

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WHALEY BRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Whaley Bridge

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112647

Headteacher: Mr R. Heys

Reporting inspector: Mrs. R.J.Andrew  
21460

Dates of inspection: 4 - 7 June 2001

Inspection number: 195120

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Buxton Road Whaley Bridge High Peak Derbyshire
Postcode:	SK23 7HX
Telephone number:	01663 732354
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. Alan Johnson
Date of previous inspection:	May 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21460	Rachael Andrew	Registered inspector	History Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
19692	Robert Folks	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
13805	Lynn Lowery	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Geography	
19120	Derek Pattinson	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education Special educational needs	
20655	Beryl Rimmer	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Foundation stage	
20038	Geoffrey Watson	Team inspector	Science Music Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Whaley Bridge Primary School is a community school for pupils aged four to eleven. It is bigger than most primary schools. There are currently 264 boys and girls on the school's roll, most of them from the immediate area. The pupils are drawn from a wide range of backgrounds but very few are of minority ethnic background. This reflects the local population. None of the pupils has English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is, at nine per cent, about average. There are 52 pupils with a variety of special educational needs, including learning, speech, language, emotional and behavioural difficulties, physical disabilities and autism. This proportion, at 25 per cent, is above the national average. Twenty-one of these pupils have statements. They are drawn from a wide geographical area and are provided for through the school's enhanced resource status. Attainment on entry to the reception class is broadly average. Attainment on entry to Key Stage 2 is affected by the inclusion of the well above average proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs.

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

This is a good school with significant strengths. It is well led and achieves high standards in much of its work as a result of the quality of education it provides, including good teaching. There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs who are admitted because of the school's enhanced resource status. The school provides good value for money.

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

- The quality of teaching leads to good achievements in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, art and musical performance.
- Pupils behave well and work conscientiously.
- The headteacher provides strong leadership for continuous improvement. The deputy headteacher, key staff and governors support him well.
- The school provides a wide range of good quality learning experiences within lessons and beyond the classroom, including opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The enhanced resource provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' care and welfare.

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

- The independent learning skills, creative and physical development of the youngest children in the reception class, through more opportunities to explore, experiment, make decisions and participate in purposeful play.

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

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

The improvements made by the school since the last inspection are good. The two areas identified for improvement at the time of the last inspection have both seen significant changes. The school has developed effective planning for information and communication technology (ICT). Teachers' skills and confidence have benefited from training opportunities; standards have improved and are now similar to those found in most schools. The school is making better use of ICT to support other subjects. The school has developed good systems for checking how well it is doing and has sharpened its focus on how the changes it makes affect pupils' learning and the standards they achieve.

The overall quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and standards have risen substantially. The school has continued to provide a wide range of interesting opportunities for pupils to learn, both in lessons and outside the classroom. It has not yet used the recent national guidelines for the Foundation Stage to provide the best possible start for the youngest children in the reception class.

### **STANDARDS**

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

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

**Key**

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

The table above shows that results in English and mathematics in 2000 for eleven-year-olds were above average and standards in science were average compared with national results. Pupils' achievements in English and mathematics were good comparing favourably with similar schools. Inspection findings confirm that standards are above average in English and mathematics and indicate that standards in science are now also above average. Achievement is now good in all three subjects. The improvement in science has come about through more demanding work for higher-attaining pupils. The improving trend for all subjects is above the national trend. There has been significant improvement since the last inspection. The school has set challenging targets for 2001 and these are likely to be achieved.

The results of National Curriculum tests in 2000 for seven-year-olds in reading, writing and mathematics were well above the national average and well above the average of other similar schools. They have improved since the last inspection. Results in reading were in the top five per cent nationally. Results for the current year indicate that where standards were high they have been maintained. The achievements of higher-attaining pupils have improved in mathematics and writing. Teacher's assessments of science at the age of seven in 2000 indicate that although all the pupils achieved the nationally expected Level 2, no pupil achieved a Level 3. More demanding work has been provided this year for higher-attaining pupils and their achievements are now good.

Standards in ICT have improved since the last inspection and are now broadly average, although computers are not used well enough to support musical composition or data handling in mathematics. Standards in art and design, design and technology and the singing and instrumental performance aspects of music are above those found in most schools. There are weaknesses in pupils' knowledge of religions, composition skills in music and their ability to apply mathematics to problem solving.

By the age of six, children at the Foundation Stage reach most of the early learning goals expected of them. They exceed the expectations in reading and writing. Not all the goals are achieved in their creative and physical development because of a lack of opportunity to develop their skills.

Pupils with special educational needs make generally satisfactory progress towards the targets set for them. Statemented pupils make good progress because of the individual support they receive.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are interested in their lessons and work hard. They are keen to take advantage of the many opportunities provided for them beyond the classroom.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave well in lessons, at playtime and around the school. They understand and accept the school's clear code of conduct. They are polite and helpful.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils are co-operative. Boys and girls and pupils of different ages, capabilities and backgrounds play and work together sensibly. They



	carry out duties responsibility to help the school run smoothly.
Attendance	Attendance is broadly average. It has fallen slightly since the last inspection.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	good	good

During the inspection, all the teaching observed was satisfactory or better. In seven out of ten lessons it was good and in three out of ten very good. The teaching of English and mathematics is good overall. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well and pupils make good gains in learning. They quickly become fluent readers, and write sufficiently well to support other areas of the curriculum. Pupils' achievements are good, as teachers generally provide work that matches their needs and provides the right level of challenge. Work builds on earlier learning so that pupils master progressively more difficult tasks. Teachers make it clear to pupils what they need to learn and explain new learning well so that pupils' understanding develops well. Teachers' high expectations and encouragement ensure that pupils work hard. However, marking does not always make it clear to pupils how they could improve. There is occasionally too much written practice of easy number work and teachers do not always encourage pupils sufficiently to ask questions, make decisions or take the initiative in their learning. At the Foundation Stage teaching is satisfactory, overall, with particular strengths in reading and writing. Insufficient attention is given to the needs of the youngest children in terms of opportunities for exploration, experimentation and purposeful play. Pupils with special educational needs are generally taught well although their targets are not always clear enough for teachers to ensure that they make good progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school has successfully introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and at the same time has maintained the breadth and quality in the teaching of most other subjects. Work in ICT has improved and is used more effectively to help pupils learn in other subjects. There is some imbalance within subjects, so that composition in music, applying skills in mathematics and learning about religions are relatively weak.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The enhanced resources are used very well to provide for and support stated needs of pupils. The tasks provided for them are tailored to their individual needs and the level of support they receive enables them to make good progress. Other pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Not all of their individual targets are precise enough.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is very good in all aspects. The act of worship makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. The school helps pupils to understand the effect of their actions on others. There are many opportunities for pupils to work together and to represent their school. Work in art, music, history and geography and beyond the classroom gives pupils insights into their own cultural heritage and that of others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has very good procedures for child protection and for ensuring the welfare of the pupils. The school keeps a careful watch over pupils' personal and academic progress. Very good support is provided by outside agencies to benefit pupils with special educational needs.

Most parents support pupils well at home. Staff and parents work well together to help pupils make the most of the opportunities to learn and make progress. There are many opportunities outside normal lesson time for pupils to take part in activities that benefit their learning. The school has paid too little attention to national guidelines for providing a curriculum that meets the needs of the youngest children.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides strong leadership. His enthusiasm motivates pupils to do well and teachers to work together to help the school to improve. The deputy head and other key staff manage their areas of responsibility effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors make well-informed contributions to school development. They provide good support for the headteacher and staff in many areas of the school's work. They carry out their responsibilities effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is much improved since the last inspection. With strong support from the local education authority the school has developed good systems for checking how well it is doing. It uses the information gained from this procedure, for example, about the quality of teaching and the standards achieved, to take action where required.
The strategic use of resources	The school deploys staff to advantage and uses their expertise well. Learning resources are used well to develop pupils' understanding. The school's budget and specific funds are spent wisely to benefit the pupils.

Staffing and learning resources are sufficient to meet the demands of the curriculum. The accommodation is inadequate for the wide range of special educational needs present in the school. The room provided for teachers is currently shared with music teaching and is inadequate. The school ensures that it achieves best value by making comparisons and exploring options when making spending decisions.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children like school.</li><li>• Children make good progress.</li><li>• The teaching is good.</li><li>• Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school.</li><li>• The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best.</li><li>• The school is well led and managed.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Behaviour in the playground.</li><li>• Information about how children are getting on.</li><li>• The way the school works with parents.</li><li>• Activities outside lessons.</li></ul>

Inspectors agree with parents' positive comments about the school. During the inspection, behaviour was good and most parents at the meeting felt this to be so. The school provides a good range of information about how children are getting on although comments in their marking and in reading diaries could be more helpful. Evidence from the inspection and parents' comments at the meeting indicate that the school works well with parents. There is a very good range of activities outside lesson times.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Many, but not all, of the pupils with statements of special educational needs are disapplied from the National Curriculum and do not take National Curriculum tests. They are, however, included in the table showing attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 on page 37, and this accounts for the comparatively large proportion of pupils who do not achieve Level 4. The judgements below and in the English, mathematics and science subject sections are based on the average point scores of each pupil taking the tests (see table on page 8) and do not therefore include these pupils. This gives a more accurate picture of pupils' achievements.
2. Based on average point scores, the results of National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000 show that standards were:-
  - above the national average in English and mathematics and average in science;
  - above average in English and mathematics and average in science in comparison with similar schools.
3. Results in science were lower than in English and mathematics because although more pupils achieved the expected Level 4, fewer pupils achieved the higher Level 5. Boys' and girls' results were similar. The current year's results are not yet available. Results have improved since the last inspection. Over the last four years, the school's results have improved more than national results.
4. The findings of the inspection confirm that standards in English and mathematics are above average. Standards in science have improved and are now also above average. More pupils achieve high standards. This results from the school's identification of relative weaknesses in science and the action taken to raise levels of challenge for higher-attaining pupils. The school has set appropriately challenging targets for all three subjects and is likely to achieve them.
5. Based on average point scores, the results of National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 show that standards were:-
  - well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
  - well above average in writing and mathematics, in comparison with similar schools, and in the top five per cent in reading (A\*).
6. Teachers' assessments in science were lower than in reading and writing because although all pupils achieved the expected Level 2, no pupil achieved the higher Level 3. Girls' results were better than boys', especially in writing. Results have improved since the last inspection. Over the last four years, the school's results have improved more than national results. The current year's results show that where standards were high they have been maintained. More pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in writing and mathematics.
7. The findings of the inspection confirm that high standards have been maintained at the end of Year 2. There has been an improvement in the achievements of higher-attaining pupils in science as a result of the actions the school has taken to provide more challenge for them.
8. By the end of Year 6 pupils' achievements in English are good. Eleven-year-olds speak confidently about a range of topics that interest them. They show, by their perceptive answers, that they listen attentively. There are high standards of reading throughout the school and, by the time they leave, many pupils are fluent readers, able to understand a wide range of fiction and information. Standards of writing are above average. Eleven-year-old pupils write fluently using adventurous vocabulary. They write in a range of different forms and use their skills well to record work in most other subjects, especially history, where higher-attaining pupils' writing about the war was of a particularly high standard. A few lower-attaining pupils still make mistakes with tenses.

