

INSPECTION REPORT

WESTFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Runcorn, Cheshire

LEA area: Halton

Unique reference number: 111240

Headteacher: Mr M Sexton

Reporting inspector: Mrs L J Traves
24039

Dates of inspection: 10th – 13th June 2002

Inspection number: 195737

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Clayton Crescent Runcorn Cheshire
Postcode:	WA7 4TR
Telephone number:	01928 572343
Fax number:	01928 565099
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	The Reverend S Smith
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
24039	Mrs L Traves	Registered inspector	Geography History The Foundation Stage	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Leadership and management Key issues for action The work of the Hearing Impaired Unit
13723	Mrs J Overend	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
30724	Mrs D Hiscock	Team inspector	English Special educational needs Equal opportunities Physical education	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
32158	Mrs B Horsfall	Team inspector	Art and design Religious education Science	
3624	Mr P Snelling	Team Inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Music	Teaching and learning

The inspection contractor was:

Primary Associates Limited
Suite 13
West Lancashire Technology Management Centre
Moss Lane View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TN

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	1
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	5
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	7
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	9
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	12
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	13
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	14
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	16
THE WORK OF THE HEARING IMPAIRED UNIT	17
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	19
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	23

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Westfield Primary School is smaller than most schools of this type, with 164 pupils on roll aged between 4 and 11 years. Numbers have decreased since the last inspection and junior pupils are now taught in three mixed-age classes. The school has recently moved into one building. There is a hearing impaired unit which currently caters for 6 pupils. The school is situated on a mature estate of mainly local authority housing close to Runcorn Docks and most pupils live in the immediate locality. There are about the same number of children entitled to free school meals as in most schools (20.7 per cent). More children are identified as having special educational needs (32.3 per cent) than at the last inspection. This is above average. These are mainly related to moderate learning difficulties. The number of pupils with statements is also above average. The majority of pupils are white and all speak English as their first language. Pupils' attainment on entry to reception is below that expected for children of this age, particularly in their language development.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Westfield is a good school. The majority of pupils make good progress. Standards in English, mathematics and science are average for 11-year-olds. Younger pupils are now achieving at a faster rate. In information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology and art and design, all pupils reach above average standards. Much of the teaching is good and the curriculum is rich and exciting; it motivates the majority of children to learn well. The headteacher leads the school very well, with the support of the staff and governors. However, some aspects of management could be improved. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher is a very good leader;
- Children in the reception classes get off to a good start;
- Most of the teaching is good and as a result, the majority of pupils achieve well;
- The school develops pupils personal, social and moral awareness very well;
- The curriculum is exciting and stimulating; good links are made between subjects;
- The school encourages children to work hard and develops their talents.

What could be improved

- The achievement of some higher attaining pupils;
- Some aspects of management.

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 good improvement overall since the last inspection in June 1997. It has addressed most of the key issues identified. It has also maintained good standards in many areas and improved in areas that were not issues last time. Standards at Key Stage 2 have improved. All subjects are now guided by appropriate schemes of work, which ensure pupils can build on their knowledge and skills from year to year. There are more opportunities for investigations in mathematics and science. Assessment has improved in English, mathematics and science, but there is still work to be done in some other subjects. Individual education plans for those pupils with special educational needs are used more effectively. The quality of education provided for children in the Hearing Impaired Unit is now good, overall and management responsibilities within the unit are clearly defined. However, there are still a small number of higher attaining pupils who could be challenged more effectively. The school has received two awards from the Department for Education in the last two years for its achievements in improving standards in the national tests for 11-year-olds.

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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	E	D	C	A	well above average A above average B
Mathematics	D	C	A	A*	average C below average D
Science	E	C	B	A	well below average E

The test results for last year were the best the school has achieved. Standards in mathematics were strongest, being well above average when compared with all schools. Standards in science were above average when compared with all schools and average in English. Pupils' attainment was above that of similar schools to Westfield in English and science and in the highest 5 per cent in mathematics. One reason for the sharp improvement was because more pupils achieved the higher level (Level 5) in the tests, than is usual for the school. It is also a result of good teaching. Inspection findings show that for the current Year 6 class, standards in all three subjects are closer to the average, with fewer pupils on course to achieve the higher level. Although progress is good for these pupils, there are more in the class who find learning difficult than there were in the previous Year 6 class. The school has set appropriately challenging targets for this year and is likely to achieve these.

Pupils in the Foundation Stage (reception class) are making very good progress in their language development and good progress in all other areas of learning. The current reception class is on course to exceed the standards expected for their age in their personal, social and emotional development, their creative and physical development, and to meet expectations in all other areas of learning. This is a stronger picture than last year.

In the 2001 tests for 7-year-olds, the majority of pupils reached the expected level (Level 2) in reading, writing and mathematics. However, not enough pupils reached the higher level (Level 3) in writing or mathematics. The trend in reading and mathematics has been downwards recently. However, inspection findings show that standards for the current Year 2 pupils are average in reading and writing and close to the average in mathematics. The majority of pupils at Key Stage 1 are achieving well in reading and writing from a below average starting point. Achievement is satisfactory in mathematics.

In both key stages, a small number of higher attaining pupils could achieve at a faster rate if they were challenged more effectively. Throughout the school, pupils reach above average standards in ICT, handwriting and design and technology. Pupils also achieve above average standards in the performance aspect of music and in dance at Key Stage 1. Standards in art and design at Key Stage 1 are well above average. In all other subjects, pupils reach similar standards to those found in most schools.

Pupils with special educational needs and those with hearing impairment at Key Stage 2, make good progress in relation to their abilities. For Key Stage 1 pupils in the Hearing Impaired Unit, progress, whilst sound, is slower because of their complex needs.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Children are very keen to learn and join in enthusiastically with all the school has to offer. They work very hard, particularly when teaching is exciting and challenging.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are polite and helpful. The majority behave well both in lessons and around the school. They respond well to strong classroom management.
Personal development and relationships	Very Good. Pupils work well together. They show respect for others and are very sensitive to their needs. They respond very well when given responsibility and take the initiative in their learning. Relationships are strong throughout the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory, but rates have fallen recently

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	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. Over half the lessons seen were good and a sixth were very good. The majority of the very good teaching is at the end of Key Stage 2. In the Foundation Stage, teaching is consistently good or better. No lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. Teaching of special needs pupils is good. This is because teachers take closer account of the individual plans setting out their needs. Hearing impaired pupils are well supported in class lessons. Specific speech and language sessions are taught well and are strongly focused on individual needs.

