

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THE BROW COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Runcorn

LEA area: Halton

Unique reference number: 111124

Headteacher: Malcolm White

Reporting inspector: Ted Wheatley  
10013

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> July 2002

Inspection number: 195675

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Infant and junior
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	The Clough The Brow Estate Runcorn Cheshire
Postcode:	WA7 2HB
Telephone number:	(01928) 563089
Fax number:	(01928) 591314
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Trevor Higginson
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
10013	Ted Wheatley	Registered inspector	Science Design and technology Information and communication technology Equal opportunities	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9974	Daljit Singh	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
4483	Jean-Pierre Kirkland	Team inspector	Mathematics History Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?
23886	Declan McCarthy	Team inspector	English Geography Religious education Special educational needs	The work of the speech and language unit
15292	Janet Pollard	Team inspector	Foundation stage Art and design Music	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The Brow Community Primary School has 179 pupils and is smaller than most primary schools. There are 22 pupils in the reception class of whom seven are under the age of five. In all years there are more boys than girls. There are no pupils with English as an additional language and a very small number from ethnic minorities. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with statements of special needs is well above average and the percentage on the school's register for special educational needs is above average. A very large number of these pupils are supported by the school's specialist provision for pupils with speech and language difficulties. Overall, attainment is low on entry to the school.

The school is part of the Achievement in Schools in Runcorn East (ASPIRE) education action zone (EAZ).

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

The school has many good features and provides a sound standard of education. Teaching is often very good and pupils make satisfactory progress overall; many make good progress despite levels of attainment being below average. The headteacher and key staff provide good leadership and generally good direction for improvement. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and parents are very supportive. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Teaching and learning are often very good.
- The school is well led and managed.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is very good.
- Procedures to promote good behaviour, consideration for others and good attendance are very good.
- Parents' views of the school are very positive.
- The school's aims and values are reflected in its work.

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

- Attainment in English, mathematics and science throughout the school.
- Assessment, including marking.
- Some elements of the curriculum.
- The further inclusion of pupils from the speech and language facility into lessons of the main school.
- Attendance of a small number of pupils.

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

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

The school has made sound progress since it was last inspected in June 1997. Assessment has improved but there is still a need for further improvement. Development planning has improved so that staff are more fully involved and costings are more carefully allocated, but criteria for measuring success are still insecure. There has been significant improvement in curriculum planning so that pupils' learning experiences generally build on prior attainment and identified learning needs. Opportunities for independent learning have improved, but not enough in all classes. Improvement in the teaching of music

has been good. Standards are broadly the same as at the last inspection which is good for this school because there are increased numbers of pupils with special educational needs. Teaching has improved significantly. The capacity for further improvement is good.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	D	E	D	C
mathematics	C	C	E	D
science	D	D	E	E

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

Attainment of pupils in the foundation stage is well below average by the time they are ready to enter Year 1 but they make satisfactory progress from when they enter the Reception class. In particular, many make good progress in developing their personal, social and emotional skills. Overall, children meet the early learning goals.

Standards reached by seven year olds currently in Year 2 in reading and mathematics are below average and similar to those seen in the national tests in 2001, while standards of writing are now well below average. The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs – mostly speech and language problems – has a detrimental effect on overall results. Compared with similar schools, the performance of pupils in the 2001 tests was broadly average. Standards by age seven are below average in science and average in all other subjects.

The attainment of the present 11 year old pupils in English, mathematics and science is below average, and an improvement on the national tests taken in 2001 when attainment was well below average in mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools in 2001, results were below average. The school did meet its targets, but these were unrealistically high. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress.

Comparisons of results from year to year are generally misleading because there are small numbers of pupils in each year group and varying numbers of pupils with special educational needs. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and learning is gradually improving. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall, although it is slowed a little by too few opportunities for these pupils to learn in the company of other pupils. A few higher attaining pupils do not achieve well enough.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy school and approach all aspects of school life with enthusiasm.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in lessons and around the school. Pupils work in a mature and sensible manner.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships between all pupils and between pupils and adults are very good and lead to growing maturity and a very good ethos for learning. Pupils have a high level of respect and tolerance for each other.
Attendance	Attendance is unsatisfactory overall. The great majority of pupils attend regularly and are punctual to school. A small number of pupils have



	extended absence due to family holidays during term time.
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## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 - 2	Years 3 - 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

Teaching is good overall and is often very good. Pupils' learning is good in most lessons. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and they teach literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills well. As a result, pupils' learning of skills is good overall and in some classes it is very good, particularly in learning to write at length and in different styles. Teachers use computers frequently; pupils acquire a wide range of ICT skills and use computers with confidence. Numeracy is taught well and pupils make sound progress in mental arithmetic skills. In the reception class, the main areas of learning are fully covered and children get a good start to their education. Teachers manage pupils well and establish friendly, firm relationships in lessons that provide for generally good learning. Throughout the school, the highest attaining pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning overall, but in some classes they are not always challenged enough – they are capable of learning more. Marking is not always detailed enough to guide pupils in how they can learn better. Pupils with special educational needs learn well and make good progress towards their targets.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall, although there is too little time for some subjects and there are too few planned opportunities for independent learning. The curriculum fully meets statutory requirements. The range of extra-curricular activities is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good overall. The quality of support is good and helps pupils learn well and make sound progress. Pupils from the speech and language facility do not spend enough time in lessons with other pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for spiritual, moral and social education is very good and provision for cultural education is good. There is a strong bias towards developing social skills and encouraging respect and tolerance for other people.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The quality of care and welfare is effective and procedures to promote good behaviour, encourage attendance and to deal with oppressive behaviour are effective. Assessment procedures and the use of assessment information to set targets and guide the planning of teaching are inconsistent.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Very well. Parents are welcomed into the school and are encouraged to support their children's learning. Parents have a very positive view of the work of the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher provides good direction for improvement and he is well supported by staff with management responsibilities. Responsibilities are mostly suitably delegated to staff although responsibilities for those staff managing special educational needs are not clearly stated.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well overall. The governors know the school well and are fully involved in the improvement planning process. They support the headteacher and staff and visit the school frequently.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall. Teaching is observed and evaluated, but good practice is not consistently shared. The school recognises its own strengths and areas for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall. The headteacher and governors plan expenditure so that it is linked to improvement plans. Funds are spent wisely to obtain best value.

Accommodation is very good and well used. The school is well resourced and staffed.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents are pleased with the school and feel that their children are taught well and that they learn in a supportive, caring atmosphere.</li> <li>Parents feel the school treats them with respect and takes their concerns seriously.</li> <li>Parents with children in the speech and language facility are impressed with the support provided by teachers and support staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents expressed no concerns about the school either in the questionnaire or at the parents' meeting before the inspection.</li> </ul>

Inspectors are generally in agreement with the strengths parents recognise. However, inspectors judge that a small number of higher attaining pupils do not always learn as well as they could.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Attainment on entry to Year 1 is well below average and, in particular, standards of literacy are very poor; this has an impact on how pupils perform in all other subjects. There are variations in the attainment of pupils in different year groups and along with fluctuating, although generally increasing numbers of pupils with special educational needs, attainment from year to year varies.
2. The children enter the Reception class with attainment that is well below average. Over their time in the Foundation Stage, most children make satisfactory progress and a few make good progress from initial low standards because of the good teaching and support given to them. By the time they are nearing the end of the Reception year, most children have not achieved the early learning goals, with the exception of in their creative development where standards are broadly as expected. Nevertheless, considering their low standards on entry to the Reception class, children's progress is broadly satisfactory. Attainment is lower than at the previous inspection when the under fives generally reached levels in line with expectations.
3. In the national tests taken by seven year olds in 2001, attainment was below average in reading, writing and mathematics. The percentage obtaining level 3 or better in reading was broadly average and was below average in writing and mathematics. In science, performance by seven year olds in teachers' assessments in 2001 was below average, although the percentage obtaining level 3 or better was above average. Attainment in English, mathematics and science has fluctuated in recent years and an overall trend is difficult to identify because numbers of pupils taking the tests have been low. Results overall were also affected by the proportionally large numbers of pupils with special educational needs whose attainment was often well below average. Compared with similar schools, the performance of pupils in the national tests was broadly average and this is good for this school. Standards seen during the inspection are broadly the same as those of the tests taken in 2001, although in writing they are lower. In science standards are below average and in other subjects they are as expected for seven year olds. There is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls and pupils with special educational needs generally perform below average. Overall, pupils have made satisfactory progress from when they entered Year 1 and some pupils made good progress, considering that levels of literacy were poor on entry to the school.
4. The attainment of 11 year olds in the national tests taken in 2001 was well below average overall, although it was better in English with below average results. The proportion of pupils obtaining level 5 or better was broadly average in English, well below average in mathematics and below average in science. As with seven year olds, comparisons between successive year groups are not reliable because such small numbers of pupils were involved in the tests and the high numbers of pupils with special educational needs also affected the overall results. Compared with pupils in similar schools attainment was average in English, below average in mathematics and well below average in science. The present 11 years old pupils attain levels below average overall in English, mathematics and science and this is higher than in the 2001 tests. Coverage of National Curriculum subject matter has been carefully planned and unconfirmed results for 2002 indicate that they are in line with these improvements. Standards are broadly average in other subjects and in history they are above average. Generally, pupils make satisfactory progress from Years 3 to 6. Pupils make sound progress in developing literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.
5. While progress is satisfactory overall and some pupils make good progress, progress could be better for more pupils. In some classes there are opportunities for independent learning and investigative work, but this is not happening in all classes and this has a limiting effect on progress. There are also variations between years in the quality of extended writing that pupils produce, indicating an occasional lack of sufficient challenge. There are very few higher attaining pupils generally (although some classes have more than others) and they do not all achieve as well as they could. While higher attaining pupils perform well in some classes where teachers

recognise their learning needs and provide suitably challenging work, this is not consistently the case.

6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets on their individual educational plans. They make good progress in lessons where support is provided in classrooms and when teachers provide different approaches, methods or activities to support their learning. Pupils with literacy difficulties make good progress in their reading, writing and spelling when individual support is provided on a withdrawal basis. However, some pupils in the speech and language classes do not have enough opportunities to work with pupils of the same age to develop their speaking and social skills.
7. Standards of literacy are below average throughout the school, in spite of the time spent on teaching literacy skills. Overall, standards of speaking and listening are broadly average, but writing skills are below average; pupils do not express their understanding and knowledge well enough in writing, largely because of insufficient opportunity to write independently. Some teachers provide opportunities for pupils to write independently and creatively in subjects other than English, although this is not consistently the case.
8. Pupils' numeracy skills are below average, but overall pupils make sound progress as they move through the school. Number work in science, design and technology and geography is well established and contributes to pupils' progress.
9. EAZ funds have been used effectively to support pupils' learning. This is especially effective in raising standards of literacy of low attaining Year 3 pupils. Funds have also been used successfully to raise the self esteem and improve the motivation of vulnerable pupils.