9. By the end of Year 6 pupils' achievements in mathematics, especially number work, are good. Eleven-year-olds use addition, subtraction, multiplication and division accurately to solve number problems. They use fractions confidently to describe proportions. Higher-attaining pupils can reduce fractions to their simplest form and recognise their equivalents. Standards in data handling are not as high, as pupils spend too little time undertaking work in this area and ICT is underused as a way of developing pupils' understanding.
10. Pupils' achievements in science are good. The work is demanding and the amount of work covered is considerable. As a result, eleven-year-olds have a thorough understanding of the knowledge aspects of science in all the areas of study - for example, the human body, plants, animals and micro-organisms. Higher-attaining pupils undertake work at higher levels and, for example, know about cell structure. Through valuable opportunities provided for investigative work, pupils develop a good understanding of how to ensure that tests are fair. Higher-attaining pupils confidently design and carry out their own experiments, in response to questions posed by the teacher.
11. Pupils' achievements in English, mathematics and science are good at the end of Year 2. Seven-year-olds answer questions thoughtfully and describe what they have been doing in some detail. They read accurately and this helps them to find information to help their learning in other subjects. They are taught well from the start and this helps them to tackle words they don't know. They make good progress in writing increasingly lengthy accounts of their own experiences.
12. Pupils' achievements in mathematics, particularly number work, are good. Seven-year-olds solve number problems accurately using a range of mental calculations and show a growing understanding of the number system and place value. Higher-attaining pupils confidently recognise and order numbers up to 1000.
13. Pupils in Year 2 develop a good understanding of the science topics they study because of good teaching and well-focused investigations. The work is demanding and leads to a good level of achievement. For example, when studying materials pupils classify materials in a wide variety of ways and go on to test a range of papers for qualities of absorption.
14. Standards in art and design and technology are above those found in most schools. These subjects are taught well and pupils' skills are developed progressively. Pupils use a wide range of materials for two-dimensional and three-dimensional work and benefit from a careful study of the work of famous artists and craftspeople. They plan their work before starting on the making process and, when the work is complete, say why it is successful and what could be improved. Higher-attaining pupils make improvements as they proceed.
15. Pupils throughout the school sing well. They have many valuable opportunities to sing together in groups of different sizes. The teacher's expectations are high and she intervenes skillfully during practices to hone their skills well. Pupils learn the recorder and achieve high standards. Many benefit further from tuition on other instruments by the local education authority's peripatetic teachers. Musical performance is a strength of the school.
16. Standards in ICT have improved since the last inspection and are now broadly average. Pupils use their skills, for example in word processing, data handling and graphics, and their research skills to support the work in many subjects.
17. In religious education and all other subjects of the National Curriculum standards are similar to those found in most schools. There is some good achievement amongst higher-attaining pupils in history, especially their knowledge and understanding of life during World War II. The oldest pupils' knowledge of faith other than Christianity is sketchy, although they develop a good sense, in general terms, of how religious faith can guide peoples' lives.
18. Children at the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress overall and achieve most of the early learning goals expected of them by six years of age. They make particularly good progress in reading and writing and exceed expectations. In some areas of social, creative and

physical development, pupils do not achieve all the expected goals because of a lack of opportunity to develop the necessary skills.

19. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress towards the targets set for them. This is because most teachers ensure that work is carefully matched to their needs. Where pupils receive regular help from the dedicated and able support staff, their progress is good, especially in their literacy and numeracy lessons.

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

20. The pupils have positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour overall is good. Relationships within the school are constructive and personal development is good. Attendance is roughly in line with the national average.
21. The pupils enjoy coming to school and take full advantage of the wide range of activities and opportunities available to them. They get on with each other well and their friendliness is apparent at all times. They behave very well before school when playing in the playgrounds with very little supervision and are well behaved during playtimes and lunchtimes, when the level of supervision is much higher. At lunchtimes, they talk to each other animatedly. They initiate conversations with visitors and make them feel welcome. There are eight dinner supervisors at lunchtimes who provide a high level of supervision for the pupils both inside the dining room and outside in the playground. A few boys were occasionally exuberant in the playground but this did not cause any problems. Parents felt that they were well behaved, especially on outside trips, and this was seen to be the case on a geography field study around Whaley Bridge. The pupils were particularly well behaved and attracted a number of complimentary comments from passers-by.
22. In lessons, pupils behave well. They apply themselves diligently, even in less interesting lessons, and maintain their concentration for long periods of time. They participate well in most lessons, are well motivated and enjoy learning. In their questionnaires, a few parents expressed concern about bullying. The school intervenes effectively in various ways to tackle intimidating behaviour and bullying wherever it occurs. As in most schools, it is not always completely successful but pursues reported incidents seriously. No evidence of bullying or aggressive behaviour was seen during the inspection. There were six temporary exclusions during the last year. Only two pupils were involved; both were justifiably excluded as a last resort.
23. Most pupils with special educational needs have a positive attitude to their work. They are keen to learn, eager to please, and enjoy succeeding. They are mostly well behaved, and respond well to the encouragement they receive, which helps to boost their confidence and enables them to take pride in their achievements.
24. The school offers a wide range of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility during their time at the school. These develop a sense of serving the school community and include acting as library monitors, tidying equipment, and ringing the school bell at the start and finish of lessons. More substantial responsibilities include acting as house captains and representing the class on the school council. Pupils take these seriously and do their best to consider the views of others. Many pupils take advantage of the wide range of additional activities available such as the school choir, recorder groups and the extra-curricular activities available. They also take part in fund-raising for local charities.
25. There are good relationships within the school. This is particularly apparent in the way that boys and girls play with and help the pupils with special educational needs who enter the school in Years 3-6. They are considerate of their disabilities and show a mature respect for their needs. Pupils mix very well together and firm friendships are made that benefit all parties. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting said how much they valued the school's commitment to integration. The benefit of this was observed on a daily basis during the inspection.

26. Attendance is roughly in line with the national average. It has dropped slightly since the last inspection. Unauthorised absences are better than the national average. All statutory requirements are met. There was little evidence of lateness during the inspection week.

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

27. The quality of teaching is good overall. All the teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory or better. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was observed. In a significant proportion of lessons, seven out of ten, the teaching observed was good or better and in three out of ten lessons the teaching was very good. The quality of the teaching results in pupils who work hard and make good gains in their learning.
28. In most lessons teaching is successful because:
- work builds on earlier learning and is generally at an appropriate level for different groups within the class to enable them to make good progress;
  - teachers make clear what they want pupils to learn in the lesson, not just what they will do, so that pupils have a better understanding of their learning;
  - most lessons are well organised and include a range of interesting activities so that pupils are motivated to work hard;
  - teachers are knowledgeable and explain the work well so that pupils' understanding develops well;
  - teachers develop pupils' self-esteem and confidence by using praise constructively;
  - relationships are good and teachers manage pupils well so that pupils are keen to do well.

Examples of the resulting good gains in learning include:

- pupils in Year 1 mastering progressively more difficult tasks as the lesson proceeded, in a physical education lesson;
- pupils in Year 2 gathering specific information when they studied the local area so that they were able to answer the questions the teacher had posed for them;
- pupils in Year 3 channelling the enthusiasm gained from a visit to The Yorkshire Sculpture Park and the interesting follow up work in class to produce good ideas for their own sculptures;
- pupils in Year 4 benefiting from their teacher's scientific background when studying habitats;
- pupils in Year 5 confidently approaching new learning about mode, median and mean in mathematics because the teacher responded positively to their answers, helping them to overcome misconceptions and praising their efforts;
- pupils in Year 6 showing they are keen to offer suggestions about how to add impact and interest to their writing.

There are however a few weaknesses that impede progress. For example:-

- marking is variable and does not always make clear to pupils what they do well or how they could improve;
- there is occasionally too much written practice of number calculations that pupils already do easily;
- not all teachers put sufficient emphasis on encouraging pupils to ask questions, make decisions, take the initiative in their learning, or make the most of opportunities for discussion.

29. The teaching of English is good. Very good teaching was observed in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection. Basic skills of reading and writing are taught well and pupils make good progress. Teachers extend pupils' vocabulary well by asking well-chosen questions.
30. The teaching of mathematics is good. Teachers' skilful questioning develops pupils' mental skills in mathematics so that they are able to use a range of strategies to calculate and explain their thinking. The setting of pupils by ability in Years 5 and 6 enables teachers to plan challenging work, well suited to pupils' needs and this moves the learning on briskly.
31. The teaching of science is also good. A few very good lessons were observed at both key stages that promoted pupils' understanding to a high level. For example, in a lesson in the mixed Year 2/3 class about light and shadows, a good range of methods was used. Investigative work is used well to develop pupils' understanding in many areas of study.
32. Design and technology and art and design are both taught well. Pupils make good progress in planning, making and evaluating their own and other people's work and in developing drawing and painting skills. They are able to use their developing skills when working in the style of artists they have studied and produce high quality results.
33. The teaching of ICT has improved substantially since the last inspection. Teachers have taken advantage of training opportunities to upgrade their skills and now work confidently with pupils. The co-ordinator's considerable expertise has been used effectively to develop the subject throughout the school. As a result standards are now broadly average.
34. The teaching of performance skills, including singing, recorder and other instrumental work, is of good quality. The teacher's considerable experience and expertise enables her to develop pupils' skills well through a broad repertoire of songs and recorder pieces. Opportunities to learn other instruments, brass and strings, contribute to pupils' musical knowledge and skills. Teachers miss opportunities to develop pupil's composition skills, however.
35. The teaching of religious education is satisfactory overall but there are weaknesses, especially in Year 6, in pupils' factual knowledge. This results from too little time being allocated for pupils to write and draw to help them to remember what they have learned and to develop their understanding further.
36. In other subjects teaching is generally satisfactory and pupils' progress sound. Teachers use knowledgeable visitors and well-planned visits very well to help pupils broaden their understanding of history and geography.
37. At the Foundation Stage, teaching is satisfactory overall. There are aspects of good teaching in each area of learning, especially in literacy. The teacher and nursery assistant work well together and place a strong emphasis on teaching children to read and write. There is, however, too little emphasis on children's independent learning skills, creativity and physical development.
38. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs in the mainstream school is sound. Pupils make sound progress towards the targets set for them. There has been some recent lack of direction, while a replacement co-ordinator was being appointed, that has affected the quality of pupils' learning. Action is being taken by the new co-ordinator to ensure that pupils' individual education plans have more precise targets and that all teachers apply the same rigour in monitoring the progress pupils are making towards achieving their targets. Most records are conscientiously maintained and regularly updated to enable teachers to track progress.



