The school treated the key issues for action identified in its previous inspection seriously and has addressed them systematically. The provision for children in the Reception classes is now good. Attainment in music, art and design and in religious education in Years 1 and 2 has improved. Attainment in religious education in Years 3 to 6 remains unsatisfactory overall. Schemes of work now provide a framework for teaching and learning in all subjects. Subject managers monitor and evaluate planning in their areas of the curriculum and scrutinise work and the headteacher and managers for English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology have monitored teaching and learning. There are plans to extend this monitoring to the other subjects of the curriculum. There are now very good systems for assessing pupils' progress and for using the information that they provide to raise attainment. Satisfactory systems now exist for teaching drugs awareness. Performance management systems have been introduced in line with current requirements and are effective. In addition to these key issues from the school's previous inspection, the quality of learning in information and communication technology is now good and the school is now more effectively focused on what it needs to do to improve attainment further. It is on course to maintain improvement.

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	C	C	C	C
mathematics	C	C	B	B
science	D	C	C	C

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

Since the school's first inspection, attainment in English at the age of 11 has declined slightly, but it has improved in mathematics and science. The school failed to achieve its agreed targets in English and mathematics in 2001, although they were very challenging. Attainment at the age of seven has declined in English and mathematics but evidence from this inspection is that this decline has now been reversed. Science is not examined at the end of Year 2, but teachers' assessments judged attainment to be close to the national average. In 2001, attainment in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 was in line with the average attained in schools which draw their pupils from similar backgrounds, while attainment at the end of Year 2 was below the average attained in similar schools.

Evidence from the inspection is that children in the Reception Year make good progress and attain at least the standards expected by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress overall and are on course to achieve better levels of attainment in the National Curriculum tests in 2002. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make satisfactory progress overall although standards are gradually improving. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in speaking and listening, reading and writing, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, art and design and design and technology are above those normally found. Attainment in geography, history, music and physical education is at the level normally found. Attainment in religious education is above that expected for pupils following the Halton agreed syllabus. By the end of Year 6, attainment is above the level normally found in speaking and listening, reading and information and communication technology and at the level normally found in all other subjects except religious education. Attainment is below the level expected for pupils following the Halton agreed syllabus in religious education.

Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in Years 1 and 2 and good progress in the Reception Year and in Years 3 to 6. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress overall, and very good progress in the Reception Year.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Overall, pupils have very good attitudes to school and to learning. However, a minority of pupils has less mature attitudes in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good overall, although a few pupils in some classes have short concentration spans. Play is boisterous but friendly with occasional instances of misbehaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults, are mostly very good. There is good provision for pupils' personal development although there is scope for opportunities for responsibility and initiative to be extended.
Attendance	Attendance matches the national average.

Most pupils enjoy learning and work with a good level of interest and concentration. Their behaviour reflects this. Very good relationships help to promote attainment and progress. However, some pupils in some classes do not concentrate well and the management of their behaviour slows down learning for other pupils. No pupils were excluded from the school during the last full school year (2000-2001).

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

The quality of teaching is good overall and over one fifth of teaching was very good. Very good teaching is characterised by high expectations for pupils' behaviour and effort, interesting learning activities and very good relationships. These lessons result in learning of very good quality. Where teaching is satisfactory, relationships tend to be less positive and more time is taken to manage the behaviour of some pupils so that learning for the rest is adversely affected. In the one unsatisfactory lesson, learning activities were undemanding and unvaried. The school succeeds in involving all pupils in learning and the good provision for pupils with special educational needs helps to achieve this. More challenging work to extend the attainment of higher attaining pupils is not provided consistently. Most pupils work with a good level of interest and concentration and have an above average understanding of what they are learning and what they are learning it for.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the curriculum are satisfactory but there are instances of imbalance when the planned amount of time is not devoted to particular subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs in Years 1 and 2 and good provision elsewhere. These pupils make good progress in their learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils who speak English as an additional language make very good progress in the Reception Year and good progress elsewhere because of the good provision made for them.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Provision for their personal development is good although opportunities are missed for them to take responsibility and develop initiative.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is very good provision for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Good care is taken to ensure pupils' welfare.

The school's curriculum is planned to meet legal requirements, but where the planned amount of time for a subject is not fully devoted to it, this may not be fully achieved. Some lessons are excessively long so that some pupils lose concentration. Pupils are well known to all adults and parents appreciate the good quality of care that the school provides. The school has good links with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is a highly effective leader and manager who is very well supported by her deputy and key stage managers.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a very good appreciation of the school's strengths and weaknesses and fulfil their statutory duties effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has good systems for evaluating its performance and taking the necessary action.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its physical and human resources well overall. It succeeds in getting the best value from its expenditure.

The school has been going through a difficult phase with a high level of staff change. At the time of the inspection, three temporary teachers were in post and there were some temporary arrangements for the management of subjects. The headteacher has managed this period of transition skilfully and the school remains confident and forward-looking. Accommodation is adequate and resources for learning are good overall. Adults are deployed effectively overall but, in some areas, the skills of classroom assistants are not fully used.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching is good and children make good progress. • Behaviour is good and children become more mature and responsible. • Parents feel comfortable when approaching the school with concerns. • Children are expected to work hard. • The school is well led and managed. • Children like school. 	<p>Of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 per cent questioned the amount of homework set. • 10 per cent did not believe that they are well informed about progress. • 11 per cent questioned if the school works closely with parents. • 27 per cent did not believe that there are enough activities outside class.

The school distributed 317 questionnaires and 88 were returned (27.8 per cent). These views therefore, represent just over one quarter of all parents and carers. Fourteen parents attended the meeting held before the inspection.

Conversations with parents during the inspection and at the parents' meeting suggest that they hold the school in very high regard and inspectors agree with their positive views. The use of homework to support learning is satisfactory and the quality of the information provided for parents is good. Inspectors believe that the school works closely with parents, but the provision of activities outside lessons is less than is found in many schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In the National Curriculum tests in 2001 at the end of Year 6 in English, 76 per cent of the school's pupils attained the national expectation of level 4 at least and 22 per cent attained the higher than expected level 5. This compares with 74 per cent attaining at least level 4 nationally and 28 per cent attaining level 5. The school's results were broadly in line with the national average and with the average attained in schools which draw their pupils from similar backgrounds. Girls' attainment in English was slightly better than that of boys in 2001, but this is not part of a general pattern from one year to the next.
2. In mathematics in the National Curriculum tests in 2001 at the end of Year 6, 74 per cent of the school's pupils attained level 4 at least and 30 per cent attained level 5. This compares with 71 per cent attaining at least level 4 nationally and 25 per cent attaining level 5. The school's results were above the national average and above the average attained in similar schools. In this subject too, girls outperformed boys, but again, this is not a trend from year to year.
3. In science in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2001, 87 per cent of the school's pupils attained at least level 4 and 37 per cent attained level 5. This compares with 87 per cent attaining at least level 4 nationally and 34 per cent attaining level 5. These results were close to the national average and the average attained in similar schools. In this subject, boys outperformed girls, as they have done in most years since the school's first inspection.
4. Since the school was first inspected, the improvement in its average National Curriculum points score for all these subjects has been broadly in line with the national trend. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment were very close to their test scores in 2001. The proportion of the school's pupils attaining the higher level 5 exceeded the national average in mathematics and was below the national average in English and science. The school agreed challenging targets for attainment of at least level 4 in English and mathematics and did not quite achieve the target in either subject. In 2001, the school's performance in English had slightly worsened from when the school was inspected previously, but its performance in mathematics had improved, and its performance in science had improved markedly.
5. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 in 2001 in reading, 74 per cent of the school's pupils attained the national expectation of level 2 at least with 22 per cent attaining the higher than expected level 3. This compares with 84 per cent of pupils attaining at least level 2 nationally and 29 per cent attaining level 3. These results were well below the national average and the average attained in similar schools. Boys outperformed girls in reading although both boys and girls were below the national average. There is no pattern to the performance of boys and girls since the school was first inspected.
6. In writing, in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 in 2001, 84 per cent of the school's pupils attained level 2 at least and four per cent attained level 3. This compares with 86 per cent of pupils attaining at least level 2 nationally and nine per cent attaining level 3. This level of attainment was below the national average and the average attained in similar schools. Again, boys outperformed girls and were slightly above the national average while girls were below. There has been no overall pattern in the performance of boys and girls in writing since the school was inspected previously.
7. In mathematics in 2001 in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, 94 per cent of the school's pupils attained at least level 2 and 26 per cent attained level 3. Nationally, 91 per cent of pupils attained at least level 2 with 28 per cent attaining level 3. The school's results were close to the national average but below the average attained in similar schools. Boys outperformed girls in this subject too, but there has been little significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls in

the years since the school's first inspection.

8. There is no national test in science at the end of Year 2. Teachers' assessments of attainment in science placed the school's pupils at the national average. Attainment at the end of Year 2 in the National Curriculum tests has worsened since the school's first inspection. This is partly explained by a decline in the learning skills of children when they enter the school. One effect of this is that, in 2001, the proportion of the school's pupils attaining level 3 was below the national average in each of the three subjects reading, writing and mathematics. Teacher assessments for science were that the proportion of pupils attaining level 3 would also be below the national average. Teachers' assessments for pupils' performance were slightly above their test scores in reading and writing and accurate for mathematics. Evidence from this inspection is that the decline in attainment for seven-year-olds in reading, writing and mathematics has been reversed in 2002.
9. The learning skills of children entering the Reception Year are below those normally found. Children make good progress in the Reception classes and, by the time they begin their work on the National Curriculum in Year 1, they have achieved the expected standards in communication, language and literature, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. They have reached higher than expected standards in personal, social and emotional development and in creative development. The good progress that they now make is an improvement since the school's previous inspection.
10. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in Years 1 and 2 and good progress in Years 3 to 6 towards the targets identified in their individual education plans. This is because of the accurate assessment of their needs and the very good provision made for them in Years 1 and 2. The school has reviewed its support for these pupils in Years 3 to 6 and concluded that in-class support in the lower ability sets in literacy and numeracy is likely to be more successful in raising attainment for these pupils. Inspectors support the school's plans to introduce this system in the next school year.
11. There are no significant differences in the progress and attainment of the few pupils who speak English as an additional language in the school and their fellow pupils. No pupils are in the early stages of acquiring English skills. Two pupils who speak English as an additional language in the Reception Year are making very good progress and their spoken and written English is good for their age. In other year groups, pupils who speak English as an additional language are able to take a full part in lessons and they make progress in line with their ability.
12. Evidence from this inspection is that, in English, pupils' skills in speaking and listening are overall better than is normally found. Standards of reading are now good in Years 2 and 6 and the quality of writing is above that normally found by the end of Year 2 and in line with the level normally found at the end of Year 6. However, pupils in Years 3 to 6 are insufficiently careful with regard to the accuracy of their spelling. Attainment in mathematics is above the level normally found at the age of seven and at the level normally found at 11. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are insufficiently careful when using numbers so that there are too many careless errors. The school has introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies successfully and, overall, their use is improving attainment. However, throughout the school, there is a significant difference between the best practice and practice which is less effective. In science, attainment is above the level normally found at seven and at the level normally found at 11. Standards in information and communication technology are good throughout the school and this is a good improvement since the school was inspected previously.
13. In the other subjects of the curriculum, attainment is above that normally found at the age of seven in art and design and design and technology and at the level normally found in geography, history, music and physical education. At the age of 11, attainment is at the level normally found in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. In religious education, attainment is better than expected for pupils following the Halton agreed syllabus for this subject at the age of seven, but not up to the standard expected at the age of 11. This is a good improvement in this subject at the end of Year 2 since the school's first inspection,

but the unsatisfactory standards found at the end of Year 6 have not improved.