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

10. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships with each other and adults are very effective, purposeful and constructive and enable pupils to learn in a mature and harmonious environment. This friendly environment supports pupils' effective personal and social development.
11. Almost all pupils display very positive attitudes to school and good attitudes to learning. This is evident in many lessons where pupils consistently approach their tasks with enthusiasm and interest and sustain good levels of concentration. Pupils value the opportunity to work independently, sharing ideas and information, and this is promoted by effective teaching. Pupils speak highly of their teachers and value and appreciate the time and commitment that teachers give outside of lessons. For example, inspectors observed a rugby practice after school supervised by a member of staff. The activity motivated both boys and girls and inspired pupils to learn in a confident and disciplined manner and effectively supported their spiritual, social and cultural development. Pupils use informal interaction with visitors to pose interesting and thought-provoking questions; for example, a significant number of pupils questioned a Sikh inspector about his faith and the wearing of the turban. Pupils' inquisitive nature is a significant feature of their learning, which also supports their spiritual and multicultural development.
12. Most pupils behave in a very disciplined and mature manner and this is conducive to learning. Pupils are polite and welcoming to adults and consistently observe the school's high expectations of behaviour. They open doors for visitors and are keen to please and impress both staff and visitors. Pupils are courteous and respectful to others and older pupils are caring and protective of younger peers. There are rare incidents of inappropriate behaviour and during the inspection there were no signs of bullying or other types of aggressive and anti-social behaviour. Very occasionally some pupils lose concentration during lessons and speak out of turn. Noise levels are occasionally high in some parts of the school, but this is only evident in the rare event of teachers and support staff not being present. The very good levels of behaviour and discipline ensure that the school community continues to learn in a warm and stimulating environment.
13. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to school and behave very well in lessons, particularly when support is provided for their learning.

14. Relationships between pupils and adults are very effective and promote a constructive environment for pupils' learning and enable pupils to serve the school in a mature and responsible manner. Pupils' confidence grows considerably as they progress through the school. During the inspection older pupils were observed building relationships with younger pupils both inside and outside of the classroom. Some older pupils help their younger peers with reading and contribute to teaching by helping teachers with chores. Pupils exercise responsibility and maturity as prefects and contribute significantly to local and national charities. These efforts are rewarded and recognised by teachers and support the very effective relationships which continue to support pupils' personal development. By the time pupils are eleven, most pupils display confidence in their interactive personal and social skills. This promises well for their entry into secondary school.
15. Attendance is unsatisfactory despite the concerted efforts of the staff, educational officer and the majority of parents. The school works diligently to ensure absences are systematically investigated, information is shared amongst staff and pupils are encouraged to attend regularly and on time. Registers are taken on time, all pupils are accounted for and the process complies with statutory requirements. Parents are discouraged from taking holidays in term time and most parents comply with school policy. Parents are also given opportunity to review their child's attendance and how absence affects progress. Regular and full attendance is rewarded and most pupils respond by attending school regularly and on time. This enables the school to curtail levels of unauthorised absence, which are broadly in line with the national average. Nevertheless, the small percentage of pupils who are regularly absent is of concern and the school is investigating ways to involve other external agencies in improving their attendance.
16. The school has successfully sustained the very positive attitudes and relationships evident in the last report and improved standards of behaviour and attendance.

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

17. Teaching and learning are good overall. In just over a quarter of lessons teaching is very good and occasionally excellent. It is good in well over half of lessons and satisfactory in the rest. Teaching is never unsatisfactory. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
18. Teachers' subject knowledge and expertise is very good and, while teachers are not experts in all subjects, the level of mutual support is good and pupils' learning benefits from this. In particular, the teaching of basic skills is good and, although the continuity from year to year to ensure that work is increasingly demanding is not perfected, the range of activities within literacy, numeracy and ICT is good. Pupils receive a wide experience and many opportunities to practice and develop their basic skills. Teachers provide homework regularly and it is effective in supporting the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and, in particular, their reading.
19. Lessons are very well managed and the very good relationships teachers establish provide a very secure learning situation. Pupils feel confident to seek help, to talk to each other and to be adventurous in their ideas. Teachers' expectations are satisfactory overall, and are often high, noticeably in Years 1, 3, 4 and 5 where they take advantage of the relationships in lessons to push pupils and to encourage them to investigate and engage in independent learning; this is not always the case elsewhere. Opportunities are sometimes missed to challenge the small numbers of higher attainers and their learning is then limited. Nevertheless, lessons are usually productive, the needs of most pupils are usually met and pupils work conscientiously and happily.
20. Marking varies between classes, but where it is very effective, for example, in Years 3 and 4, comments on pupils' work and discussion with pupils provide a very clear indication of what pupils need to do to make further progress – and they do. Some marking elsewhere, for example, in some Year 6 science work, is mainly 'ticks', without comment or guidance for pupils, and that is unsatisfactory. Generally marking is satisfactory, but the inconsistencies are linked to the inconsistency in the application of the school's policy.

21. Teachers make good use of the wide range of resources available. Pupils' learning is enhanced by the variety of practical activities teachers plan into their work. Computers are used effectively to add a further dimension to learning and also to improve ICT skills. Support assistants are deployed well and they work closely with teachers. Where possible they work with individual pupils and small groups and if they take pupils out of the class for specific work, they ensure that they do not miss out on what the whole class is doing.
22. Teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory overall and is often good. In the great majority of literacy lessons, activities are organised effectively to teach new skills, to reinforce those skills taught earlier and to give pupils time to practise them. In some, but not all classes, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to develop these skills. For example, in Years 3 and 4 pupils are given opportunities to write independently and imaginatively in science. This improves pupils' vocabulary, gives them confidence in writing independently and supports their understanding in science. Generally, there are too few opportunities in subjects other than English for pupils to develop their writing skills. The teaching of numeracy is sound and in some classes is good with many opportunities for pupils to reinforce their mental arithmetic skills and to practise skills they have been taught.
23. Teaching is good in all areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. There is a good understanding of the children's learning, social and emotional needs. There are interesting approaches and the children are challenged and motivated to learn. The more capable children learn well. There are effective links with parents and many support their children with their learning. The children are well prepared for Year 1 and the care given to them is good.
24. Teaching is good for pupils with special educational needs when there is joint planning between the support assistant and the teacher to enhance learning within a subject topic. This ensures that activities, methods and approaches are matched to pupils' learning difficulties and enables them to make good progress. Support assistants provide very good support to pupils with special educational needs enabling them to learn well and make good progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding. However in some lessons the particular needs of pupils are not well addressed, as teachers do not always accommodate their needs particularly well.

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

25. The school has made appropriate provision to ensure that all its pupils have adequate learning opportunities through its curriculum. The school meets statutory requirements by ensuring that all subjects of the National Curriculum are taught, including religious education. In addition, there is satisfactory provision for personal, social and health education, which includes work on citizenship. The governors have decided that it is currently inappropriate to teach sex education directly, but any questions being asked by pupils are answered through the science curriculum or in health-related sessions. The curriculum is relatively well balanced, but with a great emphasis in time being placed on literacy, and to a lesser extent on numeracy. This is to take account of the relatively low starting points of children when they enter the school.
26. There is good provision for children in the Foundation Stage. Children are admitted to the Reception class in the September before their fifth birthday. Most have attended the independent nursery in the school and a few come from other local nurseries. Children enter the Reception class with levels of attainment that are well below average in all areas when compared with children of similar age. During their time in the Foundation Stage most children make satisfactory progress and a few make good progress. By the time they are ready to transfer to Key Stage 1, the majority of children are well below average in attainment in most areas, although their creative development is close to average. These levels are lower than the previous inspection when they were in line with the outcomes expected for their age.

27. Most of the issues raised in the previous inspection report in relation to the curriculum have been successfully sorted out with new initiatives. The music provision is now satisfactory, following the appointment of a new subject leader and some additional activities to enhance learning, such as a recorder group and a choir. The lack of depth in design and technology has also been overcome through some creative time-tabling with specific days focusing on the subject. The curriculum is based on plans ensuring that knowledge, understanding and skills are progressively built on as pupils move through the school.
28. Overall the curriculum has appropriate breadth, although this is not always clear in the planning. Some teachers make good, strong links between subjects, helping pupils to learn better. In a Year 4 and 5 science lesson, for example, the teacher ensured pupils knew the main vocabulary and technical language by displaying essential words in large letters on the board, making an effective link to literacy. In Year 5 and 6 history, graphs are produced, following work on historical census, making effective use of skills learnt in mathematics lessons. However, such links are relatively rare and are not yet incorporated in the planning.
29. The school has adopted nationally-recommended guidelines for all subjects. These include the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies, which are firmly in place. These and other plans have been modified appropriately to meet the various learning needs of different groups of pupils. There is still some way to go in ensuring that all staff use opportunities to extend literacy and numeracy across the curriculum more effectively. There is very little use of imaginative writing in subjects such as history or religious education. Where it is in place, it is very effective. For example, in Year 3 and 4, work on display in history shows pupils using their imagination very well when writing about what it might have been like to be a Viking. This style of independent work is relatively rare and not much progress has been made in developing it since the previous inspection.
30. Pupils with special educational needs participate fully in lessons and are included in almost all activities. The provision identified on pupils' statements of special educational needs is appropriately met. However a few pupils are sometimes withdrawn from an assembly for support and this reduces their entitlement to participate fully with their peers.
31. Overall, all pupils experience the full curriculum and the full range of other activities offered by the school. The school makes a determined effort to ensure all of its pupils are treated equally and that they form part of the school community, whatever their backgrounds, prior attainment or learning difficulties. It is generally successful in this, with the exceptions of the few pupils withdrawn from assembly and for pupils in the speech and language facility who have too few opportunities to learn with other pupils of the same age.
32. The learning opportunities are extended effectively through a good range of additional activities during and after school. Using standards funds, the school regularly buys in visiting drama groups, musicians and dancers. After-school clubs cover a wide range of activities including sport, with rugby league a popular option, music, art and drama. Pupils make visits to the seaside to enhance their learning in geography and history; they visit art galleries to see good quality paintings at first hand; they make trips to local sites to look at Roman Britain, investigate wildlife, hear major orchestras and engage in sports activities with other schools. A number of pupils have been on a residential weekend to North Wales. These opportunities enrich an otherwise appropriate curriculum effectively. Links with areas of the community and other schools are good. The school ensures pupils transfer smoothly to the two main high schools. Groups of schools participate in some of the additional provision mentioned above and there is good liaison between them. Local firms make some contribution to the resources used in classrooms, thereby enhancing learning opportunities.
33. Provision for pupils' personal development is very good and has improved since the last inspection, when it was judged to be good. Provision for spiritual development has now moved from satisfactory, at the last inspection, to very good. This is not only promoted through the very good ethos, symbolised by the spiritual qualities of the school's emblem, the dolphin, but through the promotion of teaching strategies which value pupils' views and free expression. This is very evident

in music but was also seen in other subjects. For example in a Year 4 geography lesson pupils were challenged to explore how they would feel if they lived near piles of rubbish which polluted their neighbourhood. In English, pupils also wrote about their feelings on corporal punishment. There were many examples of the display in classrooms, which recognised pupils' creative talents and imagination, for example in their art work and poetry. Pupils are also given greater opportunities to explore values and beliefs through assemblies and in lessons. For example, in a whole school assembly with 'diversity' as its theme, pupils were challenged to think of how well the Catholic and Protestant members of the Irish band U2 had established close, enduring friendships, despite their experiences of bigotry in Northern Ireland. Pupils are also given further opportunities during circle times pupils are encouraged to consider values and beliefs, and to reflect on their own experiences. The school provides a very good daily act of worship, which promotes the development of a caring community and consideration for others as well as providing opportunities for prayer and reflection. Pupils were often heard to sigh in awe and experience a sense of wonder when assemblies were enlivened by the use of very good visual aids to promote greater understanding of the theme. The religious education syllabus widens their knowledge and understanding of different beliefs.