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

39. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, with the exception of religious education and music. In these two subjects, there is an over-emphasis on some programmes of study at the expense of others. For example, in music there is much concentration on performance and rehearsal skills and much less development of pupils' composition skills. Planning for the Foundation Stage draws on the National Curriculum for Key Stage 1. It gives insufficient attention to the needs of the youngest children in the school and the recommendations of national guidance for children of this age.
40. Planning for different subjects draws successfully on recent national guidelines. Subject co-ordinators have adapted these schemes to fit in with existing plans and tailored them to the needs of the pupils of this school. In these ways the school provides interesting, stimulating and demanding programmes of study for pupils of both key stages, that effectively promote their intellectual, physical and personal development.
41. The school has successfully introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. However, in both key stages insufficient opportunities for the development of problem solving skills in real life situations reduce the full impact of the National Numeracy Strategy. Apart from this and the imbalance in music and religious education, teachers' planning ensures that pupils make continuous progress throughout both key stages. During the introduction of these strategies, and the increased emphasis now given to English and mathematics the school has managed to maintain a curriculum of good quality and depth in other subjects. The curriculum offers rich and varied learning opportunities, relevant to pupils' needs and interests .
42. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the school's broad curriculum. Provision is good. Pupils are given support, often through withdrawal groups, which meets their precise needs and helps them to learn.
43. There is good provision for activities that take place outside school. While there are clubs and groups for pupils of all ages, they mainly cater for those in Years 3-6. The opportunities vary throughout the school year according to season. They include a good range of sports clubs, an art and nature club and several instrumental groups. For pupils whose parents wish them to join, there is a before and after school club which is housed, but not run, by the school. Pupils who use this club benefit from study support after school. There is a good range of planned visits that support the curriculum. Included in the visits are residential courses in the Isle of Man and North Wales that are intended for pupils of Years 5 and 6. Pupils make further local visits to support their learning in science, art, history, geography and religious education.
44. Provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory and is dispersed throughout the curriculum as well as being delivered through assemblies and class discussions. Pupils have the opportunity to discuss many different issues that affect them. Before the 'local study week', pupils in Reception and Year 1 are visited by the local authority's safety officer so that they can be prepared on road safety matters for their work outside school. The science curriculum includes good levels of attention to personal safety in such topics as: pond dipping, rock pool studies, micro-organisms, the need for a balanced diet and exercise and care of teeth. Satisfactory provision for sex education and drugs abuse education is made for older pupils. They receive sex education as part of their science curriculum in Year 6 and the school nurse is involved in its teaching. At present, the governors are considering moving the focus for sex education to Year 5 in order to respond to the needs of those pupils who mature earlier.
45. Links with the community and other educational establishments are good. In addition to those agencies from the community who visit school, other individuals, such as a local lay reader, make good contributions to the pupils' learning and development. There is a good level of parental involvement in the school's curriculum and out of school activities such as school productions, educational visits, cookery and craft. The regular 'local study week' is planned to involve pupils of all year groups and many members of the community who visit school. There are good links with the pre-school setting that enable children entering school for the first time to feel secure and happy. They visit the school for some short sessions before attending full-

time. In English, there are worthwhile links with the secondary school when pupils attend a literacy summer school. The physical education department of the secondary school provides resources when they are needed. Staff have benefited from well-established contact through visits to a nearby 'beacon school'. They are able to see different teaching methods and approaches in a range of subjects.

46. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. This was the finding at the time of the previous inspection and the school maintains the quality and effectiveness of these aspects of its provision for pupils' personal development. The school's programme of collective worship meets statutory requirements.
47. The act of worship contributes substantially to pupils' spiritual development. The content is carefully planned and often promotes imagination, prayer and reflection. A local lay reader has regular, planned visits during which she leads the act of worship. In very engaging ways, she taught the pupils about Pentecost and Ascension Day and their significance to Christians. She then helped pupils and adults rely on these aspects of faith and wonder in their recent sadness at the death of a close friend of the school. When the pupils used singing as a means of prayer, it was markedly spiritual and sensitive. Another assembly used "theatre and props" to help the pupils understand how "God's magic" works, whereas human magicians use only tricks. In the weeks leading up to Christmas and Easter, assemblies involve a number of visitors, both lay and ordained, whose specific contribution is planned and co-ordinated. Teachers make good opportunities in lessons to introduce elements of spirituality. For example, in a whole-school singing lesson, the lyrics of a hymn referred to reverence and fear in the context of worshipping God. The teacher highlighted this phrase and after a brief discussion about the meaning of fear in this context, asked pupils to investigate it further. In a science lesson a teacher shared with her pupils her own amazement at the structure and systems of the human body.
48. Teaching frequently reinforces ideals of good behaviour, respect for one another and working together. In this and many other ways, the school's provisions for pupils' moral and social development are interconnected. In science lessons, pupils regularly work as pairs or in small groups. Teachers remind them of the benefits of working together. The school has developed the grounds into many different habitat types and when pupils from Key Stage 2 worked together in observing organisms in these locations, the teaching strongly reinforced the moral considerations of care and respect for living things. In discussions with pupils of Year 6, it was clear that they had been given good opportunities in lessons to consider the need for a moral code, for the sake of the individual as well as the school and wider community. Displays in classrooms frequently include rules to reinforce their moral development. The school choir is a very good example of pupils' teamwork, giving up their own time and effort to work towards a common goal. In a religious education lesson, the topic of bullying and what the response to it should be was well developed. Pupils' understanding of the social and moral implications was well developed. Pupils' throughout the school integrate well and help each other. Pupils with a high degree of specific needs and disabilities befriend and are befriended by others to the benefit of all.
49. There is very good provision for pupils to develop their understanding of the diversity of their own cultural heritage. The school regularly plans a 'local study week' involving pupils of all ages, members of the community and representatives of local organisations. They have studied the local practice of 'well dressing' believed to be of Celtic origin. Representatives of the 'Mighty Zulu Nation' visited the school and held workshops on the Zulu culture with pupils. They gave a public performance of music and dance as a conclusion to the workshops. Children in the Reception class have visited the Lowry Centre to study the artist's work. Pupils study a wide range of artists' styles of this country and as far afield as Australia and China. Their studies include the traditional Aboriginal style and the personal styles of Monet, Van Gogh, Picasso and Warhol. Pupils' work has involved them in making comparisons between life in their community and that in Mexico, China, and the Isle of Man. The planning for religious education shows that the multi-faith dimension of Britain is part of their learning and understanding.

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

50. The school has very good procedures for child protection and for ensuring the welfare of its pupils. Health and safety procedures are responsibly dealt with and governors' involvement is good.
51. Pupils with special educational needs are well cared for. Their work is regularly monitored to ensure that they are making progress towards the targets set for them. They receive regular reviews of their progress to help ensure that they are receiving work that is suited to their needs. The level of care given by educational care officers is of a very high standard. Very good support is provided by outside agencies to help meet individual pupils' precise needs and these include physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, a paediatrician, a school nurse, the educational psychologist, an audiometrician and behaviour support.
52. The school carefully assesses the attainment of pupils when they first come into the reception class. It carries out the tests and assessments required nationally in English, mathematics and science. In addition, it makes use of standardised tests and the non-statutory national assessments for Key Stage 2 pupils. The results of these are recorded on a clear and helpful tracking sheet. This enables teachers to check that individual pupils are making appropriate progress. Any problems are identified early and teachers are able to take appropriate steps to enable the pupils to improve.
53. The school has introduced a sensible and manageable system for assessing attainment in the foundation subjects. This information is helping teachers to write informative reports to parents. It is intended that it will also help teachers plan lessons that meet the needs of individual pupils more effectively, but it has not been in place long enough for it to directly influence the lesson content in all subjects. Where the information has been used, for example in ICT, it has identified areas of weakness and teachers have consciously planned lessons to overcome these. This has resulted in improved standards of attainment. The school carefully analyses statistical data and this has enabled them to identify overall weaknesses and implement strategies to overcome them. A good example of this can be seen in English, where strategies to improve the attainment of boys' writing are showing early signs of success.
54. Personal development is effectively monitored and supported by the class teachers and the administration officer keeps efficient pupil records. Staff know the pupils very well and deal constructively with personal problems as they arise. This confirms the comments made by parents at the pre-inspection meeting. There is a satisfactory personal, social and health education scheme which is well supported by outside visitors and which is in the process of being developed further.
55. The school has recently introduced a computerised attendance system. By efficient use of the new system, monitoring of attendance has improved and together with the rewards given for good attendance, procedures are now considered to be good.
56. There are well-established procedures for monitoring good behaviour and these are consistently implemented throughout the school. There is a good balance of sanctions and rewards, which help to create a positive atmosphere in the school. Some parents expressed concerns about bullying in the school, especially at playtimes. This was carefully observed during the inspection and no incidents were seen. The school has been paying particular attention to this problem and the measures it has taken appear to be working.
57. The care and welfare of its pupils are considered to be a strength of the school and this contributes considerably to the pupils' self esteem and well being in the school.

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

58. The school has very good links with parents, who are satisfied with the standards and achievements of the school. They are provided with good quality information on a regular basis to keep them informed of events in the school and their children's progress. Their involvement in the work of the school is good and the parent teacher association is particularly

supportive. Parents make a good contribution towards their children's learning at home and in the school.

59. The school's effective links with parents help considerably to consolidate and extend the children's learning. The parents feel that the school achieves good standards and expressed no real concerns at the pre-inspection parents' meeting about the way that the school is operating at present.
60. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are informed and involved at an early stage of identification. Communication with them is good throughout the time that pupils are on the special needs register. Links between home and school are good, and this helps to ensure that pupils receive good support.
61. The parents are very supportive of the school and a number help in the school either on a voluntary basis or as ancillary staff. There is a very active parent teacher association, which organises numerous fund-raising and social events each year. This money has been used to help buy the school's new sports field, to buy computers and to mark out the quiet play area.
62. The school sends out a variety of types of information to parents. There are many letters and regular newsletters to keep them in touch with what goes on in the school and future events. The school prospectus is a comprehensive and useful document and is supplemented with further information for parents of children who will be starting the school. The annual governors' report to parents is a good record of the governors' work for the year. Annual pupil reports were criticised in the last inspection report. They now include a separate section for reporting on each subject. Examples of how pupils can improve are identified.
63. The school operates an "Open Door" policy and a number of parents were seen to speak to teachers at the start and end of the day. The parents feel that they are able to contribute effectively to their children's education at the school and at home.