In all lessons, teachers manage their pupils well and relationships are strong. This creates a good climate for learning. In the best lessons, teachers build well on previous learning, make their pupils think hard and give them tasks that challenge them appropriately. Pupils respond by working hard and at a good pace. Resources are chosen and used well to back up explanations. Literacy and numeracy are taught well in all classes. Good attention is paid to ensuring that early reading, writing and number skills are secure and this provides a solid base for future learning.

Where teaching is more ordinary, the pace is not always as sharp and activities are not always as closely matched to children's abilities. This slows the rate of learning for a few higher attaining pupils and occasionally, for some of lower ability. Throughout the school marking is not used effectively enough to help pupils improve.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. It is rich and exciting. Very good links are made between subjects. A very good range of activities outside lessons is provided.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils' learning needs are identified early. They receive good support in lessons and in small group activities. Support for hearing

	impaired pupils is well matched to their needs.
--	---

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good in moral and social areas, good cultural provision and sound in spiritual. The school has clear moral codes and pupils are very aware of what is right and wrong. There are not enough planned opportunities for spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall. The school is a very caring community and staff know pupils well. However, sharper use could be made of information gathered on pupils' progress. Systems for checking on health and safety could be improved. The school policy to promote racial harmony. Is satisfactory.

Parents have great confidence and trust in the school. Links with parents are effective. The funds raised by parents enable the school to offer residential visits.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher is a very good leader. He sets a very clear direction for the work of the school, and is well supported by staff. Some aspects of management could be improved, such as the role of co-ordinators in checking on the work in their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory, overall. Governors are supportive and work well as a team. They are committed to moving the school forward. A better oversight of health and safety procedures is needed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The headteacher and some subject co-ordinators are checking the quality of teaching. However, although areas for improvement are identified, they are not always followed through. Plans to guide the work in subjects other than English, mathematics and ICT are limited and do not focus strongly on improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school uses its budget, grants and additional funds effectively to support pupils' learning and boost progress. It has used funds well to improve ICT.

The school has an adequate number of staff, is well resourced and accommodation is satisfactory. The school grounds are very attractive and well used to enrich pupils' learning. Site management and clerical staff make an effective contribution. The school has sound arrangements for securing best value, for example, by comparing costs of goods and services.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They feel comfortable approaching the school • The school is well led and managed • The school expects children to work hard • The teaching is good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activities provided outside lessons

The inspection team largely agrees with the positive views of the parents, although inspectors found that some aspects of management could be improved. Some parents were unsure about whether there was

an interesting range of activities provided outside lessons. However, the inspectors feel that this aspect is very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school's test results for 11-year-olds have improved at a much faster rate than the national trend over the last three years in English, mathematics and science. The 2001 results were the best the school has achieved. English results were broadly in line with those of all schools nationally. Science results were above and mathematics well above average. When compared with schools that are similar to Westfield, results were well above average in English and science and very high in mathematics. One reason for the improvement in 2001 was because a significant number of pupils achieved the higher level (Level 5) in the tests. There were a higher percentage of higher attaining pupils in the class than is usual for the school. However, improvements in recent years have also been brought about through strong teaching and the school's systems for accelerating progress. This has been particularly successful in mathematics because of better teaching, the use of 'catch-up' programmes and the effective support higher attaining pupils receive from the headteacher. Inspection findings show that for the current Year 6 class, attainment in all three subjects is closer to average. Fewer pupils are on course to achieve the higher level this year. Although progress is good for these pupils, there are more in this class who find learning difficult than in the previous Year 6 class. The targets the school has set this year are appropriate to the group and are likely to be met.
2. At Key Stage 1, the picture has not been as strong. Results have fluctuated in recent years but the trend has been downwards in reading and mathematics. Test results for 7-year-olds dipped in 2001 to well below average in reading and mathematics compared both to schools nationally and those in similar circumstances. In writing they were average compared to the national picture and above average when compared to similar schools. One reason for the dip in reading standards is that the school had focused its energies very firmly on writing to bring about improvements in what was the weaker area. As a result, less time was devoted to reading. The school has taken steps to redress the balance this year. Attainment in mathematics was well below average because although the majority reached the expected level (Level 2), too few pupils reach the higher level (Level 3).
3. When pupils enter the reception class attainment is below average in all except their physical development. Language development is particularly weak. Children make good progress in all areas and very good progress in communication, language and literacy because teaching is good. The majority of the current reception class are on course to exceed the expected standards in their personal, social and emotional, creative and physical development. In all other areas of learning the majority are likely to meet the standards expected. This is a stronger picture than in recent years, because provision has improved.
4. Inspection findings show that standards are starting to improve at Key Stage 1 in English and are now broadly in line with the national average. The majority of pupils are achieving well in both reading and writing because teachers' expectations of what they can achieve are generally higher. There is also good teaching of basic skills, such as phonics and sentence construction. However, despite the improving picture, standards in writing could be higher for a small number of more able pupils if they were challenged more effectively. Pupils also achieve well in both reading and writing at Key Stage 2. They have a secure grasp of how stories are structured and an understanding of how to write in different styles for different purposes. The quality and

breadth of the literature they are introduced to has a good impact on reading development. At both key stages, pupils make good progress and reach average standards in speaking and listening and handwriting because of the good opportunities provided for them to practise their skills in these areas. Throughout the school, pupils make good use of their literacy skills in other subjects, such as history.