14. Pupils in the Reception classes and Years 1 and 2 make good progress in their learning overall and the school is in a good position to raise attainment further in the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds. Progress in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall and, for attainment in the National Curriculum test to improve significantly, the accuracy of pupils' work will need to improve. Higher attaining pupils do not consistently make good progress and reach the levels of which they are capable because they are not systematically identified and given work which will challenge them to reach higher levels.
15. The school has been through a period of uncertainty with some rapid staff changes. When a stable staffing situation is restored, the school will be in a secure position to plan to raise attainment further.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. Overall, the attitudes of pupils in the school continue to have a positive impact on their progress. Pupils clearly enjoy school and have very good attitudes to learning. Behaviour is generally good and pupils show respect for each other. They form very good relationships with fellow pupils and with adults. Pupils are also happy to accept responsibility when opportunities arise although these opportunities are limited. Despite the school's best efforts attendance has deteriorated since the last inspection and is now in line with the national average.
17. The majority of pupils are happy to come to school and clearly take an interest in their work as can be seen in the many displays throughout the school. Pupils co-operate or work independently, taking responsibility for their own and other pupils' learning whenever they are encouraged to do so. A characteristic of the school is the confidence with which pupils ask searching questions. However, there is scope for these opportunities to be increased. For example, two Year 3/4 pupils having been questioned by an inspector, then proceeded to interview the inspector for themselves. Throughout they were polite, interested and posed some very sensible questions.
18. Opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and to accept responsibilities are satisfactory but could be extended. Older pupils in particular help with pupils in the Reception class by playing with them at lunchtime and delivering and collecting registers across the school. House captains, who are elected from Years 5/6, organise house meetings and sporting competitions. Four older pupils are appointed Road Safety Officers and, working with the Borough Road Safety Officer, organise training and competitions for all of the pupils in the school. Pupils, including the younger pupils, would clearly respond well if more opportunities for taking responsibility about the school were made available for them.
19. Behaviour throughout the school is generally good with pupils behaving well during break times and around the school. However a small group of pupils was seen in the playground behaving in a very immature way and there are small groups of pupils in some classes who have short concentration spans. The management of their behaviour adversely affects the learning of other pupils because the flow of the lesson is interrupted. Throughout an educational trip to Llandudno behaviour was exemplary and all the pupils present were a credit to the school. Pupils move about the school in a sensible and orderly manner and, at all times, are very polite and helpful. Good behaviour and helpful attitudes are expected and are characteristic of the school overall and parents confirm that bullying is very unusual and that rare instances are dealt with effectively.
20. The school functions as an orderly and caring community with all adults providing very effective examples for pupils. Relationships and mutual respect between pupils and staff, as well as with adult visitors to the school, are very good and this is a strength of the school. There is no evidence of racial or sexual harassment of any kind in the school and all pupils are valued by adults and their peers.
21. Attendance, which has declined since the previous inspection, is now in line with the national average, as are unauthorised absences. Holidays taken during term time have a significant impact

on the number of authorised absences recorded. The figures do not reflect a true picture of the school where the majority of pupils are keen to attend. Since the school's previous inspection, staff have become conversant with the school attendance policy. Punctuality, both at the start of the day and in the lessons, is good for most pupils. No pupils were excluded from the school during the last full year, 2000-2001.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. The quality of teaching in the school is good overall and just over one fifth of teaching is very good. During the inspection, 68 lessons were observed. In one per cent of lessons the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory, in 47 per cent of lessons, it was satisfactory, in 31 per cent of lessons it was good and, in 21 per cent, teaching was very good. This pattern is not dissimilar from the school's previous inspection although, throughout the school, the quality of teaching between classes in different year groups varies markedly. The school had three teachers in temporary positions during the inspection and, while these teachers were satisfactory overall, to an extent, the quality of teaching was depressed.
23. Two of these teachers were in the Reception year where the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall with one third being good. Teaching is based on a secure understanding of how young children learn. They provide a good range of learning activities to cover the areas of learning designed for children of this age. As a result, they make good progress in their learning. Learning is well organised and the experienced classroom assistants make a good contribution. However, there are instances when the skills of the highly competent classroom assistants are not fully utilised.
24. In Years 1 and 2, teaching in English is good overall with some very good and a minority of satisfactory teaching. In mathematics and science, teaching is satisfactory with examples of good teaching. In the other subjects of the curriculum, teaching is good overall with examples of very good teaching in design and technology and physical education. Overall, the quality of learning is good in Years 1 and 2 and pupils make good progress.
25. In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching in English covers a broad range with over one half being satisfactory whilst one third is very good. In mathematics too, there are examples of very good and good teaching while three fifths is satisfactory. In science, the quality of teaching is good overall. In the other subjects of the curriculum the quality of teaching is good overall, although in almost one half of the lessons observed, teaching was satisfactory and in one, it was unsatisfactory. In the unsatisfactory lesson, the learning activities planned were insufficiently challenging. The quality of learning experiences is good overall in Years 3 to 6 and most pupils put a good amount of effort into their work. They have an above average understanding of what they are learning in most lessons. Good use is made of information and communication technology to support learning. As a result, pupils' skills in using information and communication technology are above those normally found. In the other subjects of the curriculum, with the exception of religious education, standards are at the level normally found. In religious education, standards are below those usually found for pupils following the Halton locally agreed syllabus.
26. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6. These skills are developed systematically throughout the school, but the effectiveness of the teaching from Years 3 to 6 is reduced because of pupils' carelessness in their use of spelling and number. They do not routinely take care to ensure that their work is accurate or to check completed work for accuracy. The school does not have a policy for ensuring that unsatisfactory work is corrected consistently.
27. Teachers have a good understanding of the subjects that they are teaching in the main. However, there are examples of religious education being taught in insufficient depth in Years 3 to 6. Teachers put considerable thought into planning lessons. In the very good lessons, these have their full impact on learning. These lessons are characterised by very good relationships so that adults and pupils join together to enjoy learning. For example, in a very good English lesson in Year 2, pupils were encouraged to read expressively and the teacher's careful questioning enabled

virtually all pupils to express views about two stories. This questioning resulted in a mature discussion as pupils explained and justified their ideas. The pupils' interest in their work was maintained very effectively, they concentrated well throughout the lesson and graded work for different groups enabled all pupils to make very good progress in their learning. Similarly, in a very good mathematics lesson in Years 5 and 6, the teacher's very clear explanations meant that lower attaining pupils had clear strategies for adding and subtracting two and three digit numbers, including decimals. Very effective organisation of learning meant that pupils were able to build up their knowledge, skills and understanding systematically. Very effective questioning included all pupils in learning and tested and reinforced their understanding and the management of pupils appeared almost effortless; it was just taken for granted that pupils and teacher were there to work together.

28. On the other hand, when teaching is satisfactory, effective planning does not result in good learning. In these lessons, the management of pupils tends to be less secure so that the pace of lessons slows when the low concentration spans of a few pupils result in chatter and disruption. For example, in an English lesson in Years 5 and 6, the slow pace meant that the introduction to the lesson took 45 minutes so that only 15 minutes were left for individual work. In a satisfactory music lesson in Years 3 and 4, the pupils were very excitable, quickly lost concentration and dissolved into chatter so that the flow of the lesson was disrupted. As a result, the quality of learning, while satisfactory overall, was patchy because of different levels of concentration at different stages of the lesson. In lessons which might otherwise have been good, the learning objectives for the lesson are often not made sufficiently clear and plenary sessions at the end of the lesson are not used as effectively to evaluate the success of learning. There are also examples of the planned amount of time not being devoted fully to some subjects in art and design, design and technology and religious education, so that the school's strategies for delivering the curriculum are not being fully implemented. The school does not know to what extent this adversely affects the balance of the curriculum.
29. The organisation of the school day does not provide time for different subjects in easily managed quantities so that time is not always used effectively for learning. For example, during the inspection, one teacher had planned to use one 20 minute slot for a demonstration of art and design work and then questioned if this was useful. Further, on some afternoons, the whole of the teaching time is devoted to one subject. Pupils find it difficult to maintain concentration over such a long period so that the quality of learning does not reflect the amount of time being made available for the subject.
30. During the inspection, examples of very good learning were seen on a day visit to Llandudno for Years 5 and 6. Very careful and thorough preparation for the visit meant that pupils were very effectively briefed as to its purpose. Their understanding of economic geography was developed systematically as they undertook a sequence of planned tasks and the quality of their learning was enhanced by their exemplary behaviour.
31. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. When pupils are withdrawn for short periods for small group work with a specialist teacher, they are given a structured and challenging programme which improves their reading skills systematically. There are plans to change the nature of this support in the next school year so that it will be available to more pupils. The effective support available to pupils who have special educational needs means that most of them are able to follow the same curriculum as their peers.
32. Teachers are able to include pupils who speak English as an additional language fully in lessons. As teaching styles are generally effective, this inclusive practice enables these pupils to learn effectively. However, teachers' expertise, especially about language development for pupils speaking English as a second or even a third language would be improved if specialist resources and assessment materials were available.
33. Work is marked regularly throughout the school and there are many examples of helpful comments to enable pupils to learn from their mistakes and to go on to make further progress. However, too many pupils are careless with regard to spelling and work with numbers. For

example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 wrote color' even though the word was spelt correctly on the board. There are similar examples of careless work in number and, in discussion, pupils are able to identify where their work is incorrect. There is no consistent practice throughout the school for pupils to correct unsatisfactory work.

34. While the quality of teaching and learning is good overall, it is inconsistent. For some pupils, in some sets and classes, teaching and learning are very good, while, for others in different sets and classes, teaching and learning are satisfactory. The school is aware that, if it is to improve further, it needs to build on its impressive examples of best practice and make them more consistent across the school. There is a very good unity of purpose in the school and a capacity to improve.

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

35. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good in the Reception Year and they are satisfactory in all other year groups. The programme planned for pupils in the Reception Year is good and it is satisfactory elsewhere. In the Reception Year, the curriculum is based on the six areas of learning designed for children to learn through purposeful play and investigation. There is appropriate emphasis on personal, social and emotional development. The curriculum prepares children effectively for their work on the National Curriculum in Year 1. Since its first inspection, the school has put into place schemes of work for all subjects. This makes it easier for the school to check that pupils are receiving a broad and balanced education. The provision for religious education is now good in Years 1 and 2, but has insufficient depth in Years 3 to 6 and pupils in Years 3 to 6 now have a satisfactory curriculum in music and art and design. This is an improvement since the previous inspection and pupils now make satisfactory progress in art and design and music and they make good progress in religious education in Years 1 and 2 but unsatisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6. Since the previous inspection, the governing body has ensured that subject policies are in place and in line with the most recent National Curriculum review. There is a clear programme for reviewing these policies systematically.
36. The time available for each subject is usually sufficient and represents a reasonable allocation between subjects. However, the morning literacy and numeracy lessons for Years 3 to 6, which take place after play, are very long, at 75 minutes and there are occasions when the extra 15 minutes is not used effectively. In design and technology and in art and design in Years 5 and 6 time was not carefully used and, as a result, one planned unit from each subject has not been taught this year. Further, the time allocated to religious education in Years 3 to 6 is insufficient to meet the requirements of the Halton agreed syllabus fully. As a result, pupils in Year 6 have not fully covered the programmes of study of the National Curriculum or met the requirements of the agreed syllabus for religious education in sufficient depth. However, good use of teaching time is made in information and communication technology where pupils have both short information and communication technology lessons to develop skills as well as using computers to practise these skills in other lessons. For example in Years 3 and 4, pupils used a drawing program and the Internet well to research work on significant artists in art and design, and, in Years 5 and 6, pupils successfully found information about bread to help them with their design and technology unit on bread making.
37. All subjects have subject leaders and they have all produced plans for the development of their subjects for at least the next two years. These plans show that there is a good awareness on the part of subject leaders about ways of improving their subjects. For example, in design and technology, more models which can be taken apart and put back together to help with work on mechanisms, is a priority. Subject leaders check the quality of pupils' work and teachers' planning on a termly basis, to a schedule devised by the headteacher. This contributes to pupils being given new challenges which will systematically build on what they have already learned.
38. There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs in Years 1 and 2 and good provision in Years 3 to 6. They and pupils who speak English as an additional language, have good equality of access to the curriculum and are fully included in all that the school provides.

The school's carefully planned provision means that both of these groups of pupils are able to make progress in their learning in line with their abilities.