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

64. The headteacher provides a strong steer to the school's work. His enthusiasm for his role, his successful delegation of important tasks to staff and the time he spends getting to know individual members of staff and pupils motivate the school community. As a result, the deputy headteacher, particularly, and other key staff carry out management tasks effectively, developing teachers' competence, overseeing how well the curriculum is taught and contributing to the school's improvement and the raising of standards. Newly qualified and trainee teachers are supported well. In addition, a knowledgeable and well-organised governing body provides an effective level of support and advice for the headteacher and influences school development.
65. Issues relating to special educational needs are managed effectively by a newly appointed special educational needs co-ordinator. This experienced and committed teacher is having a positive effect on the quality of leadership in this important area. This has followed a period of absence by the previous co-ordinator, which left special educational needs temporarily without leadership, resulting in a loss of momentum for continuous development. Support staff are well trained, which helps to ensure that they are well informed about the nature and range of disability.
66. The school's aims are clear in its work. It has been successful in maintaining the breadth and quality of pupils' learning experiences in most subjects while raising standards in literacy and numeracy. The value it places on individuals within its community, in particular the inclusion in all areas of school life of the many pupils with a high degree of special educational need, is evident to all. Parents applaud this policy.
67. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities efficiently. Guided by the experience and accumulated wisdom of the chairman, it has developed an effective committee structure and in

this way keeps a careful watch on all areas of the school's work. Individual governors gather and share information about teaching and learning by observing lessons. A knowledgeable link governor provides the governing body with an insight into the application of the special educational needs policy and the progress of individuals. Governors are included in reviewing school improvement with the local education authority advisor and in discussions prior to decisions about school development planning. This ensures that they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and puts them in a strong position to influence future developments.

68. The school has a range of effective methods for checking how well it is doing. The headteacher and key staff observe teaching and learning, share information about what teachers do well and identify areas for improvement. There is now a sharper focus on pupils' learning and progress. This enables more productive action to be taken to bring about the necessary changes, including the continuous upgrading of teachers' skills, both for individuals and for the whole staff. Subject co-ordinators are taking an increasingly active part in this process. Early indications are that their contributions to improvement are having a positive effect on standards. The school recognises that this area requires further development, especially in terms of checking pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics and is committed to it.
69. The results of assessments and tests are analysed carefully. Useful information is gained that is used to make changes to the curriculum and adds to teachers' understanding of how teaching affects particular aspects of learning. The monitoring of teaching and learning and the analysis of results and tests are linked closely to the school's performance management programme for teachers. The annual review of how successful the current year's development plan has been adds to the picture of how well the school is doing. The rigorous contribution made by the local education authority supports the school's own review and evaluation procedures very well and has contributed substantially to improvements since the last inspection. Key issues identified at that time have been pursued with determination and improvements are good.
70. The school development planning is strongly informed by this effective review process and the identification of what works well and where further improvements need to be made. While some developments have been hampered by causes outside the school's influence, for example by problems with the quality of ICT training, by uncertainties affecting funding and by staff illness, most have been successful. The governors' contribution to development planning is effective. The relative merits of identified priorities are debated thoroughly, budget implications considered carefully and decisions well informed. The links between budget setting and development planning have been strengthened since the last inspection.
71. The school uses the resources available to it wisely. Decisions are informed by carefully considered priorities and money earmarked accordingly. Specific funds are used for the purpose intended and all decisions about spending are influenced by the need to provide best value. The governors are clear about their responsibilities and exercise their authority well. The vice-chair has a good overview of the budget, a strong grasp of procedures and systems and provides effective advice. There is an appropriate and well understood delegation of spending power to the headteacher and good information is provided by the finance committee to the governing body.
72. Financial administration and management are very efficient. There are appropriate divisions of responsibility and secure procedures for ordering, receiving and payment for goods and services purchased by the school. The school administration officer provides regular information for the headteacher and governors enabling expenditure to be efficiently monitored and budgets to be prepared. The last audit endorsed the school's efficiency and the minor areas of concern have all been promptly improved. Since the last inspection, the strategic planning has been more effectively linked to the budget to enable educational priorities to be met. Specific grants are accounted for separately, to the same high standards as the rest of the accounts. Competitive tendering is used, as appropriate, for the ordering of good and services.

73. The school's resources are adequate to enable the curriculum to be taught effectively in most areas. However, outdoor-play equipment for the Foundation Stage children is inadequate. As a result, there are too few opportunities for them to develop their physical skills, for example balancing and climbing, to have frequent recourse to energetic activity, to devise and organise their own games and to extend the work done in the classroom in a different setting.
74. The accommodation has been extended and improved since the last inspection, providing space for an additional class and a secure outdoor area for quiet activities. The grounds have been improved to open up a woodland and wild area. Indoor accommodation is, however, inadequate for the requirements of many of the pupils with statements of special educational needs. Adults who take responsibility for these pupils have worked tirelessly to overcome the difficulties of accommodation located in different parts of the school, the problems caused by stairs and a general shortage of space, so that the impact on pupils is minimised. There is considerable pressure on other areas. The school hall is only just big enough to accommodate the whole school and the twenty or so parents and visitors who attend the act of worship. It restricts the contributions that pupils can make. The teachers have no room of their own but share the space allocated to music tuition.

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

75. In order to raise standards further the governors, headteacher and staff should:-
- (1) Improve the development of the youngest children's independent learning, social, creative and physical skills (see paragraphs 18, 86, 93, 94 and 95) by:
- providing a curriculum that values and encourages experimentation, exploration, decision making, co-operative learning and purposeful play; (see paragraphs 39, 82, 83 and 84)
  - providing regular access to adventurous outdoor play equipment. (see paragraphs 82 and 94)

The following minor issues should be taken into account when governors formulate their action plans:

- the lack of balance within music, religious education and mathematics; (see paragraphs 39, 111, 147, 148, 156, 157)
- too little indication in marking of what pupils do well and how they could improve; (see paragraphs 28, 103, 132)
- insufficient opportunities and encouragement for pupils to take the initiative in their learning, to ask questions, make suggestions, follow their own line of enquiry and to take part in debate and discussion; (see paragraphs 28, 98, 111, 132, 147)
- inadequate accommodation for pupils with statements of special educational needs; for staff; and equipment for outdoor play. (see paragraphs 82, 73, 74, 81)

## **ENHANCED RESOURCE PROVISION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS.**

76. Enhanced Resource Status (ERS) funding is used very well to support pupils with statements of special educational need, who take a full part in the life of the school. The teaching is good and support staff are very effective. This ensures that pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Provision for these pupils is a strength of the school.
77. Despite the wide range and severity of disability of pupils who are funded through ERS, their diverse needs are successfully met. This is because:
  - the good teaching and very good support of pupils in lessons help to ensure that work is at the right level for them, and that pupils are interested and fully involved in their learning;
  - there is especially good teamwork, with all adults working closely together to meet pupils' needs;
  - pupils' individual education plans are conscientiously completed, include precise targets and indicate clearly how targets will be achieved.
78. Most pupils are enthusiastic towards their lessons, and have formed very good relationships with staff and fellow pupils. Almost all pupils respond well to praise, which helps to improve their often low self-esteem on entry. They are fully involved in school life. Along with all other pupils, their achievements are celebrated, and their contributions valued. Pupils have full access to the school's broad curriculum.
79. Assessment arrangements ensure that the progress of pupils funded through ERS is carefully and regularly monitored. Information obtained from the assessment of pupils' work enables teachers to build effectively on previous learning to help them to make the best possible progress.
80. There is good communication with parents and representatives of outside agencies. All work successfully together for the pupils' benefit.
81. Teachers make the best possible use of the split accommodation. However, both rooms are too small for all pupils to be taught together. One of the two rooms can only be entered using a steep and narrow flight of stairs, making it unsuitable for wheelchair access. The accommodation is therefore unsatisfactory for the wide range of pupils' needs.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	66
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	18	48	32	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	264
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	29

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	21
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	52

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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



### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	20	21	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	18	18
	Girls	21	21	21
	Total	40	39	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (90)	95 (87)	95 (93)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	19
	Girls	21	21	21
	Total	39	39	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (87)	95 (97)	98 (87)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	23	23	46

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	15	17
	Girls	12	12	16
	Total	25	27	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	54 (71)	59 (74)	73 (76)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	16	19
	Girls	12	12	16
	Total	28	28	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	61 (74)	61 (76)	76 (76)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

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

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

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	5	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21:1
Average class size	26.4

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

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	350

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	640420
Total expenditure	657401
Expenditure per pupil	2417
Balance brought forward from previous year	14626
Balance carried forward to next year	-2355

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	264
Number of questionnaires returned	60

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	42	5	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	30	7	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	42	12	3	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	52	8	0	3
The teaching is good.	52	45	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	45	10	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	37	8	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	37	7	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	32	50	13	2	3
The school is well led and managed.	52	35	8	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	45	10	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	48	12	2	5

### Other issues raised by parents

Many parents felt that the inclusion of the pupils with statements of special educational needs enriched the school and promoted the personal and social development of all the pupils. They spoke of the school's dedication to these pupils. Parents also appreciate the opportunities that all pupils have to take part in school music and drama productions performed to a high standard.

## **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. There are two entries for children into the reception class, in September and January during the term in which they will be five. They follow an interesting and varied programme of work based on the subjects of the National Curriculum, which includes all the areas of learning for this age group. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided for children at this Foundation Stage are satisfactory overall. The curriculum is well structured and organised, with an emphasis on the basic skills of reading, writing and number. However, there are limited opportunities for children to learn independence, to show imagination and creativity and use their initiative by choosing their own activities. There is a lack of an appropriate outdoor area where children can experience a range of adventurous climbing and balancing equipment and engage in co-operative play.
83. The initial assessments carried out by teachers on entry to the school show a broadly average spread of attainment in language, mathematical and personal development. At the age of four children have particular strengths in reading and speaking and listening. The teacher uses these assessments to group children of broadly similar levels of attainment. Overall, children make satisfactory progress and by the time they are at the end of the reception class, they have reached the expected standards in all of the areas of learning except creative and physical development, where some early learning goals are not achieved. Children make good progress in literacy, especially in developing reading skills and a significant proportion of pupils exceed the expectations of the age group. Children do not use or apply their developing mathematical and scientific skills sufficiently to relevant practical situations to help them to solve everyday problems. As a result their independent learning skills are less well developed.
84. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The teacher and nursery assistant have high expectations of children's achievements and behaviour and plan work carefully. There are aspects of good teaching in all areas, particularly in language and literacy. Throughout, however, teaching provides too few opportunities for children to learn through their interactions with one another and their surroundings through exploring and experimenting and by making independent choices.

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

85. Most children make satisfactory progress in their personal and social development. They form constructive relationships with adults and learn to behave well. The teacher has established good links with pre-school groups and children and their parents are prepared well for their entry into school. Children feel secure and settle well in the well-established, orderly routines of the reception class. They know what is expected of them and learn to respond well to the clear directions and instructions from adults. Children maintain concentration well and sit quietly during their reading and writing activities. They are willing to take turns, queuing patiently for their turn to roll a ball at skittles, for example and know they must put up their hands before they speak in a group. Adults encourage children to tidy up after activities and put resources away in the right place which they do. With help, they are learning to take responsibility for themselves and their belongings. Many still need guidance when changing for physical activity and wait for assistance.
86. Teaching is satisfactory. Adults constantly affirm and praise positive behaviour and correct responses to questions and as a result, children are eager to please. They are very well behaved and polite in response to requests and directions. There are, however, too few opportunities for children to work purposefully together and make decisions about their work. As a result, children do not always share or co-operate well and tend to work alone even when they are in a group setting, because their interactions through play activities are limited and often over-directed by adults.