5. Standards in mathematics are rising at both key stages. Although they remain just below average at Key Stage 1, there is evidence of improvement. One reason for the rise is that throughout the school, pupils now have many more opportunities to carry out investigations and solve problems than at the time of the previous inspection. There is also more emphasis on teaching mental strategies. All pupils are given a rich range of experiences that develop their interest in and enthusiasm for the subject. In Key Stage 1 pupils make steady progress, overall. Pupils are given a solid foundation on which to build. Overall, progress is good at Key Stage 2, mainly because of the strong teaching in the Year 5/6 class.
6. Standards in science are average at both key stages. There is evidence of improvement and the majority of pupils achieve well. Pupils now have more opportunities for investigative work than previously. They are encouraged to think scientifically and develop their knowledge and understanding of scientific facts at a good rate. Good links are made between science and other subjects, in particular with geography through a strong emphasis on environmental studies.
7. However, despite good progress for the majority of pupils, a small number of higher attainers at both key stages do not always achieve as well as they might in English, mathematics and science. In some lessons, the work set is not as challenging for them as it could be. It does not always stretch them as much as it could. Also on a few occasions, the work set for below average pupils is too hard for them and their progress slows as a result.
8. Pupils at both key stages with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their abilities. This is because their needs are identified early and their progress is supported by good quality individual education plans. These ensure that learning is broken down effectively into small, achievable learning steps. They receive good support both in class and in small groups.
9. Standards in ICT are above average at both key stages and pupils achieve well. They get off to a good start in the reception class and build well on this throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. This is largely due not only to improved resources, but also the way in which pupils are given good opportunities to practice their ICT skills in almost all subjects.
10. In art and design, all pupils achieve well. Standards are well above average at Key Stage 1 and above average at Key Stage 2. Again, pupils build well on the firm foundations laid in the reception class. Standards are also above average in design and technology throughout the school, in dance at Key Stage 1 and in the performance element of music at Key Stage 2. Standards in the composing element of music are satisfactory overall. In all other subjects of the curriculum, standards are in line with expectations at ages 7 and 11.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. At the time of the last inspection this area was a strength and this has been maintained with improvements in the children's personal development. Pupils' attitudes to their work and life in school are very good. There is a happy, yet

purposeful atmosphere, which has a positive effect on pupils' learning and supports their progress well. Pupils show enthusiasm for learning. They usually work very hard particularly where the teaching is interesting and where the work is appropriately challenging. This was seen in a reception physical education (PE) lesson where children made rapid progress performing neat scissor jumps, jumping from a box. On a few occasions, when pupils were less involved in the lesson, a small minority became restless.

12. Nearly all parents who responded to the questionnaires felt that behaviour is good. This view is strongly supported by the inspection findings. In lessons most pupils behave well. Behaviour is best where teachers have high expectations and strong classroom management to which the children respond well. Those with behavioural difficulties are well managed to avoid interruptions to learning. All pupils have a clear understanding of what is acceptable behaviour and most are happy to comply with the standards set. Pupils move in a very orderly fashion around the buildings and show self-discipline and respect for conventions in assemblies. They play well together in the playground and their play usually remains good natured. Lunchtime in the hall is a pleasant occasion for all. Children eat sensibly and chat happily together. There have been no exclusions in the last 12 months. Relationships between all members of the school community are good and as a result, pupils get on well together and are keen to please their teachers.
13. The children's personal development is very good and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The children are given plenty of responsibility appropriate to their age and are well supported in their own initiatives. For example, the children decided to support the Blue Peter Charity Drive. They held a Bring and Buy sale and raised £200 by themselves. The children also get plenty of opportunities to express themselves and to perform in assemblies, playing recorders. They have very good study skills, which they are encouraged to develop from the earliest stages through using the library and the computers.
14. Attendance is satisfactory. The attendance rate is close to the national average and pupils are punctual. The school now has systems in place to ensure the registers close promptly, which had been a weakness at the time of the last inspection. However, the attendance rate is falling. This is largely due to an increasing number of parents who take holidays in term time, not always realising how important regular attendance is to their child's progress. Holidays are often taken at crucial times of the school year, for example, at the beginning of September. This often means that these pupils get off to a slower start and have ground to make up.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching is good. In all lessons seen the teaching was at least satisfactory. It was good in half the lessons and very good in a further sixth. This is an improvement since the 1997 inspection when there was some unsatisfactory teaching and not as much good teaching. Whilst the quality is good for children across the school, most of the very good teaching is at the end of Key Stage 2. In particular the teaching of science is much better and pupils are given far more opportunities in both science and mathematics to use their skills and knowledge in investigations. Teaching of special needs pupils is also better because teachers now work more closely to the individual plans setting out the pupils' needs.
16. Teaching in the reception class is consistently good and sometimes very good. The class teacher and nursery nurse work very well together as a team. They have a good understanding of how young children learn and plan activities which will excite

and interest them. They know the children very well and this helps them to match learning closely to their needs. As a result, children get off to a good start.

17. A lot of emphasis has been placed in the past three years on ensuring that literacy and numeracy are taught well. The school has been largely successful in this, though up until now the results have been more visible in the junior than the infant classes. However, changes in staffing in the infant classes, a better balance between the teaching of reading and writing and an increase in investigative work in mathematics, are now resulting in measurable improvements. Through training, teachers have built up a very good knowledge of how best to teach literacy and numeracy. In literacy, for example, they teach phonic skills to younger children very effectively and pupils make good progress with their early reading and writing skills. The school has gathered a very good collection of literature which all teachers use well and which children are eager to use. In numeracy, teachers explain fresh ideas well to children so that they quickly begin to understand new work. Through sharply paced mental arithmetic sessions at the start of lessons, teachers build pupils confidence in how to use different strategies to work out answers. They then happily apply those skills in solving problems. In all other subjects, teaching is effective. It is often at its best when the lesson is in the teacher's own area of expertise. For example, there is very good teaching of literacy, ICT, geography and art and design by the subject co-ordinators.
18. Several key strengths characterise the effectiveness of teaching overall. The teachers manage the pupils skilfully. They are consistent in their use of the school's procedures for ensuring good behaviour though they rarely have to use them. They make it very clear to the pupils what they expect and the pupils respond well to their high expectations. If pupils do not meet the standard it is quickly pointed out to them but a happy atmosphere of praise and good humour is the norm. There are very good relationships between the pupils and all staff. The pupils have respect for the adults and so try their best for them. The good classroom management and relationships create the right conditions for active and interesting learning and pupils know they are expected to work hard. Teachers use resources very well to back up their explanations and demonstrations, so making it easier for pupils to follow and understand what they are saying. Use of resources such as small whiteboards and pens allow all pupils to participate in activities such as mental arithmetic. The pupils enjoy using the good resources they are given to work with and the quality of their work is raised. This can be seen in the way pupils present their written work, which reflects the teachers' high expectations.
19. There are some other good features of the teaching which help the pupils to learn effectively. Teachers usually set the context for lessons by reminding pupils about what they already know and they ask questions that make pupils think. Having asked a question, they give the time for pupils to answer fully and explain their thinking. At the time of the last inspection pupils were given too few opportunities to develop their research skills and to work independently. They now have plenty of opportunities to apply their skills, particularly in ICT, mathematics and science. Teachers extend learning opportunities very well; for example, through allowing pupils to work on computers during lunchtime and the wide range of extra-curricular clubs. Homework plays an important part, particularly for the older children, and teachers and pupils value it.
20. There are some features of teaching which are not so consistently good. Teachers often bring their lessons to a close by drawing all the children together for a summary. These sessions tend to be 'show and tell', which gives one or two children the opportunity to explain what they have done in their group work. The opportunity is often missed for the teacher to check which pupils have understood the main learning