39. The school's programme for sex and drugs education is part of the science curriculum and the personal, social and health education and citizenship schemes of work and is satisfactorily addressed. The Key Stage 1 co-ordinator has overall responsibility for the personal, social, health education and citizenship curriculum. The scheme of work shows clear links to other subjects including science, geography and English and teachers can choose to integrate the work into other subjects or to have specific, regular, short lessons each week. The work done in personal, social, health and citizenship education is not yet monitored closely enough for the school to be sure that it is being taught well and that pupils are learning effectively from it.
40. The provision of activities outside lessons is satisfactory with some good opportunities for performance in music and drama. However, the number of activities in sport and music is less than that found in many schools.
41. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. By the age of 11, pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and conduct themselves responsibly and courteously about the school. English and religious education lessons make a valuable contribution to their spiritual development with pupils producing some impressive poetry in both subjects. A valuable contribution is also made in art and design, history and geography to increasing pupils' awareness of the rich variety of their own cultures and those of others.
42. Opportunities for spiritual development are good. In their English lessons, pupils have the opportunity to explore their feelings and the world about them in a variety of ways through the teaching of literature. In a Year 3/4 literacy class, for example, pupils explored how they would describe a colour without revealing the name of the colour. One pupil offered 'a razor blade soft as a pillow' to describe grass, others offered lines to describe red and yellow, which showed that they appreciated the richness of the available language. In religious education lessons, feelings are explored at the correct level from the youngest pupils through to the oldest as they empathise with characters from stories. In assemblies an opportunity is given for reflection, although greater use could be made of the pupils' prayers and reflections in this situation. Prayers are said in class at the end of each day.
43. Opportunities for moral development are good. Pupils know that there are rules about good relationships and behaviour and respond positively to teachers' and other adults' high expectations of their conduct. The rewards and sanctions used by the teachers are understood and felt to be fair. There is an acceptance that bad behaviour will be punished and good behaviour will be rewarded. A system of positive reinforcement was seen to be working effectively in one challenging Year 3/4 class so that the pupils' capacity for moral judgement was improved.
44. Opportunities for social development are good. Good manners are the norm throughout the school with pupils opening doors for adults and conversing politely. In the classes observed most of the older pupils understood and acknowledged the need to take turns. However, in one Year 2 class, there were several pupils for whom this understanding is still developing. In another Year 2 class, pupils had a clear understanding of when to listen to others and how they could make their own contributions. There is an absence of litter about the school and classrooms used for packed lunches are carefully cleared in time for afternoon school. Displays are well cared for and there is a pride in pupils' work. As some of the corridors are narrow, there is the potential for displays to be damaged, but they are not.
45. Valuable contributions made in a variety of subjects have improved pupils' knowledge of their own and other cultures. Stories told in assemblies, English and religious education lessons and also work in music, history and geography lessons have extended what pupils know of their own culture and those of other countries and faiths. They have a healthy curiosity about the world and ask pertinent questions as part of their studies. For example, one Year 6 pupil, after being taught about what Muslims believe and do as part of their religion, asked whether Osama Bin Laden prayed five times a day and was a 'good' Muslim. Pupils in a Year 2 lesson compared two stories

by the same author and were able to talk about the similarities, not only of the plot, but also of the style of writing and the moral at the end of the story. There are examples of masks from Ancient Egypt and of painting in the style of several famous artists including Picasso and Van Gogh and drawings and paintings of still life to promote a good appreciation of different genres of art.

46. The contribution of the community to pupil's learning is good. Good use is made of visits and visitors linked to curriculum areas. One good example of this is when grandparents were invited to talk and be questioned about their experiences in the 1930's. The visit to Llandudno during the inspection was part of a project looking at the town's history, economic activity and land use as well as a study of the geographical context of the town. It resulted in very good learning. Strong links exist with both the local Church of England and Methodist churches and pupils have recently visited a synagogue.
47. The school has good links with local industry. The local 'co-op' runs an Easter art competition that the school regularly takes part in. Each year, pupils successfully raise money for charities and, this year, they won a shield for collecting the most money when selling poppies for the local British Legion Remembrance Day Appeal.
48. Links with the local high school are satisfactory and developing. Year 6 pupils visit the high school for a day and, afterwards, Year 7 pupils from the high school return to the school to talk with Year 6 about the realities of what they can expect when they change schools. Older pupils are also invited to see any dramatic performances that the high schools are presenting.
49. The curriculum complies with legal requirements and with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The criticisms of curricular provision from the last inspection have all been addressed successfully.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

50. The school is a caring community and there is good provision for the welfare and protection of pupils. The school succeeds in putting into practice its aims of providing a good level of care for all its pupils.
51. The school provides a secure environment for pupils to work in and the friendliness and courtesy of the staff and of the pupils is a strong characteristic of the school. The staff consistently apply the good range of policies which very effectively promote pupils' welfare. These include a clear anti-bullying policy, which encompasses racist and sexist behaviour. The school has an effective child protection policy and staff are well aware of their responsibilities in this area.
52. Teachers and other adults have a very caring attitude towards the pupils. Pupils are well cared for and the procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development, attainment and progress are generally good.
53. Relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils are good and pupils are seen to be caring and supportive of each other. Older pupils help and support younger pupils during lunchtimes. Older pupils are also responsible for organising Road Safety competitions and raising safety awareness across the school. Throughout the school, pupils are more than willing to talk about themselves and their feelings and to ask for help when it is needed.
54. The school is committed to a positive discipline and behaviour policy and this helps it to function as an orderly and caring community. Pupils are well disciplined and good behaviour is an expectation of the school with the majority of pupils responding well. The supervision of pupils during lunchtime and other breaks is good.
55. Parents are encouraged to contact the school should a problem arise and many parents said that staff are more than willing to discuss any difficulties that they might have. Good arrangements are in place to deal with pupils who become ill and there are sufficient adults who are qualified in first aid.

56. There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' attendance. The school works closely with the education welfare officer and makes good efforts to improve the attendance of the small number of pupils with unsatisfactory attendance.
57. The governing body monitors the effectiveness of the health and safety policy regularly and a fire practice takes place each term. A small number of minor health and safety concerns have been raised with the school, which is aware of the need to deal with these as soon as possible.
58. There is an assessment, recording and reporting policy and also a marking policy within the school and both policies have been recently reviewed. The marking policy states that 'all work is to be marked in such a way that is likely to improve pupils' learning, develop confidence, raise self-esteem and provide opportunities for self assessment'. In the work seen in most subject areas, especially the English, mathematics and science books, this policy is being followed effectively. Teachers do correct work and make helpful comments which set targets; their comments are supportive and the targets set are relevant to raising attainment.
59. The 'aims' of the marking policy are to link with assessment, recording and reporting; marking should provide feedback to pupils which is frequent and timely and emphasises progress. There should be a record of a balance of strengths and areas for improvement. The monitoring and evaluation of marking is carried out by the assessment co-ordinator who samples work on a termly basis to assess whether the policy is being implemented consistently. The inspectors' analysis of pupils' work showed that there is a high level of consistency in marking in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and in some other subject areas. However, religious education work is not always marked according to these criteria. The assessment, recording and reporting policy is comprehensive in its approach to assessment. There is a detailed programme of assessment throughout the school, from testing when children join the Reception classes to Year 6 National Curriculum tests. Pupils are tested in their reading, writing and comprehension skills and their spelling and mathematical skills. The data collated from the testing and assessment carried out is used to set targets for future learning and has assisted in the accurate identification of pupils who have special educational needs.
60. The school is involved in several Local Education Authority initiatives associated with assessment and this experience has been beneficial in raising the attainment of pupils in the Year 2 classes in particular. It helped to target pupils who need support in improving their literacy and numeracy skills. The planned use of 'Assessment Manager', a computer program, as part of an education authority initiative, will give the school the opportunity to track and target individual pupils and groups of pupils in the future so as to meet their needs more accurately. It is hoped that the success already achieved by Year 2 pupils will be built on as they move through the school and that the use of this system will enhance the attainment of pupils by the age of 11. The assessment, recording and reporting and also marking policies are 'user-friendly' and give staff clear guidance on their aims and use. In addition staff have been improving their assessment of pupils by having samples of work with which to judge the level of pupils' attainment. This is to ensure that teachers' assessments are more accurate. The school has developed some self assessment practices in its 'I can do' sheets for pupils. The mathematics and science sheets are being used with some success and an English sheet is being trialled at present. Samples of each year's work are placed in hardback books. The books, completed by pupils in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, are impressive in terms of the quality of the work that they contain and also clearly illustrate the progress made, for example, in handwriting and the content of written work. Pupils from the rest of the school have not had the same level of experience in using these books and their progress is less impressive.
61. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is thorough. The learning support teacher keeps detailed records of the pupils in withdrawn groups and uses the information to structure targeted work with these pupils. This has been successful in raising their attainment. Teachers keep a recording sheet on pupils' progress and attainment which is regularly reviewed. A record card prepared by the class teacher is kept on each pupil and is handed on to the next teacher. Formative assessment is made through marking, lesson planning and schemes of work.

62. The individual education plans of special educational needs pupils are satisfactory in detailing the short-term targets which have been set and teachers' reviews map the progress that has been made. The half-yearly review process of pupils who do not have statements of special educational needs ensures that pupils are moved within and off the register as their needs change. There is very good provision for any pupils who have a statement of special educational needs within the policy for assessment and also the special educational needs policy. The cohesion of the various policies ensures a comprehensive strategy for assessing all pupils and recording and reporting the findings of assessment so that they can be used to raise attainment and improve progress. This is a good improvement since the school was previously inspected.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

63. Parents have very positive views of the school and the majority support social and fund-raising events well. They are kept well informed about the school through regular newsletters and the parents' notice board in the playground. In conversation with inspectors, all said how much they appreciated the way that the school had helped and encouraged them to support their own children's learning.
64. The views of the majority of parents and carers are that this is a very good school which their children enjoy attending and where the staff care deeply for their children. This is a happy, friendly place where children are expected to work hard and give of their best. A number of parents said that they chose to bring their children to this school despite the distance they had to travel and its lack of a sports field.
65. The impact of parents' involvement with the school is good. Parents said that they are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school and, as a result, a number act as volunteers working closely with the teachers. A number also act as very effective volunteers on school trips as was seen on the educational trip to Llandudno held during the inspection week. There is an active Parent-Teacher Association, which organises social and fund raising events for the school and takes great care to involve the local community.
66. The quality of the information provided for parents is good. Parents are kept informed of their children's progress through consultation evenings and a well-written annual report, which includes targets for each child. The majority of parents felt that they are kept fully informed about their children's progress. Parents whose children have special educational needs are fully involved in supporting their children's learning. They play a full part in planning programmes of work for their children and are involved in review meetings where this is required. There is a well-written and comprehensive school prospectus, which includes a home-school contract and an informative annual governors' report to parents. Parents spoken to during the inspection said how much they appreciated the accessibility and approachability of the staff if they had a concern.
67. There is a well-established programme for new parents about how their children will be introduced into the school and their first year's education. This includes a well written 'how to read with your children' booklet. Courses are run for parents to help them to develop the skills they need to support their children's learning and these are much appreciated. These are in addition to workshops on Literacy and Numeracy which parents have found helpful. A recent commendable development is the provision of carefully prepared 'Story Sacks' for parents to take home and use with their children. Throughout the school, homework is given on a regular basis and many parents help their children with homework and reading and make good use of the homework diary.
68. The good links with parents described in the report of the school's first inspection have been developed further. The school is in a good position to continue to develop the role of parents in supporting their children's learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

69. The school is well established in its community and seeks to maintain the quality of education

that it has provided for many years. It has a positive ethos and a clear vision of what it is seeking to achieve for its pupils. Basically, this is for pupils to achieve their potential academically in a supportive and challenging environment. These aims are reflected very effectively throughout the school's work.