34. Moral provision is now very good and much improved since the last inspection when it was judged to be good. This is because there is a much clearer framework to help pupils distinguish right from wrong and all staff now provide very good role models to help pupils develop their own moral codes. There is also a stronger focus on developing common, inclusive values and helping to pupils develop the skills of honesty, independence and respect for others. All pupils are well aware of the high expectations of the school's aims and behaviour code. The school has a strong ethos built upon developing responsibilities, and Year 6 pupils generally set a very good example as school monitors. Through circle and PSHE time, pupils are encouraged to understand and respect the needs, interests and feelings of others. All classes have the opportunity to, and do, raise objections via the school council to any unfairness and there is a well appointed 'Buddy Stop' sign in the playground where pupils who are feeling lonely wait for other pupils to befriend them.
35. Provision for pupils' social development is very good and also much improved. Pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively, take responsibility for their work, and to help others. All classrooms have many duties allocated to individual pupil monitors and there is a strong sense of corporate achievement and belonging. Relationships between pupils and the staff are very positive. Sporting activities promote the development of teamwork and leadership well. Pupils enjoy and grow from participating in the residential trip.
36. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good and has improved. Pupils' understanding of their own and other cultures is promoted through religious education, English, geography, history, art and design, design and technology, and music. For example, a wide variety of musical instruments from China, Africa and India is displayed in the hall, there is a wide range of books to promote different cultural traditions such as 'An Egg for Babycha' the story of a Ukrainian family's celebration of Easter, and there are displays of Indian wall hangings. An understanding of different cultural traditions was very well promoted through the recent World Cup football tournament held in South Korea and Japan. Each class chose football teams from around the world and made very good use of the Internet to write about the different lifestyles, geographical features and community characteristics of the various countries they had selected in class books. Pupils therefore became more aware of the diversity of different cultures, not only in Japan, but in other countries such as Nigeria, Denmark, Cameroon, Russia, Brazil and Ireland. There are a few opportunities for pupils for pupils to meet people from other cultures: there is a regular Hindu visitor, but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to meet people from different cultural traditions through, for example, visits to mosques, synagogues, Hindu or Sikh temples.

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

37. Provision for pupils' welfare and wellbeing is very good and founded in the caring and sensitive way staff relate to pupils. It has improved since the last inspection. Staff provide very purposeful supervision, support and guidance to ensure pupils learn in a disciplined and orderly environment.



The arrangements for child protection are satisfactory and the designated teacher ensures effective management and co-ordination to provide a safe and secure environment. The designated teacher is aware that further training should be provided to enable all staff to take account of recent legislation.

38. There are very good procedures to ensure the safety of the school community. Governors undertake risk assessments regularly, under the leadership of the headteacher, and they take decisive action to ensure that health and safety is a priority at all times. The headteacher and staff are fully aware of their legal responsibilities and ensure that pupils understand the importance of safety and security. Pupils know the evacuation procedures and fire drills are regularly undertaken. The personal, social and health education programme reinforces important aspects of safety and enables pupils to make informed choices about their safety and wellbeing.
39. Pupils' personal development is monitored appropriately and reported to parents. The information is used well by teachers to ensure the very good personal support that pupils receive. The school works closely with homes to ensure that children settle into school quickly and happily. Staff listen attentively to pupils' concerns and respond constructively to their concerns. Pupils' achievements are recognised and celebrated to enhance learning and create a caring and sensitive environment. Pupils care for each other and observe the high standards of discipline set by teachers and support staff.
40. The school has recently employed a learning mentor. She works diligently and sensitively to support the learning of disaffected pupils, offering good quality support and guidance. This enables pupils to become motivated and confident learners. There are strategies to raise pupils' self esteem and support their transition back to the classroom. This provision gives a constructive framework for pupils' academic and personal achievement.
41. There are very good procedures in place to ensure that pupils understand the importance of good behaviour, and discourage all types of anti-social activity. Teachers consistently implement and reinforce the school's very clear code of conduct, which is supported by the vast majority of parents. This enables the school community to achieve very good standards of behaviour and to combat all types of anti social behaviour rigorously.
42. All pupils with special educational needs have good quality individual educational plans which contain relevant individual targets to support their learning. These are reviewed regularly to determine the progress pupils have made and to set new targets. However, pupils and parents are not fully involved in developing new targets. Good records are maintained by the special educational needs co-ordinator to show the progress pupils make towards their targets. However, teachers do not consistently accommodate the needs of pupils with particular difficulties effectively in lessons.
43. There are effective measures to ensure that pupils' attendance is consistently monitored and rewarded. All absences are thoroughly investigated, reported to parents and if required, pursued by the educational welfare officer. The strategies for improving attendance are sound, but having a limited impact, due to the irregular attendance of a small but significant minority of pupils, who continue to affect overall levels of attendance.
44. Assessment was a key issue in the last inspection. There has been some improvement as assessment procedures and practices are satisfactory in Reception, English and mathematics, history and music. There are school policies for assessment, but assessment procedures for art and design, design and technology, geography, ICT, physical education and religious education are not fully established. Overall assessment is still unsatisfactory, but the school is aware of this and is planning improvements. There is some analysis of data in English, mathematics and science. In particular, in science the analysis shows clearly the strengths and weaknesses of the pupils and points to aspects of the subject that need improvement. There is no whole school approach to assessment and the ways assessments are to be used have not been clearly identified. This results in the specific learning needs of pupils not being identified sufficiently in teachers' planning.

45. In subjects where there no formal assessment, little information is available to judge present attainment of pupils and their progress over time. The school has considerable information about its pupils from the National Curriculum tests but better use of this would help to identify pupils' progress more effectively.

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

46. Most parents have reported that they are very pleased with the education the school provides for their children. Parents believe their children like coming to school and pupils receive good quality care and support, which contributes constructively to their welfare and wellbeing. These parents value the teaching, which is good, as well as the leadership and management. Parents rightly believe expectations of behaviour, homework and the provision of extra-curricular activities are due to the commitment of staff at all levels and leads to pupils becoming mature and responsible members of the school and wider community. The majority of parents enjoy a purposeful and constructive relationship with the school because their concerns are addressed and the school values and welcomes their suggestions. Inspectors agree with most of the very positive comments made by parents. However, whilst the inspection team recognise the sound levels of communication between the home and school, some written communication, reporting pupils' academic progress, should be reviewed.
47. The school provides satisfactory levels of information. The school newsletters and correspondence regularly inform parents of events in school and the community and are written in language which is accessible to most parents. The school prospectus is provided to all new parents and complements the useful information in the governors' annual report, although details of pupils' absences and school security are omitted. Parents are invited to parents' evenings, which are well attended, and parents rightly appreciate the information they receive. All parents receive an end-of-year report, which informs them of their child's progress, personal development and attitudes to learning. Targets for improvement are set and this is helpful to those parents who support their child's learning at home. Some reports are not clearly expressed in language familiar to parents and this conceals the points teachers try to make.
48. Most parents consistently support their child's learning in the school and this has a positive, effective impact on progress. Parents and parent governors provide considerable support in lessons, especially with ICT, reading and numeracy. They consistently help with educational visits and regularly join in the learning and social activities, helping to raise pupils' levels of confidence and self esteem. Parents also support the school's parents, teachers and friends of the school association (PTFA). They organise events for the school community, including the pupil discos, and raise substantial funds through social events. Funds raised are used to purchase essential learning materials which support standards and to bring parents, pupils, teachers and the community together.
49. The school actively encourages parents to support the child's learning in school and as indicated a significant number of parents respond well to the school's requests. A number of parents also support their child's learning by supporting their homework and by providing equipment necessary to complete set tasks. This evidently raises achievements. However a small, but significant, minority fail to support their child's regular attendance and ensure they arrive at school on time. This disrupts learning, affects pupils' achievement and undermines the high standards set by the school and supported by most parents.
50. Parents are informed of individual education plan targets which have been set for pupils with special educational needs but neither pupils nor parents are not fully consulted when targets are being developed. However there are good opportunities for parents to participate in the reviews of their children's individual education plans and annual reviews of Statements. Effective support is provided by outside agencies such as the visually impaired service.

51. Since the last report the school has sustained its good relationship with parents and continues to enjoy a purposeful relationship with the PTFA, as well as making good progress to ensure the active involvement of parents who support learning in the classroom. To further sustain this progress the school should build on its existing strategies and further improve the attendance and time-keeping of a small but significant minority of pupils. It should also continue to further encourage parents, particularly those who choose to take family holidays during term time, to support full attendance.

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

52. The school is well managed and led. The headteacher has a clear view of how the school should improve and he is well supported by the deputy head and key staff. Responsibilities are mostly delegated well and the headteacher reviews these regularly in the light of the school's needs and the professional development needs of teachers. Those in management posts carry out their responsibilities well; they give clear direction for development and support their colleagues well. Those staff taking on responsibilities recently are fully involved in identifying the school's needs for development and planning an improvement programme. The atmosphere for learning is very good and is a reflection of the attitudes of staff and the caring ethos established throughout the school. All staff – teachers, classroom assistants, office and caretaking staff – are hardworking and committed to improvement.
53. The management of special educational needs is good although there is some confusion about delegation of responsibilities for special educational needs between the headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO). The SENCO has made a satisfactory start in implementing the Revised Code of Practice. She now recognises that more needs to be done to ensure the needs of pupils with special educational needs are accommodated effectively in all lessons through systematic and regular checking of the school's provision. The headteacher recognises the need to ensure that the role of the SENCO is more clearly defined. There is insufficient time for the SENCO to liaise with outside agencies or to check the progress of pupils with special educational needs by observing lessons. The SENCO also needs to develop the use of diagnostic assessment further to ensure that teachers plan more consistently in matching activities, methods and resources to the needs of these pupils. The SEN governor has good knowledge of pupils with special educational needs from regular informal meetings with the SENCO. The very good ethos of the school ensures that pupils with special educational needs thrive.
54. Support assistants work very effectively with teachers to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are fully included in lesson activities. This strong teamwork ensures that these pupils have equal access to learning and make equally good progress as other pupils.
55. Governors are knowledgeable and support the school. Several visit the school regularly and some work in classrooms with teachers and pupils. They are fully involved in the school's planning processes, monitor and check the budget and occasionally observe lessons, especially with reference to monitoring the literacy strategy. They monitor the school's work in other ways also, through the budget and the headteacher's reports. For the most part they meet their statutory obligations, although the school prospectus and governors' annual report have minor omissions – they do not contain details of absences or school security.
56. The priorities for improvement are good, well matched to the school's needs and for the most part are well reflected in the school's work. Governors and staff are involved in the development planning process and the school makes good progress in meeting its targets. The headteacher has detailed plans to reorganise teaching responsibilities and to provide time for subject coordinators to evaluate provision in their subjects, to plan for improvements and provide support for colleagues. However, the school's actions in some areas have been a little limited, especially in terms of raising the attainment of some pupils. This is because there is no fully implemented assessment scheme that is used consistently to record pupils' progress, identify their learning needs, to set targets and to change the curriculum and teaching accordingly.