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

87. Children's speaking and listening skills are above the levels usually found by the end of the reception year. Children listen attentively, with interest, to clear instructions and well-chosen stories because teachers and adults provide good role models and have high expectations. Teachers encourage children to send postcards to school from their holidays and this provides very good opportunities for speaking and listening. The youngest need much encouragement to contribute and respond to questions with single words or phrases. They make satisfactory progress and by the time they reach the end of the reception year many children are keen to talk about their own experiences. They express themselves well, communicating meaning in extended, well-constructed sentences. The most able are confident and articulate when talking to adults and one another. Direct teaching includes all children but sometimes the questions can be rather leading, discouraging spontaneous contributions. The teacher does not always use children's answers to advantage when they differ from what she expects. This leads to rather tentative responses to questions about new learning. Children do not often initiate conversations or negotiate plans and activities with others.
88. Children enjoy listening to and joining in well-told stories from shared texts and concentrate well. Some are already early readers, recognising many familiar words in their group reading books. They take delight in recognising sounds in sentences 'spoken' by puppets such as 'Gerald Giraffe' and 'Tilly Toucan'. The teacher uses these resources well to stimulate interest and enjoyment. Children develop good pencil control through frequent practice in copying from very good models provided by the teacher. Almost all of the children write their names clearly and copy from the teacher's writing accurately with well-formed letters and accurate use of capital and small letters. A significant number exceed expectations, using their knowledge of sounds to use wordbooks effectively to write sentences and lists. They take great pride in their writing and illustrate their stories and narratives with lively, imaginative drawings. Teaching is good. The systematic teaching of phonic skills and letter formation is most effective in providing a firm foundation in the basic skills of reading and writing and as a result children make good progress.

### **Mathematical development**

89. By the end of the reception class most children recognise numbers up to ten, matching groups of objects correctly to symbols and accurately putting numbers in order. They make good progress in counting, sequencing and ordering numbers, reaching standards beyond those expected of the age group. By putting spots on ladybirds, the youngest children are beginning to develop an understanding of the principles of addition and subtraction but they are unsure how to relate this to objects to solve practical problems. Some children show a good grasp of number facts, doubling numbers with confidence and accuracy and knowing that they count on two on a number line to find even numbers up to twenty. In response to lively and encouraging questioning from the teacher, they enjoy drawing on the whiteboard the leaps needed to jump from three to seven, for example. Children record their findings to a high standard in their workbooks.
90. Teaching is satisfactory. The methods used provide interesting ways of demonstrating mathematical ideas, in a well-organised structured programme of number activities and involves all children effectively by using a colourful and stimulating range of resources. Adults reinforce mathematical language to a good extent, using vocabulary such as 'between', 'odd' and 'even'. However, opportunities for children to relate their learning to relevant practical activities are not sufficiently regular or frequent.

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

91. Children experience an interesting variety of activities, gaining a good knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They achieve the expected learning goals and are well prepared for the subjects of the National Curriculum. By the end of the reception year children talk about themselves, their families and where they live, many knowing when their birthdays are and their addresses. They show good levels of general knowledge when they compare the characteristics of London and Wales, expressing opinions about the town and countryside. Children have suitable opportunities to work on computers and to direct a programmable toy along a chosen pathway, to develop skills in ICT. They find out about their

environment through a wide range of visits to places of interest, such as museums, parks, farms and art galleries, including the local shops, the canal and the Lowry Centre. The most able children talk knowledgeably about the artist's style and where he lived. Following a visit to a playground, children design and construct their own models of playground equipment, choosing from a selection of construction materials effectively. They achieve good standards of work. Generally, however, children are not sufficiently confident in investigating, finding things out for themselves, or in asking questions. They have difficulty in using the selection of toys purposefully to find out how things move, for example.

92. Teaching is satisfactory. There is a very clear purpose for the carefully planned activities and the teacher keeps reminding children of the intended outcome. She developed vocabulary well during an examination of transport pictures, for example. However, when the teacher leaves the group, children are not sufficiently interested to continue without supervision. Questioning is not open-ended enough to fully extend pupils' skills in problem solving.

### **Physical development**

93. Children barely reach the expectations of the age group in physical development because they lack regular opportunities to use adventurous play equipment. Most achieve the expected learning goals in the development of dexterity with their hands. By the time they reach the end of the reception class, children handle pencils and crayons with suitable levels of control. During construction activities, they manipulate scissors and other small tools and equipment with safety and considerable precision. In weekly sessions in the hall, there are too few opportunities for prolonged vigorous exercise, although they run, jump, hop and skip for short periods of time. Their agility and co-ordination are not as well developed as among many children of their age. They use their hands and feet to control a ball and stop and start with increasing levels of confidence and skill. Children benefit from regular opportunities to go swimming but have limited opportunities to develop climbing and balancing skills.
94. Teaching is satisfactory, overall. It ensures that children have some opportunities to practise their hand-eye co-ordination by using small equipment and throwing and catching bean bags and quoits. Teaching encourages children to improve their skills by example and demonstration but gives children too few opportunities to experiment and use their physical skills in a creative way. Children in reception play in the playground alongside older pupils but lack an appropriate area to engage in suitably robust physical activity in safety. There is a shortage of equipment such as wheeled toys, climbing frames, ladders and nets to offer appropriate challenges and to encourage imaginative ways of moving and travelling along and around equipment.

### **Creative development**

95. Children do not fully meet the expected early learning goals in creative development by the time they reach the end of reception. They experience a wide range of materials and media and use colour, texture, form and shape to create pictures and models individually and as a group. Painting activities are not readily accessible for children to use independently and most of the activities are carried out under close adult supervision and guidance with a finished outcome in mind. For example, children produce traditional paintings of roses and leaves, of a high standard, inspired by a visit to the canal boats. However, the finished results are almost identical to one another and children have little chance to interpret their observations creatively. They contribute to impressive school displays by printing and painting backgrounds and shapes. Much of the work seen is of a high standard of finish. Children enjoy limited opportunities for role-play with puppets and in the home corner, where, for example, during the inspection they bought tickets to board a train. Planning shows opportunities for responding to music through dance and all children participate in an annual production incorporating music and drama. Teaching is barely satisfactory in this aspect, because although it provides a good variety of experiences and children develop good technical skills, it fails to provide sufficient opportunities for children to communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings through art, music and role-play. There is a strong element of over-direction by adults that limits the development of imagination, creativity and free expression.

## ENGLISH

96. Results of National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000 show that standards are above the national average and above the average of other similar schools. Results in reading and writing for seven-year-old pupils are well above the national average and well above other similar schools. At the end of Year 2, the performance of girls is better than that of boys with little difference evident at the end of Year 6. Inspection evidence confirms these results, which are a marked improvement since the last inspection, four years ago. Pupils' achievements are good. The school set appropriate targets for its Key Stage 2 results in 2000 and these were exceeded in relation to the expected levels. The successful implementation of the literacy strategy and an improvement in teachers' knowledge through the training provided have contributed to the rise in standards. There is a higher percentage of pupils with special education needs in Years 3-6 who have entered the school at different times and this contributes to the variation in standards.
97. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in terms of their prior attainment. They make good progress because of the good levels of support they receive both within lessons and in sessions where they receive tuition in smaller groups. They are particularly well-integrated into lessons, with teachers making sure they are involved. They made good progress in a Year 4 literacy lesson, for example, where the teacher encouraged pupils to consider the meanings of words and a less able pupil explained accurately and succinctly that the word 'secure' means 'safe and tight'.
98. Speaking and listening skills are above average overall. By the end of Year 6, the majority of pupils show by their relevant comments and questions that they have listened attentively, with close interest and understanding to well-told stories, instructions and information. There is a high standard of listening throughout the school because teachers have consistently high expectations and insist on full attention. The youngest pupils know what is expected of them and respond appropriately to teachers' clear directions. They speak clearly when explaining ideas or responding to questions with a suitable command of spoken English. Pupils have suitable opportunities to speak in a variety of situations and the majority of pupils are confident speakers using well-constructed sentences. They show a good range of vocabulary when they talk about the books they have read. The most able pupils are most articulate, develop their ideas thoughtfully and, when given the opportunity to speak at length, they make good progress. Occasionally in Year 6, however, pupils are not always encouraged to respond fully to questions and as a result they lack confidence or enthusiasm. Pupils have good opportunities for speaking in front of an audience when they participate in class assemblies and whole-school productions. Pupils in Year 1 showed they were beginning to have an appropriate sense of audience when they spoke clearly and loudly in an assembly about friendship.
99. Reading is of a high standard throughout the school. By the end of Year 6, pupils are independent readers, enjoying a wide range of stories and poems, including poetry and some short novels. They tackle difficult vocabulary with ease, reading words such as "manoeuvre" and explaining the meaning of phrases such as "intellectual superiority". The majority of pupils talk about their favourite authors, giving considered reasons for their choices. They read confidently, accurately and fluently, with good levels of understanding beyond the literal. Many read aloud with sensitivity and expression, taking good account of punctuation. Boys in a Year 6 class enjoy reading their favourite poems aloud. Many girls are avid readers, the most able choosing a wide range of authors and readily discussing the comparative styles of writing. They know how to use the library's simple colour coding system with confidence and familiarity when they look for information books.
100. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve well, building on their already secure knowledge of sounds and letter blends. They recognise an above average number of words by sight and try hard to decipher new words, using their knowledge of sounds to good effect. The majority rely on a finger – or thumb - as a guide and this inhibits fluency to some extent. Pupils have a good understanding of the structure of books and discuss, with interest, their preferences for

information books or stories. They are able to re-tell, with good levels of recall, stories they have read and talk about character and plot. Readers show good levels of understanding when they laugh aloud at the humour in books such as 'The Plasticine Child', as the story unfolds. Pupils of average ability confidently adopt different voices for different characters to add interest to their reading. Very good teaching in both year groups stimulates imagination well and seeks to improve standards through good questioning and high expectations. As a result pupils have very positive attitudes towards reading. They enjoy reading aloud confidently and accurately in one class as a result of good use of praise and very good relationships.