intended for the lesson, who might need more help and who found it easy. Marking of pupils' work is also inconsistent, and this weakness has not been improved since the previous inspection. At that time marking was judged to be lacking in guidance to pupils on how to improve and that is still the case. This lack of depth in assessment weakens teachers' planning to meet individual needs. Most affected are the more able children who are not always stretched and challenged enough in some classes. Also on some occasions the lower attainers are affected because they are given work, which is too hard. Teachers do provide pupils with a variety of tasks at different levels but the match to previous attainment is not always right.

21. The quality of pupils learning is better than at the time of the last inspection. Although more able pupils could still achieve more, they are now given ample opportunities to work independently and to research information. The educational support staff provide very valuable and unobtrusive guidance to pupils with special educational needs, which other lower achieving pupils often benefit from by being in the group. The support given to hearing impaired pupils helps them to become fully involved in lessons in the bigger classes.

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

22. The curriculum is very good. It is a strength of the school. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The curriculum is now planned effectively to ensure that pupils can build upon their knowledge and skills as they move through the school. However, it also provides pupils with a rich and stimulating variety of activities and learning experiences, both in and outside lessons. The school is very clear about what it should offer to its pupils, within its particular context and works very hard to achieve this. The requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education are fully met.
23. The Foundation Stage curriculum is very good. Children are provided with a wide range of stimulating, practical experiences in all the required areas of learning. The provision for outdoor play is much improved since the last inspection and now matches the high quality provision inside. As the year progresses, children are gradually introduced to all the required elements of the literacy and numeracy strategies in a way that builds their confidence and ensures that they are ready for Key Stage 1. The emphasis on developing pupils' skills early in the school is having an impact on raising standards. From the earliest stages in reception, children are given very good opportunities to acquire and develop key skills in almost all subject areas, and particularly in literacy, numeracy, ICT and art and design. This now provides a very solid base on which pupils can build and gives them confidence in their abilities as learners.
24. Throughout the school, exciting and relevant links are made between subjects. These provide very good opportunities for pupils to use newly acquired skills and knowledge or to develop existing skills in different but stimulating ways. For example, in history, pupils write refreshing stories and accounts as though they were present at events in the past, using strategies they have learned in literacy lessons. On residential visits, they combine science with geography and art and design as they study plant life. Pupils make good use of their numeracy skills in a range of subjects, including science and geography as they collect data and produce a range of graphs and charts to present their findings. Through such activities, children are able to see the relevance of what they are learning. Exciting links are made between art and design, design and technology and history, as pupils construct Anderson shelters and make models of the canons of Norton Priory. Links between science and geography are

exploited through effective use of the well developed school grounds. Pupils are given lots of opportunities to investigate and search for information in most subjects, especially through the use of the computer and Internet.

25. A strong emphasis is placed on the teaching of literacy and numeracy and the school has implemented the national strategies effectively. As a result, the majority of pupils are now achieving well in both areas. Pupils are given many good opportunities to use their reading skills both for pleasure and to find information to support their learning in other subjects. The range of writing opportunities provided for them ensures that they become competent and enthusiastic writers. Pupils' mental mathematics skills are improving because of the strong emphasis teachers place on developing them. This has contributed to the improvements in the subject, particularly at Key Stage 2. Good use is made of national 'catch-up' programmes in both literacy and numeracy to boost pupils' skills.
26. Provision for ICT in the school has improved significantly since the last inspection. A strong feature is the way in which pupils are encouraged to use the computer as a tool to enhance their work in almost all subjects. This extends the choice of study methods that pupils use and provides a solid platform for future learning.
27. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good across the school and is now well organised. The school is well on its way to implementing the revised Code of Practice. Teachers use pupils' individual education plans well and the learning steps outlined for pupils are clear and specific so that they achieve appropriately. Pupils' progress is checked at the end of each half term and individual pupil targets are reviewed and new ones set. Older pupils take an active part in reviewing their own progress and are aware of their own achievements and are involved in planning next learning steps. This promotes achievement well. Talents are well nurtured in the arts and sports because a strong emphasis is given to these areas both within and outside lessons.
28. There are satisfactory arrangements for personal, social and health education (PSHE). Health and sex education are taught as part of the science curriculum which also covers drugs and awareness of their dangers. Visits and visitors are used to help pupils develop necessary life skills. Year 6 pupils participate in 'Crucial Crew' with the Fire Brigade to help them cope with emergency situations. Arrangements are now being put in place for the children to study citizenship. However, the school has no overall programme to ensure full coverage of all the strands of learning and to allow children to build on their learning from year-to-year.
29. Pupils' learning is enriched through the good opportunities they are given to take part in visits, residential trips and after school and lunchtime clubs. The school makes very good use of the local environment around the school and places further afield. For example, the school grounds have been developed very effectively to provide a woodland trail, a pond and a 'wild meadow' for practical environmental work. The wealth of geographical and historical features of the area, such as the canal and Norton Priory are used effectively to enrich work in many subject areas and give pupils and understanding of their cultural heritage. Visits further afield, for example, to Chester, add to this picture, as do the residential visits pupils are offered at both key stages. The popular breakfast club provides good opportunities for social development as well as improving punctuality and setting a good tone for the school day. The other clubs enrich pupils' experience and practice of music and sports, help them learn important safety messages or provide opportunities for reflection on their lives as in the Metamorphosis club.