57. Overall, the school's procedures to monitor and evaluate its own improvements are satisfactory, and in some areas are good. The headteacher has monitored and evaluated teaching, and the literacy coordinator has evaluated the introduction and implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. These evaluations have been valuable and are leading to improvements. Further planned observations of teaching, evaluation of provision and subject developments referred to above indicate the school's determination to raise standards. Strategies for performance management are fully implemented and are closely linked to staff development.
58. Staffing is good. Teachers, classroom assistants and special needs support staff are suitably experienced and qualified for their responsibilities. Plans to improve teachers' expertise and use of assessment are advanced. Support for newly appointed staff is good. The school provides support and training for staff so that they are confident and have the expertise to carry out their responsibilities effectively. There is also a high level of support amongst staff for each other, making an important contribution to school development.
59. The accommodation is very good and continues to support teaching and learning effectively. It is a relatively new building, which is very well maintained, and very clean. Teaching facilities are often good and accommodate the size and age of pupils in all lessons. The hall is used very effectively for assemblies and as a gym and dining area. Displays, including pupils' work, provide the school with a stimulating and colourful environment. This is complemented by an expansive playground area, comprising of three district inter-linked areas, a field and other extensive areas of grass and shrubbery. The early years groups have dedicated hard and soft play areas, which are securely fenced and there is a large attractive courtyard area in the centre of the school building. The whole building is very secure and provides extensive safety for the school community. However, whilst the library is presently too small (and is being relocated to a much larger, purpose-built room), the rest of the building provides a very effective resource for learning.
60. Resources throughout the school are good, except for the lack of large equipment for the Reception class. The playground is in good order and is level. There are sufficient books in the classrooms, but the present lack of a central library has resulted in pupils having limited opportunities for independent research or to change their library books from a wider selection of books. This has limited pupils' opportunities for learning the library skills of classification, working in a library atmosphere and taking responsibility for returning books. There are sufficient computers throughout the school in the classrooms, but in some classes these are not an integral part of learning. There is sufficient software and there are new additions to the stock during the year as required. The subject coordinators have no budgets but the ordering system is clear and most resources requested are purchased. Resources are readily available, are of good quality, accessible, frequently used and satisfactorily organised.
61. Financial management is good. The headteacher and chair of governors work closely together and they are well supported by the school's bursar and the local authority. The use of computers to monitor and control expenditure is good, although the headteacher is dependent on administrative staff for computer information. Funds coming into the school are well above average, even allowing for the extra funds for pupils linked to the speech and language facility. Extra funds are used effectively to support teaching and learning. Spending plans are carefully considered and the school goes to considerable lengths to ensure that it receives good value for money. While the school has considerable reserves, these are committed to setting up the new library. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

62. The governors, headteacher and staff should:
- i. Raise standards in English, mathematics and science by providing opportunities for:
    - investigative work, research and independent learning;

- extended writing within literacy and other subjects; and
- sharing the very good teaching practice seen in many lessons.

*(paragraphs: 5, 7, 19, 22)*

ii. Improve assessment by:

- analysing National Curriculum assessment information to identify strengths and weaknesses in learning, particularly of the higher attainers;
- developing a whole school policy which is consistently applied;
- recording achievements in a consistent way; and
- setting appropriate targets.

*(paragraphs: 20, 44, 45, 56)*

iii. Improve the curriculum by:

- providing planned opportunities for independent learning;
- using some of the time presently spent on literacy to teach other subjects but including literacy work; and
- providing planned opportunities in all subjects for pupils to write creatively.

*(paragraphs: 28, 29)*

iv. Improve the attendance of the small number of pupils who have extended absence by working with:

- parents to reduce family holidays taken in term time;
- parents to help them understand the importance of regular attendance; and
- welfare officers to reduce authorised absence.

*(paragraphs: 15, 49)*

v. Increase the time for inclusion of pupils from the speech and language facility into main school lessons so that they have further opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills through conversation with other pupils of the same age.

*(paragraphs: 6, 24, 31, 42)*

63. The school should also consider the following minor issues:

- ensure that pupils are not withdrawn from assemblies for support work;
- the governing body's report to parents and the school prospectus contain information about pupils' absences and suitable information about school security; and
- reports to parents about pupils' progress are consistently written in language parents are familiar with.

*(paragraphs: 30, 47)*

## THE SPEECH AND LANGUAGE UNIT

64. The speech and language facility caters for 20 pupils aged five to 11 who have a statement of special educational needs because of severe speech, language and communication difficulties. Pupils are accommodated in two classes, with 10 younger pupils in a Reception to Year 2 class and 10 older pupils in a Years 3 to 6 class. Currently, the facility is oversubscribed with two additional pupils on roll. Many pupils have additional special educational needs such as dyspraxia and mild autism. All pupils attend the facility for literacy and numeracy and some also attend for other subjects. Some pupils are included in mainstream classes for foundation subjects.
65. The facility is housed in new attractive classroom accommodation, which is alongside other classrooms in the school to promote greater inclusion. This arrangement is an improvement since the last inspection when the facility was housed separately. Both classrooms are well-equipped with separate areas for speech and language therapy. Pupils are referred to the facility by Halton LEA and come from a wide catchment area within the authority. The majority of pupils are transported to school in taxis or minibuses.
66. It is inappropriate to compare the attainment of pupils in the speech and language facility with national expectations. Therefore, the focus is on how well pupils achieve in lessons and in relation to their individual education plans and speech and language therapy plans. Pupils at both key stages achieve well in literacy, numeracy, science, information and communication technologies, religious education, and other subjects taught in the facility. Pupils improve their ability to communicate very well, particularly in speaking, listening and writing because the curriculum is highly relevant with an emphasis on literacy, numeracy and personal and social education. It includes social interaction skills and the development of vocabulary and speech, with very good specialist support from speech and language therapists and assistants. By the end of Year 2, pupils know their letter sounds, read and spell common words, listen and speak confidently and write simple sentences legibly. By age 11, pupils read and spell key words in topics, write stories using full stops, capital letters, commas and speech marks and express their main ideas in class discussions. Pupils therefore make good progress in their use of spoken language, reading and writing because skills of communication are enhanced as key words for reading and spelling are taught well. Pupils make equally good progress in numeracy. For example, by the end of Year 6, they are able to tell the time, estimate the weight of household foods and identify odd and even numbers to 100. Pupils also make good progress when included in mainstream school lessons. Pupils with poor co-ordination and muscle tone, such as dyspraxia, make very good progress in controlling scissors when cutting and using a pencil for writing. All pupils make good progress towards targets set in Individual Education Plans and speech and language therapy programmes.
67. The quality of teaching at both key stages is good so that pupils learn well and make good progress. Teachers have particularly high expectations for language development. Teachers and support staff develop pupils' communication skills well through the use of prompt cards, visual resources and the occasional use of signing when needed. They provide very clear instructions to pupils so that they listen carefully, follow instructions precisely and learn how to communicate more effectively. Teachers, speech and language therapists and support assistants also check pupils' progress well in lessons, particularly in the development of language and communication skills. Therefore all pupils know precisely how well they are doing in lessons and what they need to do to improve. Teachers, support assistants and the speech and language therapist also work very well together, providing good individual support to enhance pupils' learning. This promotes high levels of concentration and effort.
68. Lessons are well organised with a rich variety of activities and are always lively. For example in a numeracy lesson, pupils were given opportunities to estimate the weight of various foods, then weigh them and record their results. This was followed by a game to promote their understanding of mathematics vocabulary such as 'heavier' and 'lighter' further. Teachers make good use of resources, including computers, to enhance learning. For example in a literacy lesson pupils made very good use of a publishing program to develop their listening, communication and interaction skills. Behaviour is always managed very well and all staff maintain very good

relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils behave very well and show great respect for staff and towards each other.

69. There are very good and clear links in curriculum planning between the provision specified on pupils' statements of special educational needs, individual education plan targets, and speech and language therapy objectives. These are incorporated fully into pupils' individual education plans. Pupils generally have sound opportunities to learn alongside their peers in the mainstream school. Most pupils are included into mainstream classes for foundation subjects, including physical education and religious education. A few older pupils attend full time. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to include pupils with special educational needs in mainstream lessons, particularly for literacy and numeracy. Pupils' personal development is very well promoted through the very positive caring atmosphere in the unit. For example, pupils in the Reception to Year 2 class developed their spirituality very well in celebrating and applauding the success of other pupils in a phonics lesson. Staff promote moral development very well through circle time and provide many opportunities for turn taking, sharing and group work so that pupils learn to consider the needs of others. However there are occasionally missed opportunities to promote awareness of other cultural traditions.
70. The systems for assessment and recording of pupils' progress are good and these are well used in planning to ensure that the differing needs of pupils are well accommodated in lessons within the unit. However the progress pupils make is not always written down. This is particularly evident in the Key Stage 1 class where there were some significant omissions in recording the progress pupils had made towards their targets on individual education plans and there were no records kept for pupils who receive support for dyspraxia. The head of the facility has rightly identified assessment as an area for development. Good individual education plans are formulated and reviewed regularly. Legal requirements for annual reviews and reporting to parents on pupils' achievements are fully met. The speech and language therapist carries out a detailed assessment in consultation with teachers and support assistants to establish a baseline of pupils' strengths and weaknesses in auditory skills, speech, communication and social interaction. A specific speech and language therapy programme is then formulated for each pupil and this information is used very effectively in teaching. Progress is then systematically reviewed and recorded. For example, during a very well conceived 'Narrative Therapy' session, the speech and language assistant taught while the speech and language therapist recorded gains in pupils' speaking, listening and communication – very good practice.
71. Parents are pleased with the provision for their children in the unit. They have the opportunity to become fully involved in annual and individual education plan reviews and they receive good information on their children's achievements. Parents are also provided with good information on the work of the facility and receive regular reports on their child's progress. Transport arrangements are satisfactory although some pupils travel on minibuses for a long period of time, which is unavoidable given the wide catchment area.
72. The head of the facility provides very good leadership by maintaining a happy and purposeful learning environment, promoting very good teamwork and managing the provision well. Staff are well trained and there are enough learning support assistants to provide individual support for pupils. Staff work very well together as a team and this promotes greater consistency in the management of pupils in the unit. There is good liaison between staff of the facility and mainstream teachers to promote inclusion and more effective planning. There are also sufficient speech therapists to ensure speech therapy is provided to those pupils who need it. The head of the facility now recognises that the school needs to plan for greater inclusion opportunities for pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties and ensure that mainstream staff are well trained and supported to meet the particular needs of these pupils. This is particularly true for inclusion within literacy and numeracy where pupils will have greater opportunities to develop their language and social interaction skills in learning alongside their mainstream peers.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	14	32	8	0	0	0
Percentage	2	25	59	14	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	179
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	61

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	31
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	55

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	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4



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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	21	8	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	19	19
	Girls	6	6	7
	Total	24	25	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (94)	86 (100)	90 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	18	17
	Girls	6	8	8
	Total	25	26	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (94)	90 (100)	86 (76)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	15	10	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	9	10
	Girls	7	6	8
	Total	15	15	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60 (75)	60 (71)	72 (83)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	9	9
	Girls	6	5	7
	Total	13	14	16
Percentage of pupils	School	52 (71)	56 (67)	64 (71)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	178
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	22.4

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

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	199.5

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

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

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

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	525,443
Total expenditure	501,980
Expenditure per pupil	2,852
Balance brought forward from previous year	73,995
Balance carried forward to next year	97,458

### **Recruitment of teachers**

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	179
Number of questionnaires returned	74

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	35	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	77	19	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	66	30	1	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	43	8	0	1
The teaching is good.	80	16	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	66	23	5	1	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	18	0	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	20	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	59	32	4	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	69	26	0	3	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	24	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	69	22	3	3	4

### Other issues raised by parents

Parents raised no concerns at the meeting held for them before the inspection. They are happy with the standards achieved by their children, how well the school looks after their children and the quality of education it provides. Inspectors are generally in agreement with the strengths parents identify, although they consider that a few higher attaining pupils are not challenged as much as they could be.