101. The standard of writing is just above average by the end of Year 6 and has improved since the last inspection. According to staff, there is a greater sense of purpose and organisation to writing throughout the school, with the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. A well-organised programme of work provides pupils with a wide range of opportunities for writing. Pupils re-tell stories, write imaginative narratives, letters, diaries, book reviews, poetry and accounts of their own experiences. There is a good balance between formal, structured activities and opportunities for independent writing. Their writing has a good structure and incorporates learned techniques effectively. Following the examination of poem by Ted Hughes, for example, pupils work together in pairs to draft a piece of imaginative writing, incorporating techniques to improve it. The most able pupils reach high standards, showing a growing awareness of the impact of their writing on an audience. Pupils' writing is lively, interesting and most of it is accurately punctuated. It shows a sound knowledge of spelling patterns through a systematic programme including homework. Pupils express ideas fluently and use paragraphs and a variety of story beginnings. A minority of pupils, however, sometimes use tenses inaccurately, such as 'they drove on'. Handwriting is satisfactory, overall. It is mostly neat, legible and joined, with letters accurately formed. Pupils take a pride in the presentation of their work, meeting teachers' high expectations of neatness.
102. Pupils reach well above average standards in Years 1 and 2 because of very good teaching and a well-organised programme of work. The majority of pupils write in well-structured sentences when they answer questions. They write for genuine purposes, including lists and messages and make very good progress in writing increasingly lengthy accounts of their own experiences. Teachers use the literacy strategy effectively and have established a coherent, systematic approach to the teaching of spelling and grammatical skills to provide a firm foundation for pupils' work at Key Stage 2.
103. The quality of teaching is good, overall. It is particularly good for reading, building well on the secure foundations provided for reading and writing in the reception class. Planning is good and teachers have very clear learning objectives for lessons, which they usefully share with pupils. They set individual targets for pupils in order to improve their work and match work effectively to pupils' levels of ability. Teachers manage pupils well. They give very clear instructions, so pupils know exactly what is expected of them and work hard to please. Not all teachers make sufficient use of effective marking to improve standards of pupils' work or to correct habitual mistakes. In a Year 6 class the work of the more able pupils was well marked with positive, helpful comments and a sense of humour. However, negative and sometimes discouraging comments do little to improve the work of the less able pupils in the same class.
104. Reading is well taught throughout the school. Teachers hear pupils read frequently, both in groups during the literacy hour and as individuals. They have a good understanding of pupils' capabilities and as a result, books are usually well matched to pupils' levels of understanding, though not always their interest. Older boys mainly prefer to read books that give information and have little enthusiasm for the books usually chosen by their teachers. Teachers successfully engage pupils' interest in books and language by lively and enthusiastic presentations of well-chosen texts in the literacy hour. As a result, pupils are keen to choose books, enjoy language and eagerly read for pleasure and information. Pupils are encouraged to read at home and keep reading diaries. These contain much positive praise and show the frequency of reading but do little to help pupils improve their skills. Planned library periods are used for pupils to exchange their books but opportunities are missed to develop pupils' research skills further. Books in the library are rather old and worn and do little to inspire or motivate the reluctant reader. Good use is made of a quiet reading time.



105. The teaching of writing is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and a well-planned structured approach and this has contributed to higher standards. The school has raised teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve particularly in Years 1 and 2. In Year 2, the teacher uses good levels of vocabulary and asks challenging questions to encourage pupils to think and work hard. Classrooms are very well organised and good use is made of resources and displays to reinforce learning of vocabulary and sounds. Teachers do not always use good standards of handwriting and as a result, the quality of handwriting varies with inconsistent use of joining.
106. ICT is used increasingly to promote pupils' communication skills, for example through redrafting their work. There are good examples of pupils reading and producing written work of a high standard in history and writing about their experiments in science. Opportunities are missed in geography and religious education to put pupils' writing skills into practice.
107. The co-ordinator leads the subject well. The monitoring of teaching and the analysis of test results have identified areas for improvement and developed teachers' skills. The school is taking part in a county strategy specially designed to motivate boys to read and to tackle underachievement in writing. This is beginning to increase pupils' progress, with boys showing more interest in reading and writing. There are now good procedures for checking how pupils are doing, including a recently introduced 'Gold Book' containing two pieces of writing completed each term. Teachers use these to determine the progress each pupil is making. The curriculum for English is good. Visits, visitors and a book week play an important part.

## **MATHEMATICS**

108. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in mathematics are above national levels by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and that pupils' achievements are good. The findings mirror the results of the most recent National Curriculum tests, which also show that the school is performing well when compared with other similar schools. This represents a clear improvement since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be similar to those found nationally. National test results at the end of Year 2 provide evidence of gradual improvement in the school's results since 1998. However, the trend over time is more variable in the Year 6 tests because of the impact of pupils with special educational needs who took the tests.
109. Most pupils make good gains in learning as they move through the school in most areas of the subject. This is because:
- most work is carefully matched to pupils' different needs, especially for those in Years 5 and 6, who are grouped by ability to assist learning;
  - planning is thorough and followed carefully to ensure that work builds on previous learning;
  - there is significant emphasis on the development of numeracy skills;
  - most teachers provide increasing opportunities for pupils to explain their mathematical thinking to help develop their reasoning and build confidence;
  - regular monitoring of teaching and learning and the analysis of the school's results in the national tests are helping to identify and overcome weaknesses;
  - there is general adherence to the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy, which is helping to raise standards.
110. Pupils achieve well in their development of understanding of number. By the end of Year 2, they recognise odd and even numbers, solve number problems using mental calculation and sequence numbers to 100 in different ways, showing understanding of the place value of digits. More able pupils begin to understand place value of numbers to 1000, which is beyond national requirements for pupils of this age. By the end of Year 6, pupils solve number problems using a variety of mental computations, show recognition of proportions by using fractions to describe them. They can work out the multiples and factors of numbers. More able pupils multiply correctly three-digit by two-digit numbers and use cancelling to reduce a fraction to its simplest form. These skills are beyond what is expected of pupils in Year 6.
111. However, pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to use and apply mathematics in real-life situations or to undertake investigations. There is little evidence of pupils working effectively

together in this way to develop initiative, responsibility and independence and to strengthen their understanding. The processing and interpretation of mathematical data, such as through the use of computers is not as well represented as other areas of the subject and standards are not as high. Links with ICT are weak.

112. Teaching is good, overall. Examples of very good teaching were seen in Years 5 and 6. Where teaching is good or better, teachers' high expectations result in challenging work, and pupils put more effort into getting it right. Not all teachers have high enough expectations of how neatly pupils' work is recorded, however, and their recording is unacceptably varied. Purposeful questioning develops clear understanding of new knowledge. A good choice and use of resources ensures that learning is effective. Helpful marking identifies areas for improvement. High levels of enthusiasm from teachers, very good relationships and a brisk pace help to keep pupils motivated and involved. However, some weaker features of teaching were seen that slow progress. Occasionally:
- tasks are too easy for pupils and there is unnecessary practice of clearly understood number work;
  - the mental starter to lessons is sometimes too long and not brisk enough to help improve pupils' speed of mental recall;
  - the final plenary sometimes provides too little opportunity for pupils to share the problems they have encountered during the lesson.
113. The subject is soundly led, and there are plans for its further development. There is a variety of arrangements to help find out what pupils know and understand. Teachers are increasingly using their assessments from lessons to help them plan following work that is matched to pupils' needs. The senior co-ordinator has observed all teachers teaching mathematics, and has presented his findings to staff to help improve the quality of teaching and learning. The school has made sound improvement since the last inspection in successfully working to raise standards.

## **SCIENCE**

114. Inspection findings indicate that standards are above average at the end of both key stages. This is better than indicated by test and teacher assessments for eleven and seven-year-olds in 2000 and better than standards at the time of the last inspection. It has been brought about by the school's action in providing more demanding work. This was in response to its analysis of test results, which indicated that higher-attaining pupils could do better.
115. Pupils in Year 6 have a good knowledge of the major organs of the body and the systems of which they are a part. They understand the role of the heart and lungs in the respiration system. They then investigate the effects of exercise on that system. They use their knowledge of aspects of the human body to devise their own investigations. Their work embodies many of the important skills of scientific enquiry such as ensuring that the investigation will be capable of answering the initial question and that their planning will ensure a fair test. They are responsible for the selection of resources appropriate for their investigation. Pupils in Year 2 have investigated the effects on teeth of a range of drinks. They used eggshells to simulate the natural materials found in teeth and exposed them to drinks with different contents. Their investigation included important scientific considerations and was well planned and recorded.
116. Pupils make good progress throughout both key stages. It is particularly good when they build upon their previous learning and existing knowledge. This was clearly seen in Year 6, where pupils' knowledge of the human body helped them produce valid questions to answer through scientific enquiry. In this, their scientific skills were well developed. The co-ordinator and staff have adopted and adapted national guidelines. This helps the staff to ensure that work in any one year builds on that of the previous year. This is particularly well demonstrated when, as seen during the inspection, pupils' skills of enquiry and investigation are almost always included as a key element in the topic that they are studying. Pupils in Year 2 used these skills when they tested a range of paper-based materials for absorbency and then grouped them according to their efficiency. They recorded their observations in tables.

117. The quality of teaching in both key stages is never less than satisfactory. In the great majority of lessons seen, in both key stages, it was good and occasionally very good. One constant factor in the overall quality of teaching is the positive relationships teachers have with the pupils. Teachers regularly use the introductory time effectively, ensuring that pupils are aware of what they are to do and how it relates to what they have done previously. Following the introductory phase of lessons, teachers show trust in their pupils to work alone or in a group and employ a 'light-touch' method of control. This establishes a productive working atmosphere and contributes to pupils' independence. It has a positive effect on behaviour, which is good. Because of the organisation of pupils and opportunities to work with some independence, the pupils respond with enthusiasm and attention to their work.
118. Recently, and in response to the 2000 assessment results, the staff have received in-service training in using assessment to identify ways of providing work that is a better match for pupils of higher ability. Recent developments have been successful and have led to improvements in pupils' achievements.
119. Pupils of both key stages benefit from visits to help them in their learning about habitats, food chains, electricity, pond-life and seashore rock-pools. The grounds of the school have recently been developed and now provide a good range of varying environments in which pupils can study, at first hand, types of habitat and the organisms that live in them. Science makes a good contribution to pupils' health education. Lessons promote good awareness of the need to take care when carrying out particular investigations. Pupils take responsibility for watering and maintaining the school's vegetable garden. Co-operative elements of their work make good contributions to their social development. The co-ordinator's background in environmental science has enabled her to ensure that the curriculum includes a valuable contribution to the pupils' moral development.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

120. Standards achieved by pupils in art and design are higher than those of pupils of the same age nationally. Some of the work produced in Years 3-6 is of a particularly high standard - for example, the work inspired by Charles Keeping and work on line and tone in the local environment.
121. By the age of seven, pupils have acquired an appropriate range of skills and techniques, which they use competently. For example, they are able to mix paint together to produce the colour they need. They can use a range of printing techniques and they know how to weave and stitch for decoration. They have looked at the work of famous artists, for example Monet, and are able to reproduce what they see quite accurately using pastels. They know how to use the computer programme 'Dazzle' to produce pictures. In Year 1, they have produced pictures of butterflies very competently using the computer. Pupils in Year 2 have produced some effective collages, selecting the materials carefully so that they represent the materials used to build the houses.
122. By the age of eleven, pupils have very well developed practical skills, which they use to good effect. They have extended the range of artists whose work they have studied, for example Lowry, Mondrian, Van Gogh, Charles Keeping and Clarice Cliff. They have sufficient skill and understanding to enable them to produce work in the style of these artists, rather than copying it, and they do so very well. The clay pots in the distinctive style of Clarice Cliff are very effective. They show that pupils have been helped to carefully analyse her work and have been expected to pay close attention to detail when reproducing it. Pupils have also developed a good awareness of the work of artists from other cultures. Pupils in Year 4 understand what influences Aboriginal and Chinese artists and have a good understanding of the techniques they use. Consequently, the quality of their painting and ink designs in these styles is good. Pupils acquire an increasing range of skills and become competent in the use of a widening range of materials. They produce good quality work on a large and small scale; for example they have produced a large sequence of collages depicting the story of Jason and the Golden Fleece and have used 'modroc' to make three-dimensional models. A visit to the

Yorkshire Sculpture Park has led to some interesting clay work in Year 3 and has broadened the pupils' experience of the work of artists.