30. Links with the community have continued to be a strength of the school. These extend the resources available to the school and provide first hand learning experiences and contributing very positively to children's personal development. These include links to the local chemical industry, work with the local ranger service improving understanding of their environment, visitors from the local churches and links with residential homes, which are beneficial to both young and old. There are also productive links with local sports clubs.
31. There are very good links with partner institutions, including the local secondary school, which support children's progress as they move through the transition from primary to secondary education. For example, they contribute to children's subject knowledge such as in ICT, through sharing of resources and teaching. Pupils visit the school prior to transfer. Links to local colleges are very positive and mutually beneficial as resources and expertise are shared.
32. The school has improved its provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Provision for children's spiritual development although satisfactory, is not as strong as the other areas. Lessons observed included opportunities to experience feelings of wonder. These included the reception children's search for mini beasts in the school grounds and also a Year 3/4 lesson where the children enjoyed following a set of written instructions and suddenly found they had produced a clown's face. Pupils are encouraged to respect and be sensitive to the needs and feelings of others and to care for the environment, appreciating its beauty. However, the school does not plan to promote spiritual development across the curriculum so that opportunities are missed for children to reflect on their beliefs, experiences and values.
33. There is very good provision for pupil's moral development. The school has a very clear system of rewards and sanctions that are used consistently. The children show by their actions that they understand right from wrong. Staff act as very good role models. Pupils also have their moral awareness raised in assemblies and lessons such as RE for example, where the Year 1 children looked at the need for rules. Also in literacy and in history as when discussing the needs of the poor in Victorian times. The children are encouraged to act on their concerns for the needs of others and have good opportunities for involvement with charities.
34. The provision for the social development of pupils is very good. Children are given many opportunities to work together in lessons in pairs and in groups. The very wide range of extra-curricular clubs extends the settings in which they relate to one another including the teamwork of sports and musical events to the breakfast club where they can relate one to one with their table companions. There is generous provision of residential activities for them to gain independence. The school also provides plenty of chances to use their responsibility such as the Year 6 road safety officers.
35. Pupil's cultural development is good. The children are made aware of the traditional local culture in their work and visits. An example of this was their visit to Runcorn Bridge before designing their own bridges. They also look at the canals and its way of life, compare Runcorn old town with their own estate, visit Norton Priory to see what life was like there and learn of the chemical industries of Runcorn. The children also study a range of art and design and music from around Britain. The children are prepared for life in a multicultural society through studying other religions and looking at art and music from around the world. Good use is made of multicultural displays. The 'Travel Bears' introduce children to the food, clothes and ways of life of the people their school friends and teachers meet on holidays. All learning in the school is conducted in an environment of respect for others whether alike or different.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. All staff know the pupils and their families well. They demonstrate high levels of care and concern when dealing with them. The children reflect this in their dealings with one another. However, gaps in required procedures make this aspect satisfactory overall.
37. Parents are very happy with the care and support their children receive. The good relationships that exist between staff and pupils give them the confidence to seek help if they need it. Pupils are also confident in expressing themselves and to trying out new things, so they become mature, well rounded individuals. Pupils with special educational needs and children new to the school receive good support from staff and other pupils so they can play a full part in the school.
38. Procedures for child protection have improved. There is now a named co-ordinator and staff have had training to raise their awareness of this important aspect of care.
39. The school has a large number of trained first aiders and their training is kept up-to-date. The governors conduct an annual health and safety audit but do not have a risk assessment policy. Risk assessments are done by staff taking children on visits but they are not being carried out regularly, in order to inform day-to-day practice around the site. A strong feature of the provision is the work that is done to teach children to keep themselves safe and how to cope with emergencies.
40. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very effective. All staff have high expectations of pupil behaviour. The system of rewards and sanctions with use of a behaviour diary to log concerns is well known and used consistently. The children understand it and parents are confident any worries about bullying will be dealt with effectively. Very specific Individual behaviour plans are in place for children who have behavioural problems and their progress is reviewed very regularly and parents are closely involved in this process.
41. There are no formal systems in place to monitor pupils' personal development. However, teachers know the pupils well and if problems do arise, they ensure that appropriate records are kept and action is taken to provide support.
42. Although the school has in place procedures for monitoring attendance and for following up absence, these are having limited success in halting the recently falling attendance rates. As a result of taking holidays in term time, some pupils' learning is disrupted. The school does work closely with the educational welfare service. However it would benefit the school to analyse the current situation more closely and to build in better incentives to promote good attendance.
43. The school has satisfactory procedures for keeping a check on what pupils know and can do. Procedures in the Foundation Stage are good. Information is collected at the start of children's school life and used to check how well they are achieving in all the areas of their learning. This is helping to ensure that children make good progress in the reception class. However, the current systems do not always make it easy for staff to check progress against each of the 'stepping stones' of the early learning goals outlined for children of this age. This could make it harder for the next teacher to see how much progress individual children have made.
44. In English, mathematics and science in the infant and junior classes, teachers regularly assess where the pupils are up to in their learning and track the progress of

individual children. Through recent training, the staff have increased their understanding of how to make the best use of ICT to analyse data such as test scores. They have become more aware of the benefits of tracking the progress of groups of pupils with the same learning needs and using this information to provide extra support; for example, booster groups in literacy and numeracy.