## **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**

73. There is sound provision for children in the foundation stage. As there was no judgement made at the last inspection, no comparisons can be made. Children are admitted the Reception class in the September before their fifth birthday. Most have attended the independent nursery in the school and a few come from other local nurseries. The great majority of children enter the Reception class with levels of attainment that are well below average in all areas when compared with children of similar age. During their time in the Foundation Stage most children make satisfactory progress and a few make good progress. By the time they are ready to transfer to Year 1, attainment is still well below average overall because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, but some are approaching average levels of performance.
74. The staff work hard to maintain links with parents. An issue in the previous inspection was the provision for assessment of children's individual skills. There is now a clear, manageable record keeping system that has been developed since the last inspection. It gives staff a well-informed basis for planning work and provides accurate knowledge for staff to plan the next steps in learning for the children. The baseline assessments are well used and the children's very clear individual targets are shared with parents and are reviewed each term. These are monitored well and progress is tracked. Parents are involved in their child's learning through knowing the targets and through hearing their child read at home. The comprehensive records and the end-of-year reports show well the progress children are making. This information is increasingly being used to plan activities that are more closely matched to the children's differing capabilities. Currently, the emphasis is on National Curriculum subjects rather than the areas of learning. The school is aware of this and is planning appropriate changes. The timetabled activities are clearly structured but there are limited opportunities for free choice. The school is also aware of this and has plans to develop free choice further.
75. The quality of teaching is good in all areas of learning. This leads to good learning opportunities for the children. The room is well planned and there are varied activities that are interesting and enjoyable. There are very good relationships between the children and staff who provide a calm, secure and caring atmosphere that helps the children to enjoy and benefit from the activities provided. Staff ensure that all children are included and have full access to all the areas of learning. Staff encourage and motivate the children through their conversations with them and when necessary the class rules are referred to in a calm way by the staff. This approach is beneficial for the children who are prepared well for their transfer to Year 1.
76. The provision is well managed by the hardworking and efficient co-ordinator who has clear plans for the further development of the Foundation Stage. She is well supported by the member of the support staff. They make an effective team and work together very well. Both have high expectations for the pupils and provide challenging activities. The accommodation is welcoming and the displays in the classroom, including work by the children, provide an inviting and purposeful environment with a wide range of activities available for the children to undertake. The resource provision is good, readily accessible and well used except for the inadequate provision of large outdoor equipment.

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

77. Children enter the Reception with a wide range of personal and social skills, but they are broadly well below average. Because of the positive and supporting relationships between staff, children make at least satisfactory progress and some make good progress. They become increasingly confident and independent and by the time they are ready to enter Year 1 some have average personal and social skills, although overall standards are below average.

78. Teaching is consistently good and many opportunities are found throughout the day to promote personal, social and emotional development positively. Members of staff provide good role models as they treat the children politely and with respect, valuing the contributions children make. The calm and secure atmosphere has a positive effect on children's behaviour and they co-operate well and some children have achieved the standards expected for their age group by the end of the Foundation Stage.
79. Children enjoy coming to school and they are able to follow the routines of the day and join in the activities with interest. Well planned activities help children to become more mature. Through the story about the Buddha, the children were encouraged to think about how they could be good and kind and were able to talk about helping at home and sharing with others. Children are friendly towards each other, share equipment without fuss and ask their friends to join in a chosen activity. The snack time is well used to promote the social skills of talking to each other in a group, sharing jobs and looking after each other's needs. Annotated records are kept of children's progress and because there is both a calm and consistent approach by staff, the children are well prepared for Year 1.

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

80. When children enter the Reception class, their skills in communication language and literacy are well below average. Most make satisfactory progress with a few making good progress but the great majority are well below average for the expectations for their age at the end of their Reception year. The National Literacy Strategy for the Reception Year is used well and a very clear and comprehensive programme is provided to encourage language for communication and thinking, learning sounds and letters, beginning reading, writing and handwriting. More able children are making good progress and are able to read simple texts, write several sentences with support and explain what they want to write.
81. Teaching is good and the children are encouraged to talk, listen and enjoy a wide range of activities. They are able to listen to tapes independently and follow the story well in the relevant book and recall its sequence. The teacher and the support assistant respond well to the children's questions and comments by giving replies that are within the children's understanding. Children extend their vocabulary through carefully framed questions that require them to explain what they are doing, using sentences. This promotes their communication skills. Staff interact well with the children, for example encouraging them to talk about holidays in their 'Travel Shop'. Through the careful assessment in this area of development, staff are alert to those who are not making sufficient progress and ensure that those with learning difficulties are effectively helped.
82. Children enjoy looking at books and are now able to recognise which way a book is held, but a minority turn the pages roughly. They know where the book begins and ends. Some can follow the sequence of the story, making good use of the pictures and can describe the events. Others are at the pre-reading stage, are over-reliant on the pictures and invent the text. They are beginning to recognise sounds and letters and the more able can link these together when reading, but they find it difficult to work out the meaning of the word.
83. Staff ensure that pupils at this stage of their development learn simple frequently used words and are well supported to encourage their reading skills. Children regularly take home their reading books; most parents support the school well and are involved in their child's reading progress.
84. Children are able to write their names and have frequent opportunities to write in their books. The more able write some words independently, whilst others need support. They write a pretend booking form in the Travel Shop and can choose to work at the writing table. They have short handwriting lessons where they can practise writing letters, but their letter formation is poor in their books. The more able can write more than one sentence but much support is needed in this area of development. The assessments in this area give good evidence of children's weaknesses in this area.

## **Mathematical development**

85. Good teaching supports mathematical development effectively and the children make satisfactory progress. There is clearly structured work based on the National Numeracy Strategy. Many opportunities are found during the day to develop mathematical language skills, for example, counting the number of children in the class and the number absent. The staff know the capabilities of the pupils and plan group work to meet their needs. Children regularly practise counting to 20 and the more able can count beyond this. Most can recognise numbers from one to nine and are secure in this knowledge when using counting equipment. Some can use a number line accurately to help them work out simple addition and the more able can also work out simple subtraction.
86. Some children recognise the difference between two and three-dimensional shapes and can state the difference between a square and a rectangle by counting the 'corners'. The more able can recognise three-dimensional shapes such as a cuboid, but there are few pupils of this capability. Good use by the teacher of everyday objects that show three-dimensional shapes helped the children to understand their properties. Overall, standards are well below average by the end of the Foundation Stage. Children enjoy making patterns with shapes, and a few are becoming aware of symmetry. Children are beginning to understand and use words such as 'tiny', 'smaller than' and 'bigger' in conversation and the staff encourage this. A commercial scheme is used appropriately to reinforce the children's mathematical learning. This also gives additional opportunities for assessment. Clear assessment procedures are in place and ensure that the teacher and the learning support staff know the abilities of each child.

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

87. There is good teaching in this area because there are interesting topics planned that engage the children in effective learning. The children have been learning the difference between left and right by walking round the school on a 'sound trail', listening to sounds during lesson time and learning to turn left and right. This was followed up by using the computer and learning to move the cursor right, left, up and down to paint a picture. This was much enjoyed and children are confident when using the computer. They are also aware of the way they come to school. Evidence in the records show that they have had good opportunities to design and make an imaginative model using construction equipment or other materials. Using musical instruments as part of their study on sound made good links with music and gave the children opportunities to make a variety of sounds. A good display with the instruments available supported this work. Listening to the story of the Buddha develops the children's awareness of the importance of events in other people's lives. Visits and visitors support this area well and develop the children's awareness of the world around them. Their early experiences of science show well below average awareness of the properties of materials. The varied experiences enrich the curriculum and help the children to make satisfactory progress, but most are still well below average for the expectations of their age.

## **Physical development**

88. The children have planned time for indoor and outdoor activities. However there is little equipment for the Reception class children and they rely on borrowing the large equipment from the independent Nursery in the school. There are two items of large equipment on loan to the school. Opportunities for physical development are restricted and this is unsatisfactory. No direct teaching was observed outdoors, but children were observed indoors when good teaching was seen that enabled them to develop their skills in co-ordination. Most children are aware of space and can move in the hall without bumping into others. They use the small equipment in a controlled way, practise throwing and catching skills and use skipping ropes. Some were able to experiment with different ways of moving and confidently showed these to others. All pupils have access to all the activities and the pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into the lesson. Some pupils have very poor co-ordination, showing in their use of pencils and crayons, but most children use the construction materials safely and enjoy making structures. The very well taught after-school dance club is popular and reception children enjoy the movement even though some find it difficult to keep in time to the beat of the music and make the correct movements. There is some

assessment for the area that shows children's control and co-ordination progresses satisfactorily, but most are well below average for the expectations of their age

### **Creative development**

89. Teaching is good and teachers work hard to provide a good range of activities. Children enjoy digging in the wet sand and washing up in the water play area. They have opportunities to paint, and looked at the styles of famous artists. Both structured and unstructured role play enables the children to develop their own ideas. The quality of teaching in the planned activities is good and the activities are well prepared. The children enjoyed the use of musical instruments to make observational drawings and it promoted good language. There is no provision for children to paint freely, which limits their opportunities to experiment with materials. The displays of children's work are good and include the use of textiles to make collages. The children persist with their chosen activity until it is completed, showing their interest and good attention span. Occasionally there is too much guidance by the staff, limiting the children's imaginative use of materials. Nevertheless, standards are broadly average by the end of the foundation stage, although a small but significant proportion of pupils do not reach expected levels.