123. The quality of teaching in art is good, overall, and some very good teaching was observed during the inspection. Teachers clearly value the pupils' work in art and this gives them confidence. They put a lot of time and thought into ensuring that the quality of display in the school is high. As a result, pupils cannot fail to be stimulated by some of the stunning work on display. Teachers ensure that they provide opportunities for pupils to visit places of artistic interest and involve artists and craftspeople in the work of the school whenever possible. They organise competitions to stimulate pupils' interest and to improve the environment. For example, the school is about to produce its first 'well-dressing' and a pupil in Year 6 won the prize for the best design. Pupils will all have the chance to become involved in this traditional craft, which is such an important part of local culture. Another competition was held when the school decided to have a weather vane made to celebrate the new millennium. The winner had the pleasure of seeing his design produced by a local blacksmith and given a prominent position on the school's roof. Teachers generally plan interesting activities and whenever possible give them additional relevance by linking them to ongoing work in other subjects. They provide good quality demonstrations and clear explanations of new skills and this enables pupils to acquire them quickly. For example, during the inspection pupils in Year 6 were taught how to show movement in their sketches and then how to use this ability to produce three-dimensional tin foil sculptures, which would enable them to make clay sculptures in the next lesson. The quality of their foil sculptures was very high and the tremendous pleasure and satisfaction the pupils got out of doing it well left them eager for the next lesson and keen to succeed. Art also makes a considerable contribution to the spiritual and cultural development of the pupils through carefully chosen activities and the high quality of some of the work. Pupils generally become more competent as they move through the key stage. However, not all teachers have provided sufficient activities that allow pupils to work independently and show initiative in the choice of materials, designs and skills.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

124. Pupils at both key stages achieve standards above those of pupils of the same age nationally. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when attainment was in line with the national expectation.
125. By the age of seven, pupils are able to produce simple, labelled drawings to show what they would like to make and they can say how they have made it. They are able to work with an appropriate range of materials, such as food, fabric, wood, clay, natural and junk materials. They can work safely with scissors and glue and they learn to use a range of stitches and methods of joining things together. They show imagination when designing their pizzas and know how to prepare food hygienically. They are able to make sensible choices about the materials they want to use from the range provided. For example, pupils in Year 1 have carefully chosen materials that allow them to produce the desired sounds in the musical instruments they have made. Pupils test what they have made and say whether it is successful or not. Some are able to suggest how they could make it better. Pupils in Year 2 have considered the person who will use the product when designing their glove puppets. This has involved their making paper patterns in order to ensure they will fit.
126. By the age of eleven, pupils have a good range of very well developed practical skills. This is evident in the high quality of the fairground rides and slippers produced by pupils in Year 6. They show good attention to detail and pupils have the ability to use tools carefully and precisely. They are able to produce items on a large and a small scale. For example, pupils in Year 3 understand how to use pneumatics to create movement and have worked very well together to design and make some very large and effective mythical monsters. They are able to provide clear written instructions on how to make their monster and provide short but sensible evaluations of the finished product. In Year 5, pupils competently use cams and followers in order to make their moving toys. As they move through the key stage, pupils realise the importance of producing several possible designs before deciding which one is best. They include more detailed labels to show the materials, colours and methods that will

be used to make their product. However, the most able pupils do not produce their designs with sufficient care and precision. They need to use rulers and include measurements if they are to achieve the higher standards they are capable of. Pupils at both key stages make good progress. The curriculum follows national guidelines and ensures that pupils systematically build upon previous work. As a result, they quickly acquire an appropriate range of skills.

127. Teaching at both key stages is good. Teachers have a secure understanding of the subject, which enables them to plan activities that will interest the pupils and also develop their skills and knowledge. Teachers place appropriate emphasis on the importance of making, without forgetting the place of designing and evaluating. Consequently, pupils have a very good understanding of the design process. Teachers plan lessons to develop particular skills. For example, pupils in Year 5 were given the opportunity to taste a wide variety of breads in order to develop their evaluation skills. They were introduced to a good range of appropriate vocabulary before they started and used it well to write meaningful comments about each type of bread. Teachers provide competent demonstrations of new skills and explain them clearly so that pupils are able to acquire them quickly. Whenever possible, teachers link the work to that in other subjects and this makes it more meaningful for the pupils. Teachers' organisation is good and they manage the pupils very well. Education care officers and parent helpers are carefully briefed and are able to make a very valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers ensure that the activities planned are adapted appropriately to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are able to take a full part in the lessons. There is some good use of ICT in, for example designing packaging in Year 3 and writing evaluations in Year 6, but at the moment it is limited and the co-ordinator has identified this as an aspect of the subject requiring further development.
128. Since the last inspection, the school has improved the standards achieved and the curriculum and it has recently introduced a sensible system for assessing pupils' attainment.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

129. By the ages of seven and eleven, pupils achieve standards similar to those found in most schools. However, in some aspects of their work - for example, in their study of deserts in Year 5 - pupils' attainment is better than it is nationally. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
130. By the age of seven, pupils have a secure knowledge of the local area. They understand that not all places are the same. Pupils in Year 1 recognise differences between Whaley Bridge and the 'Island of Struay' in the Katie Morag books. This skill is developed in Year 2 when pupils identify a good range of similarities and differences between their own town and Blackpool. They can suggest advantages and disadvantages of living in the town and the country and are able to say where they would prefer to live. Higher-attaining pupils are able to justify their decision with simple reasons. Pupils know what maps are and can draw a simple plan of their route to school. They are developing an awareness of the impact of humans on the environment, for example in terms of litter and traffic problems in the immediate locality. They are developing an appropriate geographical vocabulary.
131. By the age of eleven, pupils have a secure understanding of all the topics contained in the National Curriculum. They are particularly knowledgeable about the physical features of deserts and rivers. Their understanding of distant places has improved considerably since the last inspection. This is due to the provision of better resources, improved knowledge among teachers and effective use of the Internet for research. Pupils have the opportunity to study China and Mexico. Pupils become confident in their use of maps and atlases and can use them for a range of purposes. They are much more aware of environmental issues and are able to present reasoned arguments taking different viewpoints. They have lots of opportunities to carry out fieldwork, using the information gained from it to support their studies.
132. Teaching is satisfactory, overall, with some good features and, as a result, pupils make sound progress at both key stages. All teachers are well organised and have a secure understanding

of the subject. As a result, lessons run smoothly and teachers are able to provide clear explanations, which pupils can understand. Teachers plan interesting activities and link them to ongoing work in other subjects whenever possible. For example, Year 4 pupils developed an understanding of environmental changes over time, through the study of a series of pictures in an art book. A strong emphasis is placed on fieldwork and good opportunities are provided for pupils to take part in this. For example, visits are made to the local area, Blackpool and the Isle of Man. This brings the subject to life for the pupils and ensures that they are interested and motivated to do well. Teachers are quick to praise good work and consequently pupils try hard. However, the marking of work is rarely informative and does not enable pupils to see how they might improve. Teachers are now increasingly making use of ICT in their lessons and pupils are keen to use it. They confidently access the Internet to obtain the information they need. However, there are currently too few opportunities for pupils to work independently and to produce extended writing. Too much work involves short answer questions or filling in missing words on worksheets. Consequently, opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills are missed. The co-ordinator has already recognised this problem. She has ensured that the 'Natural Disasters' unit of work, about to be covered by pupils in Year 6, requires them to work in groups, to search for information they need and to make their own decisions about how best to present their findings.

133. The co-ordination of the subject is effective and there is a sensible action plan in place, which recognises how the subject needs to be developed. The curriculum has been updated to take account of recent national guidance and consequently lessons are planned well. Effective monitoring of the curriculum by the co-ordinator ensures that each unit of work builds upon what has gone before and prepares pupils for subsequent work. More maps have been bought since the last inspection and resources are now better and more accessible. A good system for checking how well pupils are doing has been introduced, but has not yet had time to influence teachers' planning for future work.

## **HISTORY**

134. By the ages of seven and eleven standards are broadly similar to those found in most schools. The most able pupils reach high standards by the time they leave the school. They show both knowledge and understanding of the period studied and link and explain causes and effects. By the end of the key stage pupils show a growing awareness of the limitations of different sources and the need to compare a range of information. They know that people's memories provide a rich source of information but may be unreliable or biased and that different witnesses might provide differing accounts of the same event. At the same time they have a good grasp of the facts and can explain why things happened as they did. Older pupils use a good range of ways of recording what they have learned, including maps, tables, writing and drawings. History lessons, especially in Year 6, contribute strongly to literacy skills by providing opportunities for a wide range of writing such as letters, first hand accounts, making comparisons, expressing a point of view and using persuasive arguments.
135. Teaching is satisfactory, overall, with some very good features. Many of the learning opportunities that teachers provide for the pupils within and outside lesson time contribute strongly to the richness of their experiences. The teacher in Year 1 uses stories well to provide the young pupils in her class with an interesting and relevant introduction to life in Victorian times. Throughout the school, visits are well chosen to complement areas of study. Visitors provide an insight, for example into life in Whaley Bridge during World War II. The way that teachers build this into their lessons and provide well planned tasks to follow, result in very good teaching and learning. The opportunities pupils in Year 6 have to reflect on moral dilemmas caused by war contribute substantially to their moral and spiritual development. The "local studies week" combines history and geography, and involves all pupils in good quality, first hand research in the immediate area where they can put their skills into practice. Pupils are used to asking key questions such as "What can this tell me about the past; are there any indications of how old it might be or clues about what it was used for; and, how and why has it changed over time?" They are supported well by a good range of photographs, other printed information and teachers' good knowledge of their subject. On these occasions pupils make good progress.