45. Although the school collects a great deal of information about pupils' progress in the core subjects, it is not always used to best effect. There are some examples of very good use. For example, in Year 5/6 pupils' targets lever up achievement rapidly in the three core subjects because they are based precisely on what each pupil can do and what they need to do to reach the next goal. Some teachers, however, are not so clear about what pupils of different abilities should achieve over a measured period of time. As a result, some more and less able children are not always challenged as well as they might be.
46. In the other subjects of the curriculum, pupils' achievement is measured more informally. In the non-core subjects, little is recorded about pupils' progress. This shows up in the reports to parents, which more often describe what children have covered in lessons rather than what they can or cannot do. It also results in some pupils not being challenged at the right level in their work. At times in these subjects all children are given the same work regardless of the knowledge or skills they already have. This slows the rate of progress for those who are below or above the average.
47. Good account is taken of information available to identify and support pupils with special needs. Individual learning plans effectively set out what they are to be taught over half term periods.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. There are effective links with the parents who have a very positive opinion of the school. Parents view the school as successful in helping their child become mature and responsible. They feel it is a happy, caring and supportive school. They confirm that the headteacher and staff are approachable and feel able to discuss any worries and concerns with them. All parents who replied to the questionnaire feel the school is well led and managed. Most parents feel their children make good progress because the school expects them to work hard and achieve well.
49. The quality of information parents receive is satisfactory. There are three parents' evenings per year, which is generous, and home/school books are used to aid communication with parents through the year. Parents of children with special educational needs including those in the hearing impaired unit and also those with children in the reception class are given good information. However, while the end of year reports meet legal requirements and include an indication of progress made, they are inconsistent in showing what the child needs to do next to improve. They are not as helpful in providing next steps for higher attaining pupils.
50. The school reaches out to parents though not always with the success it deserves. For example, parents have been able to take advantage of the computer course run in the school by a local college. The school makes good links with parents early in their child's education through induction meetings and information booklets showing how parents can help their child to learn. Parents are invited into school to learn about the national curriculum tests for 7 and 11 year olds and also when the children are moving up to secondary school. However, while parents are very supportive of social events and performances, meetings of an academic nature are not so well supported.

51. The school makes good use of homework, particularly for literacy and numeracy, so parents are given good opportunities to help with their child's learning. The Parent Teacher Association works very hard to raise funds to help the school and they subsidise visits out of school including the residential activities, so enriching the pupils' learning. They also help out with visits and help in school occasionally, to support pupils' learning. Parents have been consulted in the past over new policies for the curriculum and also when the move into one building was proposed.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The quality of leadership and management is good. The very good leadership of the headteacher is offset by the areas for improvement in the quality of his management. Despite this, the picture has improved since the last inspection, when leadership and management were judged to be satisfactory. The headteacher has a very clear idea of how he wants the school to be. He communicates this very well to governors, staff and parents, who support him very strongly. The deputy headteacher is also very skilled and hard working and she and the headteacher make a good team, who use their complementary skills effectively to bring about improvement.
53. The school has made satisfactory improvement in the key issues identified in the last report, although there is still work to do in some areas. However, improvement overall has been good because in addition to the work towards the key issues, much effort has gone in to raising standards in mathematics and English. The headteacher has taken a very firm lead in analysing pupil test data and tracking progress, towards this end and Key Stage 2 results have improved significantly as a result. Standards at Key Stage 1 are now beginning to show improvement as the recent dips in reading and mathematics have been closely analysed and action taken to address these issues. Other areas that were not identified as issues last time have also been improved. For example, pupils' personal, moral and social development are all stronger.
54. The headteacher is very successful in fostering a strong team spirit and encouraging and supporting his staff. This has been a key factor in ensuring that everyone works together to raise standards. Effective management of the move into one building has ensured that morale has remained high and the education of the pupils has been largely unaffected. The school has also recently been reorganised into one building. This has taken a great deal of time and energy both at the planning and implementation stages in order to ensure its success.
55. The headteacher's care and concern for others is evident in the way he deals with pupils and parents. He has a very good knowledge of the pupils and their families and understands the school's context very well. He deals very effectively and calmly with problems. As a result, parents find the school very approachable and feel it works very well in partnership with them. He also takes a strong lead in teaching and in developing pupils' talents and abilities, particularly in mathematics and music at Key Stage 2. A high profile is given to ensuring that all children are included in all aspects of the school's work and parents, particularly those who have children with special needs, appreciate this. All the parents who returned the questionnaire agreed the school was well led and managed.
56. Subject leadership is satisfactory overall. There are, however, some subjects in which it is strong. In English, in particular, strong leadership has led directly to some significant improvements, for example in raising standards in writing. Historically, there has been a co-ordinator at each key stage for every subject. Also, because the school is small, teachers often carry more than one responsibility. This results in

some teachers having a very heavy workload, without the systems always being in place to support this. For example, little time is available during the school day for co-ordinators to carry out their duties. All teachers with subject responsibilities support and advise their colleagues well. Only a few, however, are directly involved in checking on standards of teaching and learning. In English, mathematics and science co-ordinators have the opportunity to observe teaching and analyse progress, in conjunction with the headteacher. These observations are variable in their quality and impact. Some identify quite sharply what could be improved, while others simply record a commentary on the lesson. Although teachers receive feedback, there are no systems in place for ensuring that areas identified for improvement are effectively dealt with. As a result, some inconsistencies in teaching remain.

57. The management of special educational needs and of the Hearing Impaired Unit have both improved since the last inspection and are now good. Provision for special education needs is much better organised than at the time of the last inspection. For example, new computerised administration systems are beginning to help the co-ordinator track pupils' progress and quickly spot areas of concern. As a result, pupils' individual needs are more quickly dealt with. In the Hearing Impaired Unit, roles and responsibilities are now more clearly defined and this has ensured support is now organised which better matches to pupils' needs. Management of the Foundation Stage is good. The co-ordinator has received relevant, up-to-date training. The impact of this can be seen in the way the reception class is now well organised to reflect the six areas of learning and effectively promotes learning through play.
58. The school development plan covers three years and has detailed action plans to support developments in English, mathematics and ICT. Developments are costed appropriately and resources effectively identified. It is clear to see, for example, how the plan has effectively underpinned developments in ICT over the last 3 years and how this has led to better provision and a raising of standards. However, sometimes too many priorities are identified and success criteria are not always clearly defined. This makes it harder for the school to manage and for governors to check on progress. There are no action plans to guide the work in other subjects. As a result, improvement in these tends to centre around resource provision rather than on teaching and learning.
59. Clear systems have been established for analysing pupils' performance in tests. The school is using this information effectively to question how well it is doing and set targets for the school and for groups of pupils. Pupils who need help in English and mathematics are identified and support provided. National 'catch-up' programmes are effectively used in this way. However, not all staff use the information on pupils' progress effectively enough on occasions, to ensure that work is set at the appropriate level of challenge for a small number of higher attaining pupils.
60. The governing body supports the school well. Governors work well as a team and are committed to moving the school forward. The headteacher ensures they receive good information to enable them to understand the main strengths and weaknesses of the school and what the priorities are. Whilst they fulfil their responsibilities, systems for ensuring health and safety need improvement. Arrangements for carrying out risk assessments are limited. There is no specific health and safety policy or clear guidelines to follow. The budget is managed effectively to support educational priorities and specific grants, for example for ICT, have been used well to raise standards. The school has satisfactory arrangements in place to ensure it gets good value for the money it spends, for example through comparing prices of goods and services.