### **ENGLISH**

90. Standards have not changed since the last inspection and remain below average overall although a significant proportion of pupils are performing at average levels of attainment. In the National Curriculum tests taken in 2001 the attainment of pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 was below average and had not improved overall over the last four years, particularly in writing where there has been a drop in pupils' performance. The proportion of Year 2 pupils attaining the higher level 3 or better was broadly average and the proportion of pupils in Year 6 obtaining level 5 or better was also average. Compared with similar schools in 2001, results were broadly average. Results have varied between years, but comparisons are difficult because the numbers of pupils in each year have been relatively small. Pupils currently in Year 2 and in Year 6 are attaining average levels at best and this reflects some improvement from 2001 but overall, standards are still below average.
91. The main reasons for below average performance are:
- the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs that brings overall results down;
  - lack of challenge for some higher attaining pupils.
92. Standards on entry to Year 1 are well below average, which means that pupils' achievements by the end of Year 2 are satisfactory overall, with some pupils making good progress. Pupils' achievements by the end of Year 6 are also satisfactory and there are no significant differences in the achievements of girls and boys. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in lessons and often much better progress when withdrawn for help with the development of specific skills, or when supported by a teaching assistant in lessons.
93. Pupils' achievements in speaking and listening throughout the school are good. Pupils become confident and effective communicators. Girls and boys listen attentively and respond well to the teacher and to the ideas of other pupils. Occasionally older boys have to be reminded to listen and pay attention. The great majority of both boys and girls express their views orally clearly and thoughtfully using a good range of vocabulary and adapting their speech very well to the listener. In class discussion they are lively and imaginative in their response as shown in a Year 2 lesson where pupils discussed characteristics of dinosaurs and described their features well. In a Year 6 lesson pupils produced very good ideas in predicting the next stages of a story about "Borrowquest", and suggested a very good range of adjectives which could be used.
94. Pupils also learn to communicate appropriately through writing. Handwriting skills develop well from Year 3 onwards, with writing becoming increasingly well formed, joined and orientated. Pupils learn to write for a wide range of audiences and purposes, developing significant strengths in mastering the structure of words, sentences and paragraphs, and using punctuation accurately



and to good effect in enhancing meaning. They make particularly satisfactory progress overall in learning to understand how words can be used to best effect in description and communication. Sometimes progress in lessons is good, for example in Year 4 pupils made good progress in learning to use alliteration in creative and imaginative writing. Higher attaining Year 3 pupil and all pupils in Year 4 produced well-structured writing which was varied and interesting, and used a wide range of vocabulary to communicate imaginative and creative ideas clearly. This was seen in a range of interesting poetry, such as a book of poems about cats, dogs and seals which pupils had made. Average attaining pupils also produced good creative work, especially in imaginative storytelling, although their paragraph structure is sometimes weaker. Spelling and use of capital letters were less accurate for lower attaining pupils. Higher attaining pupils do not always achieve as well as they should because they are not provided with enough opportunities to extend their writing.

95. The great majority of pupils become confident readers of fiction and non-fiction. Those in the sample of pupils heard reading during the inspection said that they enjoyed reading and discussed, with enthusiasm, their favourite authors and types of books. Many pupils read at home, and in lessons, the great majority of both boys and girls read confidently showing a good understanding of vocabulary. Higher attaining pupils in particular were confident and demonstrated a very good understanding of complex text. In some instances, average and lower attaining pupils worked at a significantly slower rate in text analysis. Confident use is made of dictionaries to support work in both writing and reading.
96. Pupils are positive about their learning in English. Lessons are calm and orderly. The great majority respond well and participate with enthusiasm. They are attentive, work hard and concentrate well. Pupils work productively in groups supporting each other in their learning. All lessons are characterised by good relationships and a good working atmosphere. Occasionally however, there are times when older pupils do not attend closely enough and fail to make a sustained effort without firm direction from the teacher.
97. Teaching and learning are mainly good and reflected in pupils' good achievement and positive attitudes to the subject. The scrutiny of pupils' work, hearing them read and discussions all reflect a pattern of good practice. The major strengths in English teaching lie in detailed planning, generally high expectations, good relationships and skilled behaviour management. Pupils' work is always marked and there were many examples of good marking, with errors corrected and clear guidance given on how to improve so pupils had a good knowledge of the progress they were making.
98. Lessons are well organised and structured to provide high levels of expectation and they enable pupils to work with confidence, building on their knowledge and skills and consolidating their previous learning. Pupils usually work productively in lessons because they are mostly lively. Staff have very positive relationships with pupils, who show respect to adults and to one another. They also listen to their teachers, follow instructions immediately and, when the whole class are questioned, pupils usually wait for their turn before answering. There were very few minor examples seen of pupils calling out in lessons, which were managed very well by staff. Very good teamwork with support assistants ensures that pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons. Behaviour management is highly skilled in ensuring that pupils work well. Any loss of concentration is dealt with unobtrusively. Good learning is facilitated by the clearly targeted support to pupils' learning needs. Pupils are also encouraged to work well within groups so they learn from each other. The very strong focus in most lessons on three levels of structure analysis, "word, sentence and text", provides powerful support for pupils in learning to understand and apply language effectively in their speech, writing and reading. Good use is made of individual whiteboards to enable pupils to experiment with the use of words, and teachers make good use of computers to enhance pupils' learning. There were many examples of pupils' writing which were word processed and included the use of a variety of fonts and styles.
99. Provision for literacy across the curriculum is sound overall with some marked effective practice. In particular, the opportunities for pupils to talk about what they learn, and to use suitable vocabulary on a regular basis in all subjects, are good. Some teachers also provide opportunities for pupils to

write independently and imaginatively within different subjects and to check work to make sure pupils have expressed ideas and knowledge accurately. However, this practice is not consistent – time for subjects other than English is limited, and this restricts opportunities for independent writing, and in some instances pupils' work is not checked thoroughly enough to ensure accuracy of information and expression.

100. Provision for English is satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator regularly observes lessons, feedback to teachers is clear and helpful and this is beginning to help them improve their teaching. The National Curriculum and National Literacy Strategy are fully implemented to ensure that the curriculum is inclusive, to provide a breadth of clearly focused learning opportunities and effective support for pupils' personal development. The support for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is particularly strong through the exploration of ideas, opportunities for group work, sharing and respecting others' opinions, which in turn, has a good impact on their attitudes to learning. Procedures for monitoring pupils' achievement are good but used inconsistently by teachers to inform planning and address any underachievement. For example, there is some good analysis of test results, which the co-ordinator has used effectively to identify further improvements in reading, spelling and writing non-fiction. However improvements in extended writing, particularly within subjects, have not been identified. There have been considerable improvements since the last inspection and the potential for further improvement is good.

## **MATHEMATICS**

101. Standards are below average towards the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is not as good as at the time of the previous inspection. However, standards show some improvement in the current Year 6 over the national tests in 2001, when results were well below average overall and the percentage of pupils obtaining the higher level 3 or better was also well below average. When compared to pupils from similar backgrounds, these results were below average. Pupils in Year 2 in 2001 obtained results that were below average overall and the proportion obtaining level 5 or higher was also below average. Compared to pupils in similar schools results were broadly average. Overall, there is little difference between the performance of boys and girls. Results have fluctuated over recent years, although comparisons between years are unreliable because small numbers of pupils were entered for the tests. The main reasons for the below average standards are:
- big fluctuations in the number of pupils year on year with learning difficulties, some of them severe;
  - insufficient emphasis early on in the development of investigative skills and problem solving. This adversely affects the potential achievement of higher attaining pupils in particular;
  - insufficient use of numeracy across the curriculum in other subject areas;
  - not using what is known of pupils' prior attainment to modify the learning opportunities in a consistent way.
102. However, there are a number of strengths in mathematics in the school. These include good teaching, leading to effective learning in individual lessons; improved mental agility skills; well-prepared lessons so that pupils know what they are about to learn and why; and some good work on measurement and different mathematical shapes, especially in Years 3 to 6. Nevertheless, by the time pupils are 11, only about half of them are working at the average level 4 or occasionally better. Despite their overall sound progress, many pupils struggle with basic mathematical processes.
103. Teaching and learning are good, with some very good features. Teachers focus very effectively on mental agility at the start of lessons. This stimulates interest and pupils learn better as a result. Many are keen to succeed and try hard, thinking through their answers very carefully. Teachers use good strategies in the rest of the lesson to help pupils learn. For example, in learning about space and area, the teacher used the example of painting a wall and ensuring that sufficient pots of paint were available to cover the area. This brought some reality to mathematics for pupils. In another lesson, the principle of proportion was very clearly explained when the teacher used

packets of sweets and chocolates as visual aids. Such strategies engage pupils' interest well, focus their attention and keep them on task, thereby learning effectively. The pace of most lessons is very brisk. This, too, means that pupils do not waste time and get on with their work.

104. Work is now modified suitably to ensure that all pupils have appropriate materials and challenges. This works well when pupils work in groups. They tackle their work with enthusiasm and often help one another when trying to solve problems. Pupils with learning difficulties benefit greatly from this approach, and their rate of learning, often through smaller steps, is as good as the rest of the class.
105. Most pupils have learnt good strategies for solving problems, and this is now being reinforced through the mental sessions effectively at the beginning of lessons. Pupils are generally challenged by teachers to explain how they arrived at their answers. This ensures that most pupils understand very clearly what they are doing, and is now helping higher attaining pupils to make better progress, whereas historically this has not always been the case. However, in some lessons there are not enough opportunities for problem solving and occasionally higher attainers are not sufficiently challenged.
106. The school has appropriate procedures for measuring pupils' progress and attainment. These include using information from the national tests and other records kept by teachers. However, using all the data consistently to raise standards further is an area which has not been developed sufficiently well. For instance, the national tests for Year 2 pupils in 2001 showed that applying and using mathematics, along with knowledge and understanding of shapes, space and measure, were where the main weaknesses lay. Only part of this information has been used to change the way the subject is taught. On the other hand, the school discovered that older pupils approaching Year 6 were weaker in using and applying their mathematics in other areas of life generally. To counter this, the school placed greater emphasis on the mental side. This has been successful in raising agility and accuracy. Marking of pupils' work is adequate in spotting inaccuracies, although written comments do not always show pupils how to improve their work. Inspection evidence also shows insufficient focus on graphs and how to interpret data. Where it is used, as in Year 3 and 4, to show a wide range of graphs and charts using ICT, they are of a high standard. The use of ICT generally in the subject is good and this acts as a further way of raising standards and encouraging greater achievement. Overall, management of the subject is good.
107. Provision for teaching numeracy is satisfactory and is improving. Teachers generally reinforce pupils' numeracy skills as opportunities arise, and there is good practice in science, design and technology and geography in counting, measuring length, volume and weight and in simple calculation. Mental arithmetic skills are regularly reinforced. Implementation of planned opportunities to develop pupils' numeracy skills is taking place gradually and leading to improved competence and confidence among pupils.