136. Teachers manage pupils well, provide an atmosphere where pupils can concentrate and encourage them to work hard. The pupils respond well, listen attentively when the work is explained and generally complete tasks carefully. Teachers praise pupils when they achieve high standards but do not often indicate clearly enough what it is that pupils have done well or what they could do better. This hampers improvement. For example, in Year 2, the work on sequencing events gives pupils little guidance about how they could improve the standard of their written records.
137. The subject is managed well. Through the increased attention the school gives to observing teaching and learning, the co-ordinator has recognised some areas where improvement could be made and has taken effective action. As a result an imbalance in favour of pupils learning factual information is now being corrected and skills are being taught more thoroughly. This is an improvement since the last inspection. For example, pupils are developing a greater understanding of how inventories, artefacts and other sources can be used to find out about the past. A good system for checking pupils' progress at the end of each topic has been introduced recently. It is designed to identify pupils who have not yet achieved what is expected and those who show exceptional achievement so that planning can be more sharply focused.
138. The use of ICT is improving throughout the school and there were some good examples of pupils using history websites to gather information. Audio-tape recordings have been made of first hand accounts to ensure that the school has a permanent record of the memories of older members of the community. There is a shortage of computer programs and video recordings, specific to some periods of history studied, to complement the range of books and other printed materials.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

139. Pupils reach standards that are generally in line with those expected nationally.
140. Standards are broadly average at the end of Year 2 with some good achievement in word processing. Enthusiastic teaching and a systematic programme of basic skills bring this about. Pupils are secure in their understanding of the purposes of control technology and the part it plays in their everyday lives. They collect data about how they travel to school, their favourite TV programmes, animals and hobbies and present it effectively. Pupils learn to log on to the computer unaided, load a variety of different programs, find information and save and print their work. The most able pupils reach high standards when they change the text size, colour and font of their work during word processing activities. Pupils make good progress.
141. By the time they reach the end of Year 6, pupils have had suitable opportunities to experience ICT for a broad range of purposes and show good levels of understanding of different methods of communication and ways of solving problems. They go on to more complex methods of data collection, involving branching techniques when they collect information about animals in Year 4. Pupils are confident in sending e-mails to one another within school and to another school. Throughout the school, pupils produce a wide range of artwork, including posters and book covers. In Year 3, for example, they experiment with pattern and design, inspired by the work of Mondrian. ICT is increasingly incorporated successfully into other subjects, including history and geography. Pupils use CD-ROM for retrieving information and access chosen sites, such as the National Geographic, to find answers to questions. They use the Internet to gain information about World War II and how the mummification process worked in Ancient Egypt. Year 6 pupils enter information into a spreadsheet, adding and changing data with confidence. The more able, usually those who also have access to computers at home, work independently with confidence and expertise. They are suitably challenged by teachers to find alternative formulae for calculating the areas and perimeters of squares in mathematics. Displayed work shows that pupils use ICT appropriately for a wide range of purposes. More use could be made of ICT in music, design and technology and mathematics, however. Older pupils regularly use the photocopier and teachers and pupils use a digital camera to record visits and support and illustrate their work.

142. Teaching is good. Although nationally funded training was interrupted, many teachers have taken advantage of other opportunities and have developed their skills and competence to a good extent. Planned work relates well to most other areas of the curriculum and planning shows a clear understanding of what pupils are expected to learn in lessons. Good guidelines for pupils are displayed in most classes and teachers carry out a variety of tasks, effectively motivating pupils' interest. During lessons teachers demonstrate well and make good use of technical language, such as 'scroll' and 'search engine' in Year 4, for example. They have high expectations of what pupils will achieve and plan suitably challenging extension activities for the more able pupils. As a result, pupils apply themselves diligently to tasks and concentrate well. They support one another well when they work in pairs and small groups and make allowances for varying levels of expertise. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported.
143. The subject is given a high profile within the school. Teachers' knowledge has improved and the school has made good progress since the last inspection. The co-ordinator provides a source of expertise and has worked hard to produce a more detailed scheme of work. It incorporates a nationally approved programme of work within the school's own. It provides good guidance for teachers so they know what is to be taught in each year group. Opportunities are identified within the planning to check how well pupils are doing and good procedures are established. There are plans to install a new computer suite into the current library area, so that skills can be taught to a whole class at once rather than to small groups.

## **MUSIC**

144. Standards of singing and instrumental performance are high at both key stages, as at the time of the last inspection. However standards of composition are relatively weak.
145. Standards of singing are high, especially for the younger pupils. They sang in two parts and maintained their melodic line while others sang theirs. Pupils of both key stages sing with breath control, achieving a good sense of phrase. They are able to control their voices in producing accurate changes of pitch. This is particularly well developed in the older pupils. Pupils are able to sing tunefully and with expression, altering the volume appropriately. Pupils in a group of treble recorder players are able to produce a wide range of notes, some of which are quite technically demanding. All pupils learn to play the recorder from Year 2 onwards. By the time they reach the end of Year 6, they are proficient readers of traditional music notation. When pupils Year 2 used untuned percussion instruments in class, they were able to play, with a good level of accuracy, a simple pattern 'in fours,' as directed by the class teacher.
146. Pupils' throughout the school make good progress in their performing skills of singing and recorder playing. However, from discussions with pupils at the end of both key stages, it is clear that their skills in creating their own rhythmic and melodic patterns, using tuned and untuned instruments, are less well developed. This is due to the lack of opportunities provided for them to explore, investigate and create, using instruments.
147. Too little evidence was available to support a judgement on teaching, beyond that of the part-time specialist in large group and instrumental teaching. The personal expertise and devotion to the subject of the part-time teacher are significant strengths in the musical development of the pupils. She uses her technical skill and understanding in a very caring way while demanding and usually receiving high standards from the pupils. She is employed to work with class teachers in the teaching of music to their own pupils and it is here that opportunities for composition need to be more widely available. Pupils do not have access to a wide enough range of instruments. They are not yet able to develop their simple pitched patterns into ostinati and melodic phrases. The use of ICT in music is weak.
148. Music plays a very significant part in the life of the school. The standards of performance have ensured that the school choir and instrumentalists are regularly invited to perform in major concert events in the area. The social development of pupils is very effectively provided for through membership of ensembles and the choir. Their teamwork and dedication



are a credit to them. When the choir performed, without accompaniment, at a major shopping centre, they raised approximately £2,000 for charity.

149. Musical provision through singing, extra-curricular groups and brass and string teaching by the local education authority tutors make a good contribution to the total curriculum of the school.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

150. Pupils reached nationally expected standards in the aspects of physical education seen during the inspection. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Teachers' planning for physical education indicates that all aspects of the curriculum are appropriately taught, and work carefully builds on previous learning. Good emphasis is given to the teaching of skills in physical education lessons. There are good arrangements for swimming. All pupils have weekly swimming lessons in the school's own pool, where they learn and develop skills well and build their confidence in water. However, pupils have fewer opportunities to benefit from a programme of outdoor adventurous activities.
151. Pupils of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties, make at least satisfactory gains in learning as they move through the school. Progress was judged as excellent in one Year 1 lesson, which was very well led by the subject co-ordinator. In this lesson, pupils developed skills of control and co-ordination very well through a range of activities, such as improving control with bat and ball, using a variety of equipment. Pupils in Years 3 and 6 practise their swimming strokes well in a carefully planned series of exercises suited to their abilities and stages of development. Pupils in Year 5 make sound gains in learning as they practise and evaluate different approaches to running.
152. Teaching is sound, overall. It contributes to pupils' satisfactory progress. All teachers use the limited hall space well to develop essential skills, although its small size does sometimes hinder organisation in gymnastics, for example. Pupils are almost always attentive to their teachers and follow instructions promptly and accurately. Most pupils have good attitudes to learning and, in the best lessons they are very good. They work sensibly in pairs and groups, developing independence, initiative and responsibility, when given the opportunity, as seen in Year 1. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to discuss and evaluate the performances of others and to analyse their own performances to assist with their learning. This was a weakness last time, and remains a weakness.
153. The co-ordinator demonstrates excellent practice in her teaching. For example, she has a clear and rigorous focus on the development of important skills, uses resources very well, and gives briskly paced lessons. She provides pupils with opportunities to demonstrate correct techniques to enhance their self-esteem and to improve practice. She shows very good subject knowledge and much enthusiasm and this ensures that pupils are keen to learn. She gives lots of praise and support to encourage pupils to "do their best" at all times and to maintain interest and involvement. As a result, pupils' skills develop rapidly.
154. Physical education is well led with much commitment and teaching expertise from which others can learn. There are clear plans for the subject's further development. These plans include the further development of dance, where some teachers lack confidence. There is a good range of after-school activities, such as cricket and gymnastics, which enrich the curriculum, and competitive sports are sometimes held with other schools. Pupils are assessed each term to enable teachers to identify how well they are achieving.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

155. Attainment is broadly in line with expectations at the end of both key stages, as at the time of the previous inspection. However, pupils' knowledge of the beliefs and practices of major faiths other than Christianity is insecure.

156. When looking at the work that pupils have undertaken in both key stages, it is evident that there is a wide variation in the nature, extent and frequency of pupils making a written record. While valuable work in subjects can be undertaken without a written outcome, the absence or infrequency of work produced by pupils often results in a lack of understanding of their own learning and the progress that they have made. This is particularly so where written work is recorded in exercise books or files mixed up with other subjects. This was demonstrated during discussions with pupils of both key stages. They showed a lack of clarity when discussing aspects of their knowledge of religions, such as knowing about buildings and symbols of different faiths or celebrations and texts that are special to people of different religions.
157. When discussions were held with pupils in Year 6, their abilities to join in with debate involving what they had learned from religions were good and well considered. In many schools this is the weaker area of study. Pupils know how a strong religious faith affects peoples' attitudes, behaviour and daily lives and how it contributes to their understanding of right and wrong. They know that worship is an important part of religious practice. They understand the contribution that the daily act of worship contributes to the life of the school and to their understanding of religion. The school's collective worship includes elements of religious teaching and makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. During inspection, assemblies included a good balance between moral issues, religious stories and what can be learnt from them.
158. Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 2. The teaching observed in Years 3, 5 and 6 led to sound learning in these lessons. In the mixed Year 2/3 class, drama techniques were used well to encourage pupils to investigate and develop their understanding of Abraham's obedience to God. In a lesson in Year 5, good links were made between Christian and other beliefs and moral behaviour. Pupils know about the Ten Commandments and how these form the basis of rules for Christians to follow. They see the relevance of values and beliefs in people's lives. In a lesson in Year 6 pupils learnt about how people express their emotions through music and art and how these can be used as an act of worship. They understand that people of different religions are helped to worship through singing, for example. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2 but teachers' planning indicates that teaching is satisfactory.
159. The co-ordinator and staff have recently integrated the new national guidelines into their existing, locally agreed syllabus and scheme and new resources have been ordered to support the work. However, as a result of illness, the monitoring of planning, teaching, pupils' work and progress has been insufficient to ensure that training needs are identified and standards improved.