61. The school is managing its recent change to mixed age classes at Key Stage 2 well, because of the hard work and commitment of staff. The fall in pupil numbers has resulted in the school being unable to support staffing levels for four classes. Performance management systems have been implemented and are linked to raising standards through setting targets for pupil groups. These have been successful in improving writing throughout the school. However, there is not enough focus on how teaching might be improved. The school gives very good support to students in training and values the contribution they make. Support staff make a very strong contribution to pupils' progress throughout the school. They are hard working and highly skilled. Site and office management staff also make an effective contribution to the school and carry out their duties efficiently. This ensures that teachers can get on with their work without distractions.
62. The accommodation is largely bright, attractive and well maintained. The school has made very good improvements to its grounds to enrich learning, for example, in geography and science. The Hearing Impaired Unit, however, is in need of refurbishment and is rather cramped and dark, despite the best efforts of the staff to improve it. The school is well resourced. There is a very rich range of reading material available and ICT resources have been greatly improved since the last inspection.
63. The school receives average funding per pupil, including grants. Pupils' attainment is below average on entry, but is average in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2. There are signs that standards are rising at Key Stage 1. Leadership is very good and outweighs the less effective management. The school therefore gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. To build on the improvements to date and to further raise standards, the headteacher, governing body and staff should now:
- a) Improve the management of the school by:**
- Monitoring teaching more effectively to ensure that key issues for improvement are clearly identified and that action is taken to address these
 - Developing the role of subject co-ordinators in the non-core subjects
 - Ensuring that the school development plan includes clear targets to guide improvement in the non-core subjects
 - Developing more effective systems and procedures for identification, monitoring and recording of health and safety issues
- (paragraphs 39, 41, 56, 58, 122, 128, 132, 137, 144, 155, 164)
- b) Improve the progress of higher attaining pupils in particular, by:**
- Making better use of assessment information to match work more closely to pupils' abilities, in particular the higher attainers, in English, mathematics and science
 - Developing systems and procedures for the assessment and recording of pupils' progress in the non-core subjects
 - Improving the quality of marking so that it is more effective in helping pupils to improve

(paragraphs 2, 4, 7, 20, 21, 45, 46, 103, 105, 107, 114, 121, 133, 138, 155)

The headteacher, staff and governors may also consider the following minor issues for inclusion in the Action Plan:

- Improve provision for pupils' spiritual development
- Further developing systems for monitoring and promoting attendance
- Improve pupils' composition skills in music

(paragraphs 32, 42, 151)

THE WORK OF THE HEARING IMPAIRED UNIT

65. Provision for pupils in the Hearing Impaired Unit is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when it was judged to be satisfactory. The management of the unit is now good, with systems and procedures working effectively. Good opportunities are provided for staff to support children when they are working in their own classes. The computer system is now up to date and is used effectively to support pupils' learning. The unit provides a secure and caring environment for its pupils.
66. There are currently 6 pupils in the unit, three in Year 6 and three in Year 1. The Year 1 pupils have complex needs in addition to their hearing loss and have a small amount of additional support. Although the current Year 6 unit pupils will not reach national expectations in English, mathematics and science because of delays in language development, they have made good progress because teaching is very closely matched to their needs. In other subjects, they make the same progress as other pupils because staff know how best to support them, for example, in developing the vocabulary that they need and in reinforcing key concepts. The pupils in Year 6 are given very good support both by the unit staff and their own class teacher. For example, in a music lesson, the classroom assistant ensured that the hearing impaired pupils could take a full part in a group composition activity. She sensitively prompted the other children to face the hearing impaired child so that she could lip-read. There is a good balance achieved between ensuring pupils' speech and language development needs are met and that at the same time they have full access to a broad and rich curriculum, alongside others of the same age. Care is taken to ensure that the older pupils develop appropriately as independent learners and they are encouraged to make decisions for themselves as to when they may need extra reinforcement of a topic. This increases their confidence in themselves.
67. The infant pupils currently in Year 1 are taught for much of the time in the unit as a group, although they do join their own class for appropriate periods of time. The teaching observed was satisfactory overall for these pupils. It is well planned to cover the appropriate curriculum, develop pupils' speech and vocabulary and reinforce key concepts. For example, in a science lesson in class children had been learning about 'pushes and pulls'. The teacher reinforced this work in the unit through a related practical activity using playdough, and checked pupils' understanding, correcting misconceptions. However, the following activity lacked pace and excitement and progress was slowed as a result. One of the reasons why teaching, although satisfactory, is not as successful for these pupils as it is for those higher up the school is because they have very complex individual needs in addition to their hearing loss. The staff work very hard to provide for the needs of these pupils and have had

some success, for example in moderating behaviour problems. However, there are occasions when one to one teaching would be more beneficial and it is not always possible within the current resources available.