70. The school is led by an experienced and clear-sighted headteacher. As a result of her leadership, the school responded positively to its first inspection and has made good progress since then. The key issues for action from that inspection have all been met with the exception of standards of attainment in religious education by the age of 11, which remain unsatisfactory. A high priority has been given to developing the professional skills of staff and, while this is an ongoing process, it is having a positive impact on attainment and progress. There is a very good shared commitment to improvement. The rate of improvement has been slowed by some temporary staffing arrangements. During the inspection, three teachers were temporary. This situation has been managed effectively by the headteacher so as to minimise the disruption to pupils' progress. The school is now emerging from this process and a period of greater stability will put the school in a good position to raise standards of attainment further.
71. The headteacher and her colleagues see equality of access and opportunity as a key entitlement. Care is taken to ensure that all pupils are fully included in all the school's activities and the school succeeds in achieving this.
72. The education of pupils who have special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language is managed well. Pupils are integrated successfully into teaching and learning and their progress is monitored carefully. As a result, they make good progress in their learning overall and attain standards which reflect their ability. The school has policies for Equal Opportunities and on Racial Tolerance. There is a statement of intent from the governing body committing the school's compliance with The Commission for Racial Equality's Framework for Equality, but it has not yet been acted upon.
73. The school aims to achieve high standards of teaching and learning. Subject managers monitor and evaluate planning for teaching and learning in their subjects and analyse samples of pupils' work. The headteacher and subject managers in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology have monitored and evaluated some lessons and given feedback to the teachers concerned. There are plans to develop this for the other subjects of the curriculum during the next school year. This process is establishing effective planning systems but has not succeeded in eliminating inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school or in encouraging pupils to take greater care with the accuracy of their work.
74. The headteacher receives very effective support from her deputy and the co-ordinators for Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 6. This is the senior management team which normally meets fortnightly. However, these regular meetings are in abeyance because of other pressures and, while regular informal discussions are taking place, the senior management team is not currently a major force in planning strategies to move the school forward. Because of transitional staffing arrangements, the deputy headteacher has temporary responsibility for history and religious education and this is preventing her from exercising a more strategic role in curriculum development and management.
75. The school has very effective systems for determining its priorities for development. It then addresses its priorities by establishing a plan of action and by monitoring and evaluating progress towards it. This includes identifying finance within the budget to put its plans into effect. The school is adept at carrying forward sums of money from one year to the next to finance major projects. Skilful financial management both at a strategic and day-to-day level means that the school succeeds in getting best value from its expenditure. Its accounts were last audited in July 2000. The report was largely supportive of the school's procedures and its recommendations for some improvements have all been adopted with the exception of one where the school feels that its present arrangements are adequate. The school's finances are managed effectively at a strategic level by the finance committee of the governing body and on a day-to-day basis by the school secretary. Specific grants, for example, those for special educational needs, are used appropriately.

76. The governing body is very effective and meets all legal requirements. Led by its highly experienced and knowledgeable chair, it has a very good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It gives the headteacher high quality support, but is willing to question proposals as a means of determining the best way forward for the school. It plays a very valuable role in shaping the future direction of the school. Its system of committees is effective in enabling it to have a good overview of the school and to help to determine its priorities for development.
77. The school runs efficiently on a day-to-day basis in the sense that its routines are straightforward and clearly understood. Pupils move smoothly from one activity to the next. There is very good use of information and communication technology throughout the school. Its use in administration is efficient and it is used very effectively to assess pupils' attainment and progress. This information is being used with increasing success to improve attainment and progress. Pupils in the school use information and communication technology well to support learning in subjects across the curriculum. Overall, the school deploys its resources well. It is aware that it needs to consider its use of time throughout the day to ensure that it is used to enable pupils to learn effectively by ensuring that lessons are not too short or too long. Further, the school is aware that it needs to ensure that the planned amount of time is devoted to teaching and learning in each subject.
78. The school's permanent teaching staff are well qualified to teach the National Curriculum and religious education. The number of pupils per teacher is unusually low in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2 and well above average in Years 3 to 6. Classroom assistants are effective in supporting learning. In most cases, teachers and classroom assistants work well together and this is an important factor in determining the good quality of learning that the school provides. However, there are instances when highly skilled classroom assistants are not used effectively to support learning. New staff are introduced into the school effectively and the school is a valued provider of initial teacher training.
79. The school has satisfactory accommodation for teaching the National Curriculum and religious education. Some rooms are small for the number of pupils but others are light and spacious and benefit from useful adjacent spaces. There are relatively few rooms for small group work and there is no separate medical room. The building is kept in good condition by the caretaker and his team and the learning environment is enhanced by very attractive displays of pupils' work. There are adequate hard play areas and a high quality outdoor area for children in the Reception Year. There is no playing field. Resources for learning are good overall and this is an improvement since the previous inspection.
80. Purposeful leadership from the headteacher has enabled the school to improve well since its first inspection. With a more settled teaching force, the school will be in a good position to improve further.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

81. In order to improve further the quality of education provided by the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- improve the accuracy of pupils' work particularly with regard to spelling and number and ensure that there is a consistent policy throughout the school for pupils to correct unsatisfactory work; and
(paragraphs 26, 33, 73, 103, 104, 108, 116, 117, 119, 135, 169, 171, 173)
 - improve the provision for pupils' personal development by providing greater opportunities for them to take responsibility in different aspects of school life.
(paragraphs 16, 17, 18, 90, 107, 108, 143, 169, 171)

In addition to these key issues, the governors should consider the following point for development

when writing their action plan:

- ensure that the time made available for each subject is fully used for that subject so that the balance of learning fully conforms with the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education.

(paragraphs 28, 36, 129, 132, 171)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	68
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	14	21	32	1	0	0
Percentage	0	21	31	47	1	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	317
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	43

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	64

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.6
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	25	25	50

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	20	23
	Girls	19	22	24
	Total	37	42	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (85)	84 (81)	94 (90)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	19	24
	Girls	20	21	23
	Total	40	40	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (88)	80 (90)	94 (88)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	18	28	46

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	12	16
	Girls	23	22	24
	Total	35	34	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (79)	74 (76)	87 (84)
	National	72 (70)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	12	15
	Girls	21	22	24
	Total	33	34	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72 (61)	74 (76)	85 (76)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	3
White	312
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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)	13.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.8
Average class size	26.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	120

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	628,368
Total expenditure	641,506
Expenditure per pupil	1,996
Balance brought forward from previous year	69,842
Balance carried forward to next year	56,704

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	8
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	319
Number of questionnaires returned	88

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	46	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	48	49	1	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	46	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	49	17	2	0
The teaching is good.	60	38	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	48	10	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	23	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	27	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	40	48	10	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	50	40	6	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	49	3	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	15	44	19	8	14

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

82. Education for children under the age of five is provided in two Reception classes. The school's provision has improved since its previous inspection and is now good. The curriculum for these children is based on the six areas of learning designed for them and gives the children a broad and balanced curriculum. There is a wide range of well-focused experiences to promote the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. The school provides the children with a good start to their education and they are well prepared to begin their work on the National Curriculum.
83. The overall learning skills of most of the children entering the Reception classes are below those expected nationally. In recent years there has been an increasing range of ability, with more children of below average attainment and some with special educational needs. Overall, the arrangements for assessing children's attainment are good. Generally teachers use the information from the various tests, together with day-to-day observations to plan work which clearly meets the needs of the children. But there is inconsistency in the use of the available information to set targets for improvement and share it with colleagues and parents.
84. The Reception classes are taught by two teachers, supported by two classroom assistants. The classrooms are attractive and have a busy atmosphere, which creates a good climate for learning. However, due to considerable staff changes in one of the Reception classes, the two groups do not operate as a coherent unit. They do not work together as a team. This results in a degree of inconsistency in the quality of provision. For example, there are inconsistencies in making the best use of support assistants who are experienced and effective members of the school's staff. There is a good induction programme which includes visits to the school and meetings for parents. Teaching in the two Reception classes is satisfactory overall with some examples of good teaching. As a result, most children achieve well and are in line to reach the early learning goals in all six areas of learning by the end of the Reception Year, with a number of children reaching them before they move into Year 1.

Personal, social and emotional development

85. The personal, social and emotional development of the children is good and the standards reached are above those expected by the age of five. There are good procedures for introducing children to school life, which help them to settle in confidently. Care is taken to meet with parents and carers in order to be able to plan carefully to meet the individual needs of all children. They enjoy coming to school and respond well to the rules and routines of the classes. Most are confident in trying out new activities and speak confidently to other children and to adults. Children are polite and respectful to their teachers and other helpers in the classrooms and use classroom resources carefully. They sit quietly in assembly to hear a story and respond with respect during a shared prayer. The children concentrate on their activities for extended periods, either when listening carefully to a book during the Literacy Hour, or when persevering with the careful making of a biscuit tin. Children select their own activities during free choice periods and most are able to play sensibly alongside other children and some are able to share the activity with others. They demonstrate growing independence in their dressing skills and in personal hygiene, for example, when changing for physical education lessons and washing hands following a painting activity. Children take responsibility for tidying up at the end of lessons. There are well-planned opportunities for children to develop a sensitivity and awareness of other people, their different cultures and ways of life, for example, when one teacher shared with the children her childhood experiences of life in Malta. Teaching in this area is good as every opportunity is taken to develop the children's personal skills. All adults provide the children with good examples in personal and social skills. Praise and encouragement are highly effective in promoting positive behaviour.

Communication, language and literacy

86. In communication, language and literacy, standards are average by the age of five. Children make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. This area of learning is particularly well taught as teachers have identified it as a priority area for development. In both Reception classes, listening and speaking skills are extended effectively through a wide range of appropriately planned activities. When children are playing, staff engage them in discussion, question them effectively and challenge them to think and to articulate their thoughts.
87. Elements of the National Literacy Strategy are used well to develop and extend children's language and literacy skills. A strong emphasis is placed on listening carefully to the teachers and to following instructions. This is particularly effective for children with special educational needs. The children are attentive listeners. They enjoy listening to stories and rhymes and join in familiar ones with enthusiasm. They responded correctly to instructions in a physical education lesson. Phonic skills develop well as children talk about 'S' words. Structured play situations, puppets, group activities, lunchtimes and group discussions provide opportunities for children to use and extend their vocabulary. Clearly labelled displays, nursery rhyme pictures, calendars, weather charts and individual name cards help children to develop early reading and writing skills. Many hold their pencils correctly and know how to form letters. The children are gaining confidence in their abilities as readers and writers and frequently use the writing corner and take opportunities for writing during role-play when, for example compiling shopping lists. Some write their name and simple words. In both classes the book corner is used well by children and they handle the books with care. In shared reading tasks, children recognise initial sounds and use these to read unfamiliar words. Children choose books as an activity and all children take books home on a regular basis to share with family members. This has a positive effect on children's progress in learning to read. Teaching in this area of learning is good. All staff are competent in teaching the basic skills in literacy.

Mathematical development

88. Most children are on course to attain the expected standards by the end of the Reception Year, with a few likely to exceed them. Children make sound progress in developing their mathematical understanding. Work is planned using the National Numeracy Strategy. Through play, practical activities, number songs, rhymes and counting games many recognise numbers up to 10, and a significant number can count to 25 with ease. Most children are able to join in with the teacher and count down from 20 to zero. In both classes children have good opportunities to compare, match, sort, order and sequence. Teachers place great emphasis on developing appropriate mathematical language and children are encouraged to consider size, shape and position when playing with toys. A significant number recognise two-dimensional shapes and copy and repeat symmetrical patterns. Calculating skills of more or less, greater or smaller are also developed through practical activities such as threading beads and cutting various lengths of paper. Children use a computer program competently to create symmetrical shapes and this is followed up with other activities to reinforce their understanding. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support the lower attaining children and this helps them to keep up and complete their work successfully. Teaching in this area is satisfactory. Teachers and support staff are competent in teaching the basic skills of numeracy.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

89. By the time they reach the end of the Reception Year, most children are on course to reach the nationally expected levels of attainment in this area of learning. Children are interested in the world around them and this interest is promoted satisfactorily through a good range of opportunities, experiences and classroom displays. Children know that Christians pray to God and, in one class, they end their school day with a prayer. They know the different stages in the life cycle of butterflies. They paint and draw ladybirds, count their spots and recognise their distinctive patterns. They use computer programs efficiently to reinforce their understanding of themselves,

demonstrating their ability to access the program, open it up, drag and drop pictures and to draw pictures of themselves. They can type in words or phrases.