## **SCIENCE**

108. Standards in science are below average at the end of Year 2 and are lower than they were at the last inspection. In teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2001 attainment was below the national average but, compared with similar schools, it was broadly average. In the national tests for 11 year olds in 2001 attainment was well below the national average and the percentage of pupils obtaining the higher level 5 or better was below average. Compared with similar schools attainment was well below average. Inspection evidence shows that pupils aged 11 in the present Year 6 are achieving standards that are below average, but higher than they were in 2001 – provision for science has improved and there is a greater focus on the demands of the end of Year 11 national tests. Over several years standards have fluctuated but remain below average overall. However, comparisons between years are unreliable because the numbers of pupils taking the national tests are relatively small.
109. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall; many pupils achieve well and the learning needs of most pupils are met. Standards are as they are for a number of reasons. The main ones are that:

- the high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties makes attainment overall appear low;
  - opportunities for independent learning and investigative work are limited in some classes;
  - assessment information is not used consistently to plan and set targets for pupils; and
  - the needs of higher attainers are not consistently met.
110. By the time they are seven, pupils' attainment is below average. They know about simple instruments that make sound and most use boxes and string competently to construct simple musical instruments from boxes and string. Their understanding is below average. A few pupils explain how sound is produced by vibrating air or string, but they struggle with the language. The majority of pupils have a basic grasp of the ideas involved but the highest attainers do not achieve as much as they could because there are no tasks specifically to push them on. They do not, for example, grasp the role of the box in making the sound of a vibrating string. Nevertheless, achievement is satisfactory overall taking into account pupils' prior attainment, poor literacy skills and the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Attainment in Year 1 is better; the few higher attainers are challenged through more demanding tasks and questions and opportunities to develop their enthusiasm. Overall, these pupils have a sound knowledge of different units of measurement – of temperature and length, for example – and use them accurately in their speech and descriptions. They achieve well.
111. By the time pupils are 11, in Year 6, standards are below average. Pupils have a basic knowledge of cells and that they serve a variety of purposes in the body, of electrical circuits and the properties of materials, but the knowledge is not deep enough and some pupils do not express their knowledge accurately or in sufficient depth. In work on microbes, for example, most pupils have a sound understanding of the conditions needed for microbes to grow or reproduce but do not understand what happens when food is chilled or frozen. Their written and spoken explanations, particularly by the highest attainers, are often too brief and miss important points. However, progress is broadly satisfactory – it is the very small number of higher attainers who do not make the progress that they should. In Years 3, 4 and 5 pupils write in more detail, use scientific terms like “force”, “insulator” and “reversible” accurately and express their ideas clearly. In these classes pupils are encouraged to investigate with a minimum of teacher guidance or direction and they develop sound investigative skills and inquisitive minds. Their writing is frequently imaginative, detailed and shows a sound scientific understanding. Standards are closer to average here and tasks are planned to challenge pupils of all capabilities and all pupils' progress is good. Over Years 3 to 6 pupils' progress is broadly satisfactory.
112. Teaching and learning are good. Teaching is sometimes very good and never less than satisfactory. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good because teachers research the subject fully and support each other. This leads to usually well-planned lessons with a variety of activities and resources that involve and enthuse pupils. ICT is used regularly and pupils are encouraged to see and use this as part of learning about science. This has a positive impact on how well pupils learn. Teachers' management of pupils' behaviour is very good and is firmly based in the very good relationships seen throughout the school. This means that pupils learn happily, work hard and respect the opinions of teachers and each other. Where learning is best, teachers' expectations are high; the highest attainers are challenged with specific work, questioned closely and expected to respond with work and answers suited to their capabilities – it is not left to chance that they will perform well. For example, in a lesson on measuring, higher attaining Year 1 pupils were expected to explain how to take body temperature and to measure lengths accurately with a variety of measuring instruments. In a lesson on light and shadows, Year 4 pupils were expected to plan their own experiment with little teacher guidance and to remember words like “transparent”, “translucent” and “opaque” with no help and to be able to explain what they meant. There are, however, too few opportunities in some classes for pupils to find out for themselves.
113. Marking of pupils' work varies. At best it prompts pupils about extending their writing, considering different ideas and suggesting improvements that they can make. In other instances it provides little guidance, overlooks scientific errors and gives few indications of how work could be improved;

this happens most significantly in Year 6. Overall, there is insufficient analysis of available assessment information to guide teachers' planning or to set targets for pupils.

114. Classroom support assistants are present in many lessons and their contributions are significant. They work closely with pupils who have speech and language difficulties, plan work with teachers and ensure that pupils do not become detached from the main learning activities in lessons.
115. The subject is managed well by an enthusiastic, newly appointed coordinator. She is actively involved in monitoring the standards achieved by pupils and there are plans to enable her to observe and evaluate teaching from September 2002. She organises resources effectively and makes sure that there are sufficient to support teachers' needs for lessons. She supports staff effectively and is conscious of the need to ensure she is fully informed on developments in the subject. Development planning is good and assessment, marking and investigative work are identified as areas for improvement. Planning for science has improved since the last inspection, although marking is inconsistent between classes and although teachers frequently provide opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills, the quality of tasks varies between classes.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

116. During the inspection only one art and design lesson was seen which was in Year 6. Additional evidence was taken from scrutiny of the wealth of work on display, discussion with the co-ordinator and other teachers and informal discussions with pupils during the lesson seen. Overall attainment for pupils at the age of seven and eleven meets the expectations for their age. No judgements can be made on teaching. Throughout the school, all pupils, including those with special educational needs make at least satisfactory progress and some pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress in observational drawing. This is similar to the last inspection when attainment also met the national expectations. Overall there has been satisfactory development of the subject since the last inspection and standards have been maintained.
117. By the age of seven, pupils have experienced a range of media, styles and materials including using a paint program on the computer. They have a developing knowledge of texture, colour, and pattern making. They use a range of brushes to obtain different effects and textures. They study patterns in African art that are linked with an African story, and use this experience to develop their own patterns well, using bright and bold colours. Work in three-dimensions is less evident as this is undertaken earlier in the year. Pupils study the work of famous artists, for example, Van Gogh, and explore tone and texture in their landscape paintings and pastels, making good use of colour, creating atmospheric work. Very careful work has been undertaken in the project of the holiday theme where good work has been achieved through painting self portraits 'on holiday' that have well drawn features and very good use of skin tone painting. Good use has been made of textiles, including collage and weaving, focusing on shades of one colour resulting in effective work.
118. By the age of 11, pupils consolidate and develop their skills further. Very good use has been made of well known artists as a stimulus, for example, Goldsworthy. Pupils work using natural materials in the natural environment in the same way as the artist. The sketching is of high quality, showing good observational skills from photographs taken by the pupils, and weaving, using leaves to create effective collages. Pupils have written about what they have undertaken and how they achieved the results. Pupils' sketchbooks contain a range of work including good observational drawings of plant studies and leaves. A collection of work on movement gives a good impression of different ways movement is conveyed by artists. There is good use of line and hatching to show speed. Older pupils also use the computer to experiment with different styles of painting, for example pointillism, and then use the computer model to develop their own work. Three-dimensional work is stimulated by the study of women artists, including Clarice Cliff, and small plates and bowls are decorated in a lively way with good use of colour and design.
119. Displays in the classrooms and round the school show how well teachers have worked to promote and develop pupils' knowledge and skills. Pupils' work shows care and effort. Good use has been

made of visiting artists who have had a positive impact on pupils' learning and the quality of their work.

120. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has written a new scheme of work that came into effect in January 2002. This is now being used, but currently there is no whole school assessment, monitoring, evaluation or skills based records to check attainment over time. The school is aware of this and an assessment document is to be developed during the next term.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

121. No lessons were observed during the inspection because the school teaches design and technology in a two-day block each half term. Judgements are based on photographic evidence, displays around the school, teachers' planning and discussion with staff. Standards are broadly average for pupils age seven and 11 and have improved since the last inspection.
122. By the time pupils are seven they achieve standards in all aspects of the subject that are broadly average. They design and make vehicles and puppets and use a range of materials – fabric, wood, paper, card and plastic. Designs are individual and originate from a design brief that shows a high expectation of pupils. Most vehicles include various movement mechanisms and show that pupils use a sound range of technical vocabulary, for example, "chassis", "cab" and "axle". Puppets show originality of design and evidence that pupils are often expected to be imaginative. Pupils also use construction kits to explore gears and lifting mechanisms and then design and successfully make their own winding gear from wood, card, string and plastics. They evaluate their models by testing them and produce simple reports on how good they are and how they could be improved. Practical skills are sound and pupils of all capabilities achieve well and make satisfactory progress.
123. By the time pupils are 11, standards are average and progress made in developing the full range of skills is satisfactory overall. Pupils develop research skills through investigating, for example, different bridge structures before designing and making their own. They make good use of ICT for their research. Practical skills are good and show noticeable improvement from when pupils were younger. Pupils understand the design process and are familiar with the evaluation and redesign. Written reports show a sound range of literacy skills, although there is inconsistency between classes, and they are not frequent enough for pupils to develop their evaluative skills as effectively as they could. The achievement of pupils is satisfactory overall and, for many, is good. However, the highest attainers often produce work of the same quality as most other pupils – there is not sufficient challenge for them to attain what they are really capable of.
124. From the evidence of pupils' work, teachers' expectations of pupils are satisfactory and often high. Teachers set a high standard for pupil to aspire to in many cases, particularly in the quality of practical work and model making. Photographs show pupils have considerable pride in what they achieve and that they learn well from the work teachers set. Pupils concentrate well, work carefully, share resources and often work together. Work is not marked, but teachers provide considerable support and guidance for pupils.
125. Management of the subject is satisfactory and the coordinator has a high level of awareness of areas for development, particularly in monitoring work and teaching and providing support for colleagues. The subject is due for development time from September 2002. The arrangement to teach design and technology in short blocks of time is effective and makes good use of the time available. However, time is still limited and this has a negative effect on the continuity in developing skills in the subject. Nevertheless, provision has improved since the last inspection.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

126. Few geography lessons were seen during the inspection. However, there is sufficient evidence from these lessons, the analysis of pupils' work and discussions with pupils to enable judgements to be made. As at the time of the last inspection, attainment is average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, show good achievement in relation to

attainment on entry to the school because teaching is good. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls.

127. By the end of Year 2, pupils have developed a good knowledge of local places and are developing their knowledge of different environments. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils watched a video about the work of 'Vision Aid' in Uganda. They discussed the environment seen and the problems people faced in obtaining spectacles, as they made comparisons on how easy it is to obtain spectacles in Runcorn. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a sound understanding of a range of environments in different parts of the world. They drew maps of Runcorn, the school and The Clough and they showed a good understanding of deserts, rainforests and polar environments,. For example, they identified a frozen landscape as a key feature of the polar waste. Higher attaining pupils also identified the distribution of mountain ranges across the world, naming the Himalayas, the Andes and the Urals. Pupils also demonstrate a good understanding of the effects of pollution on the environment and the need for conservation. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils identified waste materials which could be recycled and discussed how they would feel if they lived near a rubbish tip. This made a very good contribution to their personal development as they reflected on each other's feelings and the effects of pollution in their local environment. Some opportunities to participate in field trips have enabled pupils to pose geographical questions, to carry out observations, and draw appropriate conclusions, for example in studying different types of houses in villages and Runcorn. Pupils also studied the River Gowy and participated in trips to Chester and Thurstaston beach where they recorded the features of a coastal environment. Most pupils have good map skills and use maps confidently to locate countries, places, identify features, and track rivers, boundaries and routes. Most pupils make confident use of geographical vocabulary, both orally and in their writing, to express themselves. Both literacy and numeracy skills are used well to support learning and good use is made of the Internet to aid learning. This was particularly evident in the books pupils had made in celebration of the World Cup football tournament in Japan. Pupils in each class 'adopted' particular countries and used the Internet to research the geographical features of those countries to good effect.
128. The quality of teaching and learning is good. This was evident in the lessons observed, pupils' work and displays, and in teachers' planning. Pupils enjoy geography and in most cases, learning is enhanced by pupils working hard and concentrating well. They respond well to challenge and work productively together, supporting each other's learning. In a Year 4 lesson, teaching was excellent so that pupils acquired new knowledge of recycling very quickly. This lesson was characterised by very high expectations, very good levels of challenge and extremely good use of real resources. Pupils were given the opportunity to identify aluminium cans which could be recycled from a mixture of steel and aluminium cans. Pupils learn well as a result of lessons being well planned, structured and clearly focused. They are helped to deepen their knowledge and understanding through clear explanation and skilled questioning which tests and extends their learning. Pupils are appropriately challenged through activities being well paced and matched to their learning requirements. Pupils' progress is closely monitored and tracked through the regular marking, which mostly provides good guidance for improvement.
129. Provision is good. Pupils' good achievement and the good teaching are strongly influenced by the enthusiastic, positive leadership and management of the subject. The subject leader provides a clear direction and the subject has a high profile in the school. Teachers are well supported by clearly focused and detailed planning, and the regular monitoring and review of the quality of provision. There is a good range of learning opportunities and the curriculum is fully inclusive. However, more opportunities could be provided for fieldwork to promote geographical skills. Geography makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. There has been good improvement since the last inspection especially in supporting improvements in the quality of teaching and the provision of schemes of work.