90. Children are developing a good sense of time and place from studying past and present events in their own lives, such as christenings, birthdays and weddings. This is reinforced by children producing their own memory boxes, which contain items about their own personal history. Role-play is also used to enhance children's understanding of the past. In this aspect the children make good progress because the teaching is good. From the range of experiences provided and stories heard, children are beginning to know about their own culture and belief and how others may have different beliefs. There are inconsistencies in the planning of activities in this area of learning. In some lessons there are insufficient opportunities for the children to investigate and explore for themselves and initiate their own activities. When this was possible, children took full advantage of the opportunities, thoroughly enjoying the experiences, as they were able to take their learning to the next stage when they were ready. Teaching is satisfactory overall with good quality teaching in some aspects.

Physical development

91. By the end of the Reception Year, most children are likely to reach the expected levels of attainment. Children make satisfactory progress in their physical development. In physical education lessons they walk, run, jump and hop using forwards and sideways directions. They can hold balanced positions on hands and feet. They listen carefully to the teacher's instructions and use space well, being aware of how to move to keep themselves and other children safe. Social skills are fostered successfully in this area. Resources for imaginative outdoor play are satisfactory. There is a secure play area which has been imaginatively landscaped with different levels and rubberised surfaces. There are defined paths for riding on wheeled toys and playground markings. When the opportunities are provided, children use the available provision well. However, the outdoor provision is a developing area and currently there are insufficient planned opportunities to learn out of doors. There is good emphasis on developing children's skills when handling tools, construction toys and malleable materials. Children are given many opportunities to cut out, glue, paint and crayon in order to develop their handling skills. Teaching is satisfactory. The school has recognised the need to improve outdoor provision.

Creative development

92. Standards in creative development are good by the age of five. Children enjoy a good range of experiences in art, music, story and imaginative play. Through such experiences, they are encouraged to use appropriate vocabulary and to develop their use of language to express ideas. A good range of musical instruments, songs and rhymes helps to develop the children's understanding of sound, rhythm and pattern. They enjoy taking part in role-play activities, for example, acting out the roles of doctor, nurse and patients. They make appointments and write prescriptions. There is an advertising board where children write out items that they wish to sell. This good range of provision is used well for developing children's speaking, listening and writing skills. One teacher actively seeks opportunities to use puppets as a teaching aid in different areas of the curriculum and does so to great effect.
93. There are many activities available for children to develop their senses through investigating texture, shape and colour. Staff provide materials with a variety of interesting textures from which children choose to create their own pictures and models. They work with play-dough, plasticine and junk material to create three-dimensional models. Sand and water are available for the children to explore. Teaching is good in this area of learning. Many varied activities are provided which encourage the development of creativity which is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

ENGLISH

94. In the National Curriculum tests in English at the end of Year 6 in 2001, attainment was at the national average. The school did not achieve its agreed target in English, although it was set at a

challenging level. At the end of Year 2, in the National Curriculum tests in 2001, attainment in reading was well below the national average and attainment in writing was below the national average. Attainment at the age of 11 was slightly below that being achieved at the time of the school's first inspection. Attainment at the age of seven in reading and writing was below the level being achieved at the time of the first inspection. Evidence from this inspection is that this decline in attainment has been reversed.

95. By the time pupils reach the age of 11, their attainment is above the level normally found for pupils of their age in both reading and speaking and listening. Their attainment in writing is broadly in line with that found in most schools although there are too many examples of careless spelling. By the time they are seven pupils have higher levels of attainment than are normally found. They have made good progress in the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall as a result of the school's strategies to support learning.
96. The standard of speaking and listening by the time pupils are 11 is at least in line with national expectations and mostly above. Pupils are able to converse confidently in small groups and to make presentations to the whole class. They have a growing vocabulary and are able to use the technical language of English naturally. This was clearly demonstrated by pupils from a Year 5-6 group who discussed the use of the 'annotation of texts' to assist them in writing book reviews. They understand that different kinds of vocabulary are used for different purposes. In a Year 3-4 group, a small group of pupils who had been working with the teacher on rhyming patterns in poetry explained how they identified the rhyming patterns using suitable notation. After this, they then enquired what inspectors did, showing great interest in the process of which they were a part. They listened carefully and phrased additional thoughtful questions to clarify their understanding.
97. By the time pupils are seven, they show confidence in talking and most are careful listeners. In small group work they discuss sensibly and feedback the results of their discussion to the whole class confidently. They sometimes lack confidence in speaking to the whole class, which can result in a lack of audibility, but they do volunteer willingly. There is enthusiasm for discussion and, in most of the classes observed, this was done sensibly and in an orderly way, even when not directly supervised by either the class teacher or learning support assistant (when present). For example, one Year 2 class discussed the various merits of two stories written by the same author. They discussed the subject as a whole class and then in small groups. They were able to give good reasons for preferring one text to the other, using comments thoughtfully about the language and the humour in one of the texts. However, there are some pupils for whom orderly discussion is still developing and they interrupt and call out unless frequently reminded not to do so.
98. In a discussion with pupils in Year 6 about their information and communication technology work, they were able to describe in some detail what they were doing to design a school web-site with individual pages and also about a control technology task. They used the appropriate technical language with confidence and some aplomb. Some pupils are very confident and often pose questions which illustrate thoughtfulness about what they have heard. In a Year 3-4 class, pupils discussing a religious education topic on 'Faith', gave examples of the people in whom they had faith and why and also stated what their expectation would be of that person, showing the concept of trust.
99. Pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills. By the time they are 11, they are confident and accurate readers. Their attainment is at least in line with, and mostly above, national expectations. They read with understanding but do not always interpret what they are reading in their use of expression. They enjoy reading and are able to discuss books and other reading with enthusiasm. Pupils are able to retrieve information from a variety of sources and use dictionaries and the thesaurus as well as electronic methods such as the Internet. They have an impressive knowledge of how to use reference books and understand how to use contents pages, indexes and glossaries. They use CD-ROMs and also the Internet competently to assist their research for topic work. All classes have access to computers in their classrooms and use a variety of programs to improve reading, punctuation, spelling and writing skills without direct supervision.

100. By the age of seven, pupils are developing confidence in their reading and their attainment is at least in line with expectation, with most pupils exceeding expectation. Book sacks have been assembled which contain 'favourite' stories as well as a range of other resources such as soft toys, glove puppets and factual books about the fictional character who is the focus of the story. These succeed in encouraging home reading for pupils up to the age of seven and also to involve their parents. The use of a fictional text to encourage reading of factual texts is a pleasing feature of the book sacks.
101. Pupils who have special educational needs receive extra support in two ways to improve their reading. Some are withdrawn for short periods while others receive extra support in class. Those pupils who are withdrawn for small group work with a learning support teacher have a structured and challenging programme of reading which also involves parents. Parents have received advice on how to help their children with their reading and the groups seen had all read to someone at home to practise their reading.
102. Pupils make good progress across the years in developing their writing skills and, by the time they reach Year 6, most pupils use a fluent, joined-up style of handwriting which is at least in line with national expectation and sometimes above. A variety of sentence structures and a range of vocabulary are used to good effect. Work is generally accurate apart from spelling and uses a range of punctuation and handwriting is legible. When using word-processed writing pupils are able to select appropriate fonts for their audience and purpose. Pupils are given opportunities to write for a range of purposes. Work seen in their books includes reports, play scripts, debates and creative writing - both prose and poetry. There are examples of extended writing and drafting and redrafting in their books. The school is developing a folio of pupils' written work for English to demonstrate how they have progressed over time. This shows an impressive development in Years 1 and 2 and this is being developed in other years.
103. Pupils have a good understanding of poetic forms and use their knowledge effectively to produce their own poems. Poetry written by pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 shows great sensitivity and makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Skills acquired in literacy lessons are being reinforced in other subject areas, for example, in some interesting diaries written by Year 3 and 4 pupils in their religious education work on Easter. However, some pupils' writing in subjects other than English is less accurate and does not appear to be closely marked. This was particularly noted in the religious education books of pupils in Years 5 and 6.
104. By the time pupils are seven, their handwriting has developed more impressively than their accuracy. Pupils have handwriting lessons using a scheme of work which is designed to prepare them for writing in joined-up forms. Its use is encouraging pupils at an early age to form letters evenly and correctly. Many pupils frequently misspell words even when they are displayed around the room or on the board. Corrections are identified but often, do not appear to be done. A spelling book is provided and the 'look, cover, write, check method' of learning spelling is supposed to be used to correct misspelling. This does not seem to have been carried out consistently or checked by teachers as the same errors are repeated in future work.
105. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is often good or better with no unsatisfactory teaching seen in English lessons. Teachers plan their lessons with care and prepare resources well to meet the needs of different pupils. Good or better teaching is characterised by a brisk pace and a good range in the tasks set. However, there are times when there is too much variety which fails to consolidate the very good initial teaching to the whole class. Well-planned learning tasks mean that there are few opportunities for pupils to waste time and most work with good levels of concentration. Teachers provide good support to pupils with special educational needs and they are able to access the same curriculum as their fellow pupils. Most teachers deploy support staff appropriately and sometimes make very good use of the learning support assistants with these pupils. As a result of this very good intervention, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in Years 1 and 2.
106. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall with examples of good and very good teaching. The mixed age and setted ability groups provide good opportunities for pupils of different abilities to

make progress at a pace which suits them. The size of setted groups of lower attaining pupils is very large and they are not always supported in all lessons. Some pupils are benefiting from the very good withdrawal provision. It is planned to increase the amount of support to these groups in the next school year to provide extra in-class support to more pupils than the present withdrawal system is able to do.

107. The schemes of work for English ensure that 'parallel' classes receive a similar curriculum. In the lessons observed it was the quality of the teaching which was sometimes markedly different as pupils used the same resources to learn the same topics. Where teaching was lively and interesting and pupils, especially in Years 5 and 6 classes, were given opportunities to develop their skills and abilities, some exhibited impressive creative skills. In classes which were more teacher directed, pupils did not have the time or opportunity for self-expression, often they were told the answers which the teacher wanted or expected and their own responses were sometimes rejected. This was observed in three classes where teaching was judged to be satisfactory.
108. There is a school marking policy which expects teachers' marking of pupils' work to be supportive and correct errors. However, pupils' corrections of unsatisfactory work are not done routinely and the same mistakes are repeated. A comprehensive assessment of pupils' literacy skills is carried out through a number of different tests. The school now has access to a computerised system for monitoring pupils' attainment and this is being used to target support and intervention with some success in raising attainment in pupils by the age of seven. Similar strategies are planned for pupils as they progress through Years 3 to 6.
109. Most pupils have good attitudes to learning in English and these enhance their attainment and progress. The behaviour of a small number of pupils is challenging on occasions, but this is usually managed well. When teachers provide interesting lessons at a brisk pace, pupils respond accordingly. Attitudes and behaviour improve when pupils are given opportunities for independent learning and to be responsible for their own work. This was observed in a number of lessons, particularly in Years 5 and 6. However, there were other occasions when pupils spent up to one hour sitting on the carpet. In these lessons, there was very little opportunity for pupils to exercise initiative and their learning was much more passive.
110. Other subjects are used well to support pupils' progress in literacy. There are good examples of literacy techniques being used in other subjects such as geography, history, and religious education. The National Literacy Strategy is used well in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6 to support learning. In most classes, the learning objectives for the lesson are made clear to pupils and lessons follow the literacy pattern. The use of the plenary session at the end of lessons to reinforce learning is inconsistent.
111. The good standards found in English at the time of the school's previous inspection have been maintained. With its increasing use of information from assessments, the school is in a good position to go on to raise standards further. The subject is managed well and the subject leader is well able to guide the school to higher standards, particularly as resources for learning are good and the use of information and communication technology to support learning is developing well.

MATHEMATICS

112. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2001, attainment in mathematics was above the national average and above the average attained in similar schools. The good standards found when the school was previously inspected had been maintained. Results in 2001 were an improvement on most years since the school's first inspection. In 2001, girls out-performed boys in mathematics but this is not part of a pattern from year to year. The school did not achieve its challenging target in mathematics in 2001.
113. In the National Curriculum tests in 2001 at the end of Year 2 in mathematics, attainment was in line with the national average but below the average attained in similar schools. This was a decline from the previous inspection. Boys outperformed girls in 2001, but, again, this is not part of a regular pattern.