## **HISTORY**

130. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6. In Year 2, standards are broadly average. Pupils' achievements are good overall, an improvement since the previous inspection.

131. No judgements can be made about teaching as none was observed due to timetable arrangements. However, discussions with groups of pupils and an analysis of works show good achievement over time, with pupils learning basic facts well. Pupils know and understand the significance of history in our present lives. They are able to explain how modern buildings use construction techniques that originated in Ancient Egypt. Year 2 pupils discuss the impact of the discovery of steam on railway building; they understand the contribution made by the later Victorians to transport generally. Their knowledge and understanding of historical facts are average for their age.
132. Knowledge and understanding develop well in Years 3 to 6. Pupils achieve well overall as a result. Through studies in more depth of Victorian times, pupils begin to acquire a good level of understanding of poverty and squalor yet appreciate how this was balanced by the significant inventions made at that time. Pupils use their work in numeracy effectively to undertake a census of their local area and translate the results on to a bar graph. Pupils generally have a good appreciation of sequences of dates.
133. Skills, particularly those of individual research and investigation, are just satisfactory. There is too high an emphasis throughout the school on the completion of worksheets, which restricts pupils' ability to be creative and imaginative. However, despite this, by Year 6, knowledge and understanding in the subject are above average and progress overall is good. Displays of pupils' work throughout the school are of good quality. They are used effectively to highlight learning and are valued by the pupils. Those in Year 3 and 4 on the Vikings are especially good in showing how creative pupils can be when given appropriate opportunities.
134. The subject is managed well. Schemes of work indicate suitable subject coverage, visits, fieldwork and planned use of ICT. Resources are good and are used well and teachers are well qualified and experienced to teach the subject.

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

135. Standards attained by pupils at the age of seven and 11 are broadly average and pupils generally make sound progress as they move through the school, although some higher attainers are not always given tasks that challenge them enough. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and provision has improved, with an increase in the number of computers and improved access to control technology and programs that support this.
136. By the time they are seven, pupils have sound word processing skills overall, although some pupils are hesitant in using simple menus to edit their work. However, most pupils move the cursor to different text boxes, use the shift key, space bar and delete keys competently. The great majority use computers competently to write in different styles, for example, to produce simple questions about dinosaurs. Most are beginning to use a database to collate information and represent it in bar chart format, for example, about travel destinations, mode of transport and accommodation. They use websites to find out information about wild life and use painting/drawing software to create their own pictures. ICT is used successfully in most subjects to consolidate pupils' skills and to provide an additional learning resource. Pupils of all capabilities make sound progress and many make good progress.
137. By the time they are 11 most pupils are achieving broadly average standards. They experience the full curriculum and many achieve well, although some higher attainers do not always achieve as much as they could. Keyboard skills are broadly satisfactory, with pupils using a range of menus to edit their word processing and while their confidence to do so has improved considerably, there are still a few pupils who are hesitant and unsure of what they do. Pupils' skills in using control technology have improved since the last inspection. They produce flow diagrams so that they can successfully programme a computer to control traffic lights and most programme a programmable toy to follow simple movement directions and to draw geometric shapes. Where pupils use computers in other subjects, their ICT skills develop well, and in particular pupils with special educational needs make good progress in developing literacy skills through using computers. Overall, progress is satisfactory.



138. Teaching is good and pupils generally learn well. Where the subject is taught separately, lessons are planned well to develop particular skills and, while organisation of this is sound overall, occasionally timing of activities means that some pupils don't always have enough time to develop their skills successfully. This is partly because pupils have to share computers. Teachers are generally knowledgeable in teaching ICT, and training to continue developing their skills continues. Their expectations of pupils are sound overall, although not always for the highest attainers. The activities they use in lessons are interesting and pupils respond well to these; they work well together, help each other and cooperate fully with teachers. Teachers' management of pupils' behaviour is very good in this respect. Lesson objectives are often shared with pupils so that they are clear on what is expected of them. Work is not marked as such, but guidance and support for pupils are generally useful and indicate to pupils what they need to do to develop their skills. Where ICT is taught in other subjects, activities are closely linked to the subject matter and opportunities for all pupils to benefit from using computers are carefully managed.
139. The subject is well managed. The coordinator has a satisfactory grasp of what happens in most classes and is aware of the development needs of teachers and the resources for the subject. He provides a good level of support for teachers, often providing training out of school time. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory but this is part of the development plan for the subject. Resources are satisfactory and are improving.

## **MUSIC**

140. From the evidence available, attainment by the ages of seven and 11 is in line with national expectations. This shows good improvement from the last inspection. Most pupils, including those with special education needs, make satisfactory progress over time. The provision of a scheme of work, development of assessment procedures, more resources, music clubs, Inset by the music adviser as well as the increased range of learning opportunities have all improved the provision. Some improvements have not been in place for sufficient time to have a more positive impact on standards.
141. In Years 1 and 2 pupils sing in tune and can keep in time with the recorded words and music of the commercial scheme. They make simple rhythms enthusiastically and with enjoyment. They can recall well work undertaken previously and learn a new song quickly. Pupils can recognise simple repeated patterns and are beginning to take account of the elements of pitch, duration and tempo. The school undertakes group singing, at both key stages. The younger group that includes the Reception class and special needs group comes together and sings satisfactorily and with enthusiasm. The large size of the group limits what can be done during these lessons and the special needs pupils took little part in the activities.
142. As they move through the school, pupils make satisfactory progress. They continue to sing with enthusiasm and additionally are able to control their breathing and pay increasing attention to the phrasing and dynamics of the music. Where staff are confident, the subject knowledge is secure and good examples of composing took place. Pupils compose sound pictures of the weather that followed intent listening to an extract of music. Pupils can understand timbre, tempo and dynamics. With the use of a good range of high quality percussion instruments, pupils created good compositions based on their graphic cards. They played their compositions to others and were able to suggest improvements. Some pupils can use the computer for composing and are able to achieve satisfactory results. Year 6 pupils understand the form of a song and recognise the different instruments contributing to the accompaniment. There was good work in the composing of rhythms. Pupils used their feet as a means of establishing and changing rhythms. They are confident in performing in front of others and there was good feedback from their peers that helped to improve the performance overall. Pupils throughout the school enjoy music and show very good behaviour during lessons. They are enthusiastic and achieve challenging tasks. They use the instruments with care and control, are able to listen with understanding and collaborate well in groups.
143. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers use the scheme of work appropriately and there is an increasingly interesting variety of activities. The composing element is beginning to be

developed well and staff are growing in confidence because of the encouragement of the enthusiastic and hard working coordinator. This results in pupils enjoying music, increasing their knowledge, skills and confidence. The introduction of recorder groups at both key stages and the choir give pupils additional opportunities to perform to others and extend their musical skills. The subject is well managed by the coordinator who is a music specialist and in a comparatively short time has raised the profile of the subject.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

144. Standards are average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, similar to those reported in the previous inspection. Pupils achieve satisfactorily throughout the school.
145. Teaching and learning are good overall. However, some lessons are very good and pupils learn very effectively as a result. In a Year 3 and 4 lesson which included a number of pupils with speech and learning difficulties, pupils made very good progress. Instructions from the teacher were clear and precise. The warm-up session was effective. Pupils were encouraged to make good use of space when playing ball games and the teacher monitored their performance and gave further guidance. Pupils benefited from the teacher's demonstration and the opportunity to explore their own imagination. In other lessons pupils learn good physical control when practising running, changing direction and speed. In Year 6 the teacher gives clear explanation about the effects of exercise on the human body, but does not give enough chance for pupils to contribute to their own learning by discussion about the issues. In most lessons, teachers enable pupils to collaborate with each other to such an extent that, in one lesson, pupils asked "Has everybody had a turn?" In the same lesson pupils encouraged a pupil with co-ordination difficulties. In other lessons, pupils learn the skills of poise and balance effectively, whether in the gym or on the field.
146. All areas of physical education are covered effectively in the planning of lessons. The school follows a nationally recommended plan, and swimming is included in Year 5. Most pupils achieve the required target of being able to swim 25 metres. Teachers focus very well on ensuring all aspects of health and safety are given appropriate attention. In Years 5 and 6, pupils benefit from learning about the effects of exercise on their bodies, relating well to work done in science. Occasionally, the learning support assistants are not always given a specific role in lessons. This results in the teacher trying to manage too many pupils in a range of activities and the pace of the lesson and the learning drops. There is no use of video playback in physical education to show how skills might be improved and no established approach to assessing standards attained by pupils.
147. Overall, the management of the subject is sound and there are suitable procedures to monitor and evaluate provision in the subject and plan for improvements. The range of extra-curricular sports activities is good. Rugby, netball, football, aerobics and judo are provided and a large number of boys and girls are involved. The school is involved in interschool competitive sport.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

148. Few religious education lessons were seen during the inspection. Judgements are based on these few lessons, the analysis of pupils' work and discussions with pupils. Attainment is average at the end of Years 2 and 6 in relation to the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils, including those with special educational needs show satisfactory achievement in relation to attainment on entry to the school. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls.
149. By the end of Year 2, pupils have acquired a good understanding of religious symbols, the creation stories and the life of Jesus. Pupils know the Old Testament stories of Noah and Moses. They also learn about the parables from New Testament, such as the story of The Lost Sheep. Pupils have visited St Mary's church and have identified the altar, the cross and the font as symbols of Christianity. Lower attaining pupils know that the cross is a symbol of Christianity. Pupils have also studied Judaism and know that Jews worship in a synagogue. Higher attaining pupils know

that the Torah is a sacred book for Jews. By the end of Year 6, pupils are beginning to consider more complex ideas in religion. For example, when learning about Islam, they are encouraged to reflect on the Qur'an as the spoken word of God and the meaning of colours in Christian liturgy. For example, pupils identify purple as the symbol for penitence and royalty and they know that priests' vestments and church decoration are purple during the Christian festivals of Advent and Lent. Higher attaining pupils know that different religions often use music to express ideas and feelings about God. Lower attaining pupils know that sacred texts are used by different religions.

150. Pupils' attitudes are very good. They are keen to share their first-hand experiences and to talk about any significant items they may possess. All pupils show respect for the different faiths they have studied.
151. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers generally have a firm grasp of the subject matter and they make good use of limited resources during lessons. They involve all pupils in discussions and provide good opportunities for pupils to explain their own beliefs. The school is fully committed to inclusion. Listening and speaking skills are promoted well.
152. The subject co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership. She has developed a good scheme of work, based on the Halton agreed syllabus and a published scheme, which is adapted to the particular needs of the school. The scheme ensures that opportunities for learning progress from year to year. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development through the study of different religions, opportunities to reflect on different beliefs and opportunities for group work. However there are no opportunities to visit other places of worship to experience different world religions and meet people of different cultures. Resources are satisfactory with enough books but insufficient artefacts representing world religions. At present, there is no effective system to assess pupils' achievements across the year groups and the co-ordinator rightly identifies this as an area for development.