114. Evidence from the inspection is that attainment is rising in the infant classes. By the age of seven, higher attaining pupils have a very clear understanding of numbers to 100 and add and subtract accurately with two digit numbers. They calculate money to one pound and have an early understanding of length in centimetres, weight, capacity and time. They know the basic two and three-dimensional shapes and identify right angles accurately. They have an above average ability to understand mathematical problems expressed in words, understand the difference between clockwise and anti-clockwise, understand the concept of symmetry and represent data in simple bar charts. They have a very secure understanding of a wide range of areas of mathematics. Average pupils cover a similar range of work and have a good level of accuracy although some work is unfinished. Below average pupils also achieve a good level of accuracy which suggests a good level of understanding. Overall, an impressive amount of work has been covered across the programmes of study of the National Curriculum and learning has been effective.
115. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language, make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Learning is organised effectively so that these pupils build up their knowledge, skills and understanding systematically.
116. By the age of 11, higher attaining pupils understand place value to millions. They are secure in using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division using three and four digits. They know that fractions, decimals and percentages are three different ways of expressing the same mathematical operation and convert one to the other. They know that there are different types of triangles and understand their properties and the properties of the other major two and three-dimensional shapes. They measure angles accurately. They understand symmetry and rotational symmetry and calculate perimeter and area accurately. They have an early understanding of the concepts of ratio and proportion and make good attempts to estimate the likely outcomes of calculations. They are able to represent information in bar charts and line graphs and interpret the information that they contain. They have a secure understanding of simple algebra and statistics. Average pupils have covered similar work but are more prone to error and have areas of insecure understanding, for example, with regard to place value when multiplying and dividing by 10 and 100. Lower attaining pupils are accurate in straightforward work but are hampered by some insecure knowledge of tables. Some work is unfinished and there are cases of incorrect work not being marked as incorrect.
117. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in Years 3 to 6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to the targets set for them and pupils who speak English as an additional language are not handicapped in their learning. For many pupils, progress is held back by inaccurate working. This is sometimes the result of carelessness and sometimes the result of insecure understanding. Pupils' work is not corrected as a matter of routine. Where corrections have been done, there are examples of corrected work still being wrong. Throughout the school, there are opportunities to practise mathematics in subjects such as science, geography and design and technology although these could be made more systematic. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning in mathematics.
118. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall although there are examples of good and very good teaching. Very good teaching features very clear explanations so that pupils are quite clear what they are doing and why. Lessons are very well planned and organised so that pupils make progress systematically and build on previous learning. Very effective questioning involves all pupils and tests and reinforces understanding. Very good attitudes to learning are rooted in very good relationships so the management of pupils appears almost effortless. In such a lesson, pupils made very good progress in their learning because their understanding of their learning tasks was secure because of the clear and careful explanations of the strategies needed to solve the problems. On the other hand, where teaching and learning are satisfactory, the learning objectives for the lesson are less explicit. The management of pupils is often less secure so that time taken to restore concentration for some pupils slows the pace of learning for others. In one lesson, pupils called out answers as opposed to raising their hands so that most pupils had no opportunity to answer. In these lessons, some groups are sometimes left to work independently for too long and do not have the concentration to work successfully for such long periods. Overall, in satisfactory lessons, the focus is less sharp and expectations are less high so that there is

less progress in learning.

119. The subject is managed satisfactorily. The introduction of setting in Years 3 to 6 is helping to raise standards because work can be more accurately matched to pupils' needs. The subject manager monitors planning and analyses written work as well as observing some classes. This gives him a good overview of standards in the subject across the school. The decline in standards in Years 1 and 2 over the last few years appears to have been reversed and standards in Years 3 to 6 are relatively stable. If the school can improve the accuracy of pupils' work and reduce carelessness, it will be in a good position to raise standards further.

SCIENCE

120. By the age of seven, pupils' attainment in science is above average. The school's performance in the 2001 teacher assessments in science was close to the national average. Pupils achieved the expected standards for their knowledge and understanding of life and living processes, materials and their properties and physical processes in the programmes of study of the National Curriculum. A much smaller proportion achieved the expected standards in experimental and investigative science. Inspection findings are that standards are better than this. Most pupils in Year 2 are achieving the expected standards and a significant number of pupils are doing better than this. Teachers' expectations are high and all pupils are being appropriately challenged. Progress for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language is good overall. In the previous inspection, attainment was judged to be well above the national standard. This does not represent a decline in standards for the school. An increasing proportion of pupils are entering and leaving the school at other than the expected times and a rising number of pupils has special educational needs.
121. The standards of work in the current Year 6 age group are similar to the national average and standards are being maintained. There is a clear trend of rising standards, which matches the national trend. Pupils are generally making satisfactory progress. In 2001, National Curriculum test results in science were in line with the national average and the average for schools in similar circumstances.
122. Standards have risen overall since the last inspection. This is due to a number of reasons. Firstly, the teachers are placing a higher emphasis on scientific investigation and pupils are encouraged to look for evidence when carrying out investigations. Pupils enjoy the practical approach to learning and most concentrate hard and work well with others in their groups. As a result, they learn from each other as well as from their teachers. Secondly, they are being taught relevant scientific terms. This helps their understanding of scientific concepts and principles. Thirdly, better use is being made of information from assessments. This is being used for grouping pupils by ability for science lessons. An analysis of planning and the observation of lessons show that this is an effective strategy for matching work more appropriately to the needs of all pupils and providing all with the right level of challenge.
123. By the end of Year 2, pupils have good scientific knowledge and good skills and have made good progress. Pupils in a Year 1 class identify different parts of the human body accurately. They know the major organs in the human body and that a balanced diet is required to remain healthy. Through practical observation, pupils know and understand what conditions seeds and plants would grow best in. An analysis of previous work shows that Year 2 pupils use electrical circuits effectively to light up a bulb. They have developed a good understanding of the action of forces on objects. They know that forces can make things change direction, stop, get faster, speed up or slow down. Higher attaining pupils explained how they made their comparisons fair and set up an appropriate test. They develop their good language skills by talking about the activities and the objects they observe. However, turning the pupils' own ideas into questions that could be investigated is underdeveloped.
124. By the end of Year 6, pupils have had a sound grounding in the range of scientific knowledge and understanding required by the National Curriculum. They carry out a range of activities well that are effective in helping them to develop their understanding of scientific enquiry as much of the work

done by pupils is in the form of investigation. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Some pupils have become confident investigators, organising and recording their work well, needing little input from their teachers and making well-judged predictions of their results. When preparing to record the results of their experiment on sound, a higher attaining group of Years 5 and 6 pupils discussed and analysed their observations together. They understand the concept of a 'fair test' by making one change in an experiment. For example, when investigating the thickness of pieces of string and whether this affects pitch the pupils were very clear about keeping other variables such as length and tightness the same. By the end of Year 6, they are developing an understanding of force and its relationship to gravity. Many pupils relate their learning effectively to everyday life. For example, they know how evaporation and condensation take place in their homes.

125. Overall, pupils make good use of their literacy, mathematical and information and communication technology skills when writing up reports of experiments. Pupils deploy their numeracy skills effectively when making appropriate measurements, for example, of length, weight and volume and display them in graphical form using computer programs. However, in Years 1 and 2 there is still an over-dependence on the use of commercially produced materials which is limiting opportunities for pupils to develop their independent enquiry skills further.
126. The quality of teaching is good overall throughout the school and, occasionally teaching is very good. The effect of this is to provide pupils with good quality learning. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the science curriculum. They use appropriate scientific vocabulary and explain tasks well. The teaching of investigative skills is now being given a higher priority. This is having a positive effect on pupils' learning as they are now looking for evidence when investigating and most pupils are tightly focused on the tasks they are given. Teachers' planning for lessons is generally detailed and effectively covers the range of knowledge and understanding required at both key stages. This planning shows clear and attainable objectives; however, the sharing of these objectives with pupils is inconsistent. Teachers' explanations are generally clear. More effective teaching is characterised by work being well matched to pupils' needs and information from assessments being used well. This was especially noticeable in a Year 5/6 lesson which incorporated a large degree of challenge with clear targets in terms of time and learning. There was good quality questioning relating pupils' learning to everyday life and experiences. Often teachers make very effective use of teaching resources; for example, in a Year 3/4 class, the teacher organised a wide range of suitable investigative activities to good effect in developing pupils' understanding of elasticity linked to forces. Classroom assistants are generally well briefed and provide sound support for pupils. Opportunities for pupils to work independently are a positive developing feature in teaching and learning.
127. Pupils are interested in their work. In the better lessons they work hard and there is a buzz of excitement and interest in many of the practical sessions. Pupils spoken to said "science is enjoyable as we like investigating and enjoy the practical work". This results in good behaviour. In all the lessons seen, a striking feature was the way that pupils collaborated and supported each other's learning. For example, pupils in Year 5/6, when working in groups, sensibly shared the tasks of investigating sound and discussing their observations. Science is used well to provide opportunities for developing pupils' social skills.
128. Since the previous inspection, the school has introduced government recommended guidelines for teaching science. In teachers' long and medium term planning, there is an appropriate emphasis on investigative work. A drug awareness programme has been included in the scheme of work. The subject leader has carried out a comprehensive audit of procedures and identified as a priority the use of the available assessment data to guide future planning between the infant and junior age groups more effectively so as to improve progression between the different age groups and systematic monitoring of lessons. The subject is being managed well and the school is in a good position to improve attainment and progress further.

ART AND DESIGN

129. The provision for art and design is good and standards of work are good overall. This is an improvement since the previous inspection where standards were satisfactory for pupils in Years 1 and 2 but were unsatisfactory for those in Years 3 to 6. The curriculum provides all pupils with the opportunity to take part in a suitable range of art activities. However, in Years 5 and 6 an art unit in the autumn took far longer to teach than had been planned for. This has resulted in this group of pupils being taught two instead of the three planned units. This informal extension of art teaching time adversely affected the time available to teach design and technology. Some catching up is planned in the rest of this term and action has been taken to reduce the chances of this happening again. While no teaching was seen in Years 1 and 2 it is clear from looking at pupils' work, at displays around the school and through talking to pupils that teaching and learning are good as pupils produce much work of good quality. They use paints, print from blocks or string, make collages using a range of papers, finger puppets using felt and appliqué work. Standards are good and pupils are gaining experience of using art materials. Pupils' art notebooks provide a good record of the work they have done. However, the work is not always dated and labelled, nor is it consistently marked which reduces the helpfulness of the notebooks in showing the progress which pupils have made.
130. Standards of work in Years 3 to 6 are good and teaching and learning are good overall. In a very well-taught lesson on 'Weaving' in Years 3 and 4 pupils worked hard and at a good rate. They carried out their investigations of types of weave with concentration, sorted materials into groups, glued pieces of materials and some of the threads neatly into their books and explored the different woven patterns of baskets and woven hats which the teacher had brought. They remembered words such as 'warp' and 'weft' and knew what they meant. Pupils looked closely at the baskets and some even smelled them. Finally, they were amazed and enchanted by some large photographs of woven sculptures by Sophie Ryder and other artists. This lesson enabled the teacher's very careful planning to lead to high quality learning. Effective resources were used and were introduced at exactly the right time. The teacher's questions were good and made pupils think hard about their work. This was a very well timed lesson where pupils made progress in observing details and describing what they were seeing. A similar lesson on the same theme was unsatisfactory in another class because the planning did not make suitable links between what was to be learned, the order in which it might be learned and what pupils already knew. As a result, little progress was made in this lesson and unsatisfactory standards of work were produced.
131. The subject manager is capable and enthusiastic. She writes detailed teaching plans for her colleagues. This is valued by them and helps to spread good teaching practice. The subject manager checks the quality of pupils' work regularly. There is no specialist art teaching room but there is a good-sized art storeroom and, apart from facilities for ceramic work, there is a very good range and quantity of art materials and books available for teachers to use.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

132. Provision for design and technology is good overall and there is now an agreed policy for the subject. The curriculum is well planned and all pupils have equality of access to it. However, in Years 5 and 6, only two of the three planned units have been taught during this school year. This is because design and technology lessons are planned to alternate each half term with art and design lessons. However, an art and design unit took more time than was planned for and continued in the next half term. In addition, teaching time for design and technology has sometimes been used to catch up on pupils' work from other subjects. This means that the unit on 'Musical Instruments' will not be taught. While it may be possible to offer this to the current Year 5 pupils later, Year 6 pupils will have no such opportunity. There is no specialist teaching room; however, classrooms are a good size and equipment is portable so that the subject can be taught successfully.
133. Standards of pupils' work at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6 are good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. In Year 1, pupils are investigating the smell, texture and appearance of different fruits and making good quality pencil drawings of them. They are beginning to use words which describe the differences between different fruits. In Year 2, pupils

are investigating winding devices and look closely at how a range of toys move. Pupils talk to each other about how a yo-yo, a fishing rod or a toy helicopter work and then confidently describe to the class what they have found. Pupils clearly enjoy and are interested in their work and are keen to create their own moving toys. Through discussion at the end of lessons, pupils are able to modify the work which they are doing and this is an improvement since the previous inspection.

134. In Years 3 and 4, pupils' write down what they have done in specially designed notebooks. These are well structured and show that pupils have had good quality experiences in joining materials, in controlling movement and have been investigating a range of paint effects through their work on devising nursery rhyme posters, picture frame designs and pneumatic mascots. Years 5 and 6 pupils have undertaken a very thorough investigation of bread making. Their work shows that they know where different breads come from. They have learned about the nutritional value of bread, devised their own recipes for bread and evaluated the quality of the bread that they have made. In addition, they took the bread home so that parents could give their views on its quality. These comments were then included in their notebooks. Parents responded well to this way of becoming involved with their children's work and one parent commented about a herb and cheese bread which her son had made, ' Very impressed....It really did taste as good as it looked'. Lastly pupils described very clearly the ways in which the bread could be improved.
135. No Year 3 to 6 lessons were observed during the inspection. However pupils' work was analysed and a group of pupils from Years 5 and 6 met with the inspector to discuss their work. From this and from lesson observations in Years 1 and 2 it is clear that the quality of teaching and learning are good across the school. However, the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent in quality and, sometimes, pupils' written work is unfinished. In Year 1 the teacher made sure that a wide selection of well-matched resources were available for pupils' use. Planning was thorough and clearly showed how pupils would make progress. At the end of the lesson, the teacher skilfully drew out from pupils what they had learned and made good links with their previous work, including their work in literacy lessons. In Year 2, the teacher was skilled at encouraging pupils to help each other, getting one pupil to demonstrate how to use a yoyo while another pupil described why it moved as it did. The higher attaining pupils in this class were enthusiastic about their work and chatted to each other while they attached string to cotton reels using cellotape, fixed axles with plasticine and then designed and cut out an item to be moved by their model. Lower attaining pupils were helped to achieve a similar work-rate through the capable support of the teaching assistant. This lesson finished well with the teacher getting pupils to describe how the winding mechanisms in their simple models worked.
136. In Years 3 and 4, work on display shows that teachers have made sure that they teach the processes of design and making. For example, a classroom display about levers combines real examples of levers, pupils' own work, teachers' questions about the work and examples of completed unit notebooks. This means that the display can be used to help other pupils to understand how levers work. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 talk in great detail about the two units which they have completed this year - bread making and moving toys. They talked enthusiastically about their first lesson in bread making where they were able to try a wide range of breads from around the world and they described clearly why they made their own choices for bread flavourings. In their work on moving toys, pupils showed that they had learned new words such as the 'prototype' which they made using balsa wood. They had also used tools such as saws, hand drills and clamps.
137. The two subject managers are capable and knowledgeable. They have ensured that the subject continues to improve by their development of the school scheme of work, the introduction of notebooks for Years 2 to 4 and their expansion of the range of design and technology resources. The teaching of food technology has improved since the previous inspection and it is now good. The school is in a good position to build on these successes and to go on to improve further.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

138. History and geography are taught in termly blocks, so it was not possible to observe any teaching in history during the inspection. However, evidence from pupils' workbooks, displays, discussions

with teachers and pupils and an examination of teachers' planning provides sufficient evidence for judgements to be made about standards and progress.

139. By the ages of seven and 11, pupils' attainment matches the levels expected nationally. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress in the development of geographical knowledge of peoples, places and environments. They also develop skills in carrying out geographical enquiries both in and out of school.
140. In history, by the age of seven, pupils have begun to develop a sound sense of the passage of time and know how things change over a period. For example, they make comparisons between the lifestyles of the Tudors and the present day and know about famous people such as the diarist Samuel Pepys and Florence Nightingale. They have learned about how life is different compared with the past by asking their parents how they travelled to school and about which toys their grandparents played with. For example, pupils in Year 1 talked about their toys which are often worked by battery, comparing and contrasting them with the less sophisticated toys of their grandparents. By the age of 11, most pupils have gained a greater awareness of the significance of historical events, the contributions made by people and of developments in the recent and distant history of Britain and other countries. Work has been done on Ancient Egypt and pupils also have good knowledge of events and different aspects of life during the Victorian era. They use their knowledge well to describe and to begin to link characteristics of past periods and societies. For example, they have studied social conditions in Victorian times and compared and contrasted them with their lives today. They are developing a satisfactory understanding of the different ways of gathering evidence so as to distinguish between fact and opinion. Most understand what is meant by primary sources of evidence. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 know that archaeological discoveries are an important source for finding out about life in Ancient Egypt and that relics, drawings and artefacts provide important clues about aspects of the past.
141. These findings broadly reflect the judgements made in history and geography at the time of the previous inspection and the sound standards being achieved then have been maintained.
142. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 make good use of the school and the local area in teaching and learning and, as a result, Year 2 pupils talk confidently about Halton and Runcorn and what they would see on their journeys to and walks around the school. They talk about Blackpool and contrast the features of seaside places with those of their home area. They use appropriate geographical vocabulary, such as seaside, beach and holiday. They make recognisable picture maps using simple symbols to show how they come to school. Many of the pupils are well aware that the world extends beyond their locality. For example, pupils are gaining a satisfactory knowledge of and understanding about places such as Mexico.
143. By Year 6, pupils look carefully at the school environment, noting aspects about the school building which they like or dislike. They think about wider environmental issues as they look at aspects of pollution. Pupils have learned how to use a range of maps confidently and to draw their own. They are developing a good knowledge of physical features. In their studies of rivers, pupils know that the estuary is where the river enters the sea. They use appropriate geographical vocabulary well, for example, source, estuary and tributary, and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. They are developing enquiry skills through visits to contrasting locations. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 visited Llandudno to investigate its land use, significant buildings and other features of this resort. Written work in exercise books is generally well presented although it contains some technical errors. On occasions, however, it is copied and there are limited opportunities for pupils to pose their own questions and predict what might happen next. Pupils are developing satisfactory research skills. Throughout both the infant and junior classes, information and communication technology is used effectively to support pupils' work in geography. For example, in a Year 3/4 lesson pupils used a CD-ROM to improve their knowledge and understanding of climatic conditions in southern Spanish resorts.
144. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall in geography. Lessons are carefully planned and activities are matched to the different ability levels within the class. In the lessons

observed during the inspection, teachers skilfully revised pupils' previous learning in order to focus on the next stage of learning. They know the importance of using primary sources, whenever possible, to make their lessons stimulating and interesting. For example in a lesson in Year 2, pupils looked at and ate Mexican food as an introductory activity in their investigation of Mexico. This resulted in a lively interest in the topic and developed pupils' awareness of other cultures and their customs. However, the pace of some lessons is too slow which limits the progress made by the pupils. On the visit to Llandudno for pupils in Years 5 and 6 during the inspection, the quality of teaching and learning was very good. Thorough preparation and a very effectively planned series of learning activities resulted in very high quality learning for all pupils. No overall judgement can be made about the quality of teaching in history because no lessons were observed.

145. Subject links are a strong and consistent feature across the school. In both history and geography teachers are skilled at maximising the opportunities to develop pupils' skills further in other subjects particularly in literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication technology. This good strategy results in raising pupils' standards in these other subjects. There is no significant difference between the achievements of boys and girls. Pupils' attitudes to history and geography show that they are interested in the topics studied.
146. Both subjects have clear policies and schemes of work. The subject leaders check teachers' medium-term planning against the planned curriculum and evaluate teaching and learning through a regular analysis of pupils' written work. There is no formal monitoring of teaching although plans are in place to introduce this in the future. Resources in geography have improved since the previous inspection with the acquisition of aerial photographs and information and communication technology software. Resources for learning in both subjects are satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

147. Standards of attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 are above those normally found. The school has continued to make good progress since its previous inspection. That inspection found that the school was not providing the pupils with sufficient opportunities to use the full range of information and communication technology tools as there was a shortage of control resources which restricted the opportunities for pupils to use computers to make, test and improve sequences of instructions. A number of improvements are now in place. The school has improved and increased the range of equipment and all classes have at least two computers each. There is ongoing training to update teachers' knowledge and skills in information and communication technology. This has improved the quality of teaching, particularly with regard to the direct teaching of skills.
148. Throughout the school, pupils, including those who have special educational needs, make good progress. This is due a number of factors. Firstly, most teachers introduce new programs and skills in a step-by-step manner, taking the pupils through a planned sequence until they have achieved the purpose of the lesson. Secondly, most pupils remember what they are told and are confident in trying things out. Their enthusiasm and good concentration contribute well to the success of their learning. A strong aspect of the subject is the way in which teachers provide opportunities for pupils to use their skills in other subjects. For example, in English, pupils in Years 3 and 4, used a program to improve their grammar and spelling and pupils in Year 1 were writing their research findings on Biblical characters straight onto the screen. Pupils requiring extra support in English and mathematics are provided with sessions on the computer to improve their skills. The work that they produce is generally of a good quality.
149. By the age of seven, pupils are competent in using the mouse and are beginning to develop good typing skills using the keyboard, identifying letters, using the space bar, capitalising and using delete and insert. They know how to change the font size. Pupils save their work, use the computer to generate pictures and are able to log on and log off in order to start and finish their work. They are developing skills in controlling a programmable device and entering simple instructions, for example, going backwards and forwards.
150. By the age of 11 pupils use word processors to organise and present their work. They use the computer confidently to produce branching databases, for example, to sort given information on

their pets into sets. They are able to use the computer in art and design lessons to develop images using repeated patterns. They move the cursor and click the right mouse, using the arrow to select an appropriate size for their work. The majority produce pictures, some very creatively, with overlapping dots of different sizes. Older pupils help each other to gain access to the Internet. They know how to start the program and how to log on to the site using a username and password. Their information and communication technology vocabulary is developing well, using words such as 'scroll-down', 'maximise' and 'email address' with confidence. Higher attaining pupils are able to enhance their texts by selecting elaborated fonts and downloading suitable illustrations from the Internet.

151. Pupils in Year 6 make good and often rapid progress because of regular access to computers, the clear explanations given by most of the teachers and the many opportunities to try things out. Their research skills are being developed through the use of CD-ROMs and logging on to the Internet to search for and to display specific information.
152. Throughout the school pupils are now confident users of computers and programs. They are keen to demonstrate their skills and talk confidently about their work. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 using control technology made a set of traffic lights using a series of instructions for controlling it. They demonstrated real skill in describing the precise sequence of moves to activate the device. Pupils help each other very well and pupils with special educational needs benefit from the support of other pupils as well as from adults. Pupils talk about trying things out at home, especially using CD ROMS and the Internet to find information.
153. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good overall. Teachers are confident and have a good understanding of the subject. For example, in Year 2, the teacher instructed the pupils in well-organised sequenced steps using precise technical language whilst expecting pupils to respond and express their understanding using the correct information and communication technology vocabulary. Throughout the lesson she carefully evaluated pupils' progress.
154. Teachers spend time ensuring that pupils understand the procedures and demonstrate how to use them. Throughout the school, relevant software is identified to support work in most subjects and instructions are often displayed next to classroom computers to remind pupils of the procedures.
155. The quality of learning is good because pupils are given regular opportunities to use their information and communication technology skills. Pupils are beginning to take responsibility for their own learning because teachers expect them to work out solutions to problems for themselves. As a result they have the confidence to try out new skills.
156. The subject manager has a secure subject knowledge and a clear awareness of what needs to be done to improve the school's information and communication technology provision further. There is sound planning for teaching and learning based on National Curriculum guidelines. Successful in-service training has raised the expertise and confidence of the staff. The subject manager currently monitors teaching and the teachers' planning. However, the information from assessments is not being used in any systematic way to guide future learning. The use of information and communication technology has improved well since the school's previous inspection and the school is in a secure position to improve further.

MUSIC

157. At the time of the last inspection, attainment in music was in line with national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6 and these satisfactory standards have been maintained. No pupils currently learn musical instruments in the school and so learning in music is not enhanced by this experience and pupils do not benefit from playing in instrumental groups. Whole school singing is satisfactory. Singing is not a routine part of daily assemblies, but Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 6 sing separately once per week. Years 1 and 2 sang enthusiastically. In two songs which they know well, they were more successful in keeping in time during the chorus than during the verse. Indeed, a few pupils were happy to sacrifice tunefulness for volume. Attempts to clap the rhythm met with varying success, but were satisfactory overall. There was good clarity with words. Years

3 and 4 practised songs from their forthcoming production of 'Macbeth'. These were quite complex in terms of rhythm and melody and pupils knew the choruses more securely than the verses. Overall, their singing was satisfactory.

158. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 know that dynamics means how loud or quiet the music is and that tempo is the term used to describe the speed of the music. They have a clear understanding that music can evoke moods or mental images. In groups, they were successful in choosing different instruments to represent different types of weather, for example, choosing a drum to represent thunder. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have satisfactory ability to repeat quite complex clapped rhythms. They sing quite tunefully. One pupil knew the expression 'tongue-twister' and pupils understood that 'tongue-twisters' have to follow a steady pulse. In Years 5 and 6, pupils know how to use a graphic score sheet to record their own compositions and have a secure understanding of how different instruments can be used to evoke different moods.
159. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in music lessons reflect the quality of the teaching. In the lessons for Years 1 and 2 and Years 5 and 6, the quality of the teaching was good and pupils responded with enthusiasm and good levels of concentration and application. In these lessons, pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, made good progress in their learning. In the other lesson observed, progress for all pupils was satisfactory because they were less focused on their work and their tendency to chatter disrupted the flow of the lesson so that less was achieved. High levels of interest and co-operation enhance learning.
160. The quality of teaching was good in two of the lessons observed and satisfactory in the third. Good teaching is characterised by high expectations for pupils' efforts and behaviour. When teachers' expectations are high, they are largely realised in the way pupils respond. Good learning resources were used effectively to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in the two good lessons. Effective management of pupils is based on good relationships and, in both classes, teachers were able to restore order quickly after pupils had been allowed free time to experiment with different instruments. In the lesson where teaching was satisfactory, this aspect of the management of pupils was less secure. The class was very excitable and broke into general chatter at any pause in the lesson. This slowed the pace of the lesson and resulted in less learning and progress. Information and communication technology is used to support learning with CD players, electronic keyboards and the occasional use of computers to alter sounds.
161. The subject is managed by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable teacher. She has reorganised the scheme of work to ensure full coverage of the programmes of study of the National Curriculum. Resources for learning have been improved with the purchase of more tuned and untuned percussion instruments and some instruments from a range of different cultures. Pupils have some opportunities to experience musical performance, for example, in harvest festivals, carol concerts and nativity plays and music and drama productions. There are occasional opportunities to hear visiting professional musicians. The subject manager has plans to develop opportunities for pupils to learn musical instruments and to create a system for assessing progress in music. Such initiatives will help the school to move teaching and learning in music forward from the relatively low profile that it currently occupies. The school has the capacity to do this.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

162. Attainment in physical education is at the level normally found for pupils aged seven and eleven and the satisfactory standards found at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make sound progress. Years 3 and 4 have the opportunity for swimming for 16 weeks in each of these two years. The large majority of pupils swim the expected 25 metres by the time they leave the school and attainment in swimming is above average.
163. Pupils throughout the school have a good understanding of the need to warm up before physical exercise and of the need for safety in physical activities. Pupils in Year 1 showed some

imaginative responses when expressing the feelings evoked by music of a particular type. One boy recognised 'Chinese' music and some pupils used high steps while others developed sideways movements as their individual responses. Some were able to distinguish between 'spiky' and 'flowing' movements in the ways in which they used their hands. Some responded with tiny steps and most were able to observe a regular pulse. They were able to offer positive comments about each other's performances. Pupils in Year 2 worked very hard to develop sequences of movements using 'stretches' and 'curls'. They develop some interesting ways of travelling along the floor and were very clear in distinguishing between fast and slow movements. Most do competent forward rolls.

164. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have below average catching skills. Some have a reasonable eye for a ball, but others are unable to anticipate how a ball is likely to bounce. A few have good ball-striking skills, but many do not appreciate that ball-striking games are played sideways so that their success in striking the ball accurately is poor because they stand facing their partner. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 made satisfactory progress in developing shot-putting techniques by using a bean bag.
165. In the Year 2 lesson, the quality of teaching was very good and this resulted in a very good response from the pupils. They responded to their teacher's high expectations with mature conduct, co-operative attitudes and very good levels of sustained concentration. They showed real respect for each other's efforts and showed very good initiative in creating imaginative movements and commenting on each other's work. In the other lesson observed in the infant classes, the quality of teaching was satisfactory and this evoked a satisfactory response in pupils. In the Year 3/4 lessons, some pupils are immature and are easily distracted. To an extent they are uncooperative, for example, when throwing the ball away from their partners instead of to them. In these lessons, relationships were variable and the immature behaviour of a minority slowed the pace of learning. In the Year 5/6 lesson, pupils worked reasonably well together in rather crowded conditions and were generally mature in their response. In the lesson where teaching was very good, the teacher's clear subject competence and high expectations created the conditions for very effective learning. Her skilful lesson organisation and highly effective use of praise and encouragement meant that all pupils were fully involved in the lesson and gave of their best. Good work was celebrated and pupils were encouraged to evaluate each other's work and explain why it was successful. The teacher made very good suggestions for further improvements. In the other lessons where teaching was satisfactory there were occasions when the management of pupils was less secure.
166. The subject is managed by an experienced and enthusiastic teacher. She has developed a scheme of work which ensures that the programmes of study of the National Curriculum are covered fully. The school is well resourced and accommodation includes the hall, a reasonable outdoor hard surface, but which is cramped when used by a full class of ten and 11 year olds. The lack of a playing field is a disadvantage and means that pupils have few opportunities to experience competitive sport. There has been a small amount of external coaching in cricket. In the school, pupils have satisfactory experience of physical education. Changing arrangements for older pupils are unsatisfactory.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

167. Pupils' attainment in religious education is unsatisfactory overall for pupils aged 11 following the Halton locally agreed syllabus. Their knowledge and understanding of other faiths is sometimes not sufficiently extended and, as a consequence, their recall of and knowledge of faith communities is not strong. Pupils are capable of writing at length about aspects of the topics which have been studied and do so well when given the opportunity. They show a sound knowledge of aspects of the topics they have studied in their discussion and some have good recall of prior learning.
168. Pupils' attainment by the time they are seven is good. The topics chosen for younger pupils are associated with feelings and attitudes and their knowledge of the various faith communities is reinforced by visits to the church and synagogue. Pupils recall some of the artefacts associated

with both the Jewish and the Christian faiths.

169. Topics taught in Years 1 and 2 including aspects of Christianity and Judaism are taught using a variety of worksheets. In a Year 2 class observed, pupils had a good recall of work done previously on Judaism. They remembered features of the synagogue that they had visited well. Some good class work was observed in one Year 3/4 class studying the topic 'Faith'. Pupils, in response to questions about what they thought 'faith' was, were able to give surprisingly mature answers which showed clearly that they understood the concept. They were able to recall the various titles given to 'God' in different religions and understood that you had to believe in your 'God' to have faith. The story of Abraham was told and then pupils discussed how he had shown his faith in God. The lesson concluded with one pupil in the 'hot seat' as Abraham, answering questions from the class about how he felt at various times in the story. This showed how well pupils had listened and understood and the pupil playing Abraham had a sound understanding of the feelings which might have been experienced by Abraham in his responses. This contrasted with work seen in a Year 5/6 class which involved some discussion after which the class copied the teacher's notes from the board. The topic was Islam, a new area for most teachers. Pupils' work contained notes on the 'Five Pillars of Islam', together with various other misspellings from other topics.
170. Teaching in religious education is mostly satisfactory but there were examples of good and very good teaching. Good or better teaching is characterised by thorough planning and preparation, interesting ways of imparting knowledge and understanding and allowing pupils to explore their feelings. Some Year 6 pupils showed clear understanding of the reverence with which Muslims treat the Qur'an and offered several words such as 'sacred', 'cherished', 'holy' and 'special' to define the Qur'an as a book. All pupils were taught how to treat the Qur'an with respect and were instructed to wash their hands prior to looking at the copy in class. The teacher's use of questions varied from very good open questions which provoked thought, to simple closed questions which required little response. The lesson concluded with pupils copying a brief statement from the board, when many were obviously capable of more independent writing from the earlier discussion which had taken place.
171. On occasions, teachers' knowledge is not sufficiently developed and some teachers are insecure with information to pupils. Similarities between various faiths are not exploited sufficiently. Teachers' basic knowledge in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall but there are significant gaps in knowledge, which indicate the need for better support and preparation, especially in the teaching about Islam. Work is not always marked in line with the school's marking policy and significant misspelled words are left uncorrected, for example church, believe, baptism, christening and articles' seen in the analysis of work of some Year 6 pupils. The use of nationally recommended units of work goes some way to ensuring that teachers have some knowledge of the topics to be taught and provides cohesive programmes of study to build on earlier learning. Some time is lost from religious education lessons as classes change over or teachers start the lesson late after other activities. Although this is not a significant amount of time it does mean that pupils do not finish work off and several books from different year groups which were inspected had unfinished work left uncompleted.
172. Learning in religious education is satisfactory overall with evidence of some good learning taking place in Years 1 and 2 classes. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good overall and learning in one Year 2 class was very good, the pupils responding very positively to the stimulus provided in the lesson on 'places of worship'. They established a clear understanding of the concept by the end of the lesson. This lesson contrasted with another Year 2 lesson where learning was judged to be satisfactory in line with the satisfactory teaching. Pupils were not as focused and, when working in small groups, needed prompting from the teacher to remain engaged in what they were learning. A similar picture emerged in Year 5/6 classes. Pupils respond positively to good teaching when their learning, behaviour and attitudes are also good.
173. Some teachers are reinforcing the literacy strategy in their marking by ensuring that key words are learned and used correctly. However, there were several Year 6 books seen where this was not the case. Average attainers and also below average attainers were not corrected in some

fundamental literacy errors of spelling and punctuation. The impact is that they repeat the same errors not realising that there is an error. The use made of information and communication technology is good with several pupils in classes throughout the school making use of CD-ROMs and search engines for their research. Some word-processing was also seen in pupils' work.

174. The assessment of religious education has still to be developed in the new syllabus but the school has well developed assessment strategies in other areas of the curriculum which will provide a sound foundation for this.
175. Resources for learning are good. There is a very good selection of books in the school library to support the study of religious education. Pupils have access to a variety of artefacts but not all pupils are given sufficient opportunity to use these facilities to increase their independence.
176. The leadership and management of the subject are good and provide a clear focus for learning. Since the previous inspection there has been substantial investment in religious education resources. The schemes of work provide a coherent and cohesive study of religions and there is evidence of pupils making good progress in the early stages of the course. For the same progress to be made in Years 3 to 6, all teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject will need to be brought up to the level of the best practice in the school.