68. A strength of teaching is the work undertaken with pupils using the 'speech trainer'. Sessions are short, sharp and tightly focused. As a result, pupils cover a lot of ground. Activities are fun and engage the pupils' interest and enthusiasm, as well as developing their language. Support staff are very skilled and experienced. They make a strong contribution to children's education and to their personal development.
69. Pupils' statements of special educational needs identify clear learning targets. Regular assessments ensure that their needs can be met, not only by the school, but also by a range of outside specialists, such as speech therapists and the educational psychologist. The unit staff have developed strong and productive links with these services. They have also developed strong links with the high school to which the children transfer. This greatly aids the transition process. All pupils receive their entitlement to the National Curriculum and as a result, their learning is broadly based.
70. Links with parents are also effective. They are involved at every stage and are given good support. A parent present at the pre-inspection meeting had strong praise for the work of the unit. The school ensures that, because the children often come from some distance away, home schoolbooks are used to relay information. Parents are also contacted by phone to ensure that messages get through. Staff are always willing to give advice and they work closely with parents in helping them support their children. A good example of this is the partnership approach to a Year 1 child who will not read at school, but will read at home. Mum hears him read, passes information on to the unit staff, who can then plan appropriate reinforcement work and advise on the next steps.
71. Another strong feature is the way the school ensures that pupils are included in everything it has to offer. The older pupils in particular take part in lunchtime and after school clubs and have been on the residential visits.
72. The unit classroom is cramped, dark and in need of refurbishment to ensure optimum conditions for learning for these pupils. The staff however, work very hard to make the environment bright and attractive with displays. They have painted the very small room used for speech training themselves to try to make it welcoming for the pupils. However, their work is made more difficult by these conditions, particularly when several staff are working with individual children at the same time.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

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

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	6	20	14	0	0	0
Percentage	0	15	50	35	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 two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	162
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	34

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		44

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	13	13	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	10	12
	Girls	11	12	12
	Total	19	22	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73 (83)	85 (96)	92 (91)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	10
	Girls	11	11	12
	Total	21	21	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (87)	81 (96)	85 (83)
	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	13	15	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	12	13
	Girls	12	13	15
	Total	22	25	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (67)	89 (67)	100 (78)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	12	13
	Girls	13	15	13
	Total	20	27	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (75)	96 (83)	93 (81)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	6
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	133
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	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.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	27.1

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	2.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	81

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	510491
Total expenditure	500300
Expenditure per pupil	3051
Balance brought forward from previous year	13903
Balance carried forward to next year	24094

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0
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	162
Number of questionnaires returned	42

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	46	48	4	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	30	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	59	35	0	2	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	52	4	0	0
The teaching is good.	63	33	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	59	39	2	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	20	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	80	20	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	46	52	2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	63	37	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	39	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	37	4	2	11

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Parents are strongly supportive of the school. They believe that it is well led and managed, their children are expected to work hard and the teaching is good. They also feel that the school is approachable and their children make good progress. Some are not sure whether the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

Other issues raised by parents

Parents at the meeting were concerned about whether the amount of homework was right.

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. Children are admitted to the reception class in the September of the year in which they are five. A significant number have attended a pre-school group on the school site, with which the school has developed good links. This helps children become familiar with the school before they start, as does the effective programme of half-day visits provided in the summer term.
74. The reception class gets children off to a good start and builds a good foundation for their learning. Assessments carried out in the first weeks after starting school show that the majority of children have skills that are below those of most other children of the same age, with the exception of their physical development, which is average. Their language skills are a particular area of weakness. Inspection findings indicate that children make very good progress in their language development and good progress in all other areas of learning. This is a direct result of consistently good teaching and the high expectations the reception class staff have of them. The environment staff create is happy, secure and purposeful. A lot is expected of children and consequently, they develop good attitudes to school life and learning from the start.
75. The curriculum for reception children is well planned to ensure that all the areas of learning outlined for children of this age are covered. It is rich and stimulating and gives children very good opportunities for learning in a practical, hands-on way. The more formal work of literacy and numeracy is introduced gradually which ensures that children develop with great confidence in these areas. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. There is also very good teamwork between staff.
76. Staff know the children very well. They make good use of assessments undertaken to plan the next steps in learning for each child. As a result, work is matched well to their different abilities. However, assessment information is not recorded in a way, which makes it easy to see how far children have progressed along the 'stepping stones' of the early learning goals. This could make it more difficult for the next class teacher or temporary staff to have a clear idea of what children have achieved.
77. Issues identified at the last inspection regarding outdoor play opportunities have been fully addressed. Children now have their own dedicated play area and a wide range of toys and activities to develop their physical skills and support learning in other areas. Staff have had good quality training which is having a strong impact on teaching, learning and provision. For example, they are very clear about how outdoor provision should mirror that indoors.

Personal, social and emotional development

78. On entry, children's skills are close to, but still below average. Children make good progress and by the time they leave the reception class, most are likely to exceed the early learning goals (national standards for pupils of this age) in the area. All pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to school. They are happy and willing to learn and concentrate very well for their age, for example when they sit on the carpet for reading in literacy sessions. They talk confidently to the adults who work with them and are keen to respond in question and answer sessions. They have learned classroom routines such as putting your hand up to speak and lining up quietly. At the end of a session, they tidy up very well, without fuss and follow the teacher's instructions

sensibly. Almost all children work well independently and are willing to try things out for themselves, for example, when they want to find how to spell a word when they are writing.

79. Teaching in this area is good. The staff take every opportunity to encourage hard work and good behaviour through praise and rewards. They manage pupils well and help them understand and follow the classroom rules and routines. This helps children to feel secure and enables them to learn confidently.

Communication, language and literacy

80. Children make very good progress in this area from a well below average starting point and most are on course to achieve the expected standards for children of this age. A third of the class are likely to exceed these. Good teaching of the early skills of reading and writing gives pupils a firm foundation on which to build. Lessons are lively and conducted at a sharp pace. A strong feature is the way in which staff develop the links between reading and writing from the earliest stages. For example, after reading 'Caterpillar Diary' children wrote their own diaries and then shared them with the class. Children approach their writing with enthusiasm and confidence. This is because they are given a wide range of writing experiences, such as making their own books about pets and a life cycle chart of a butterfly. Children make very good use of letter sounds and blends they have learned to work out how to spell familiar words. They can also independently access words from the magnetic board to enable them to spell words that they are not so sure about. More able children are already competent in writing sentences, putting full stops and capital letters in the right place.
81. Group reading sessions are taught well to enable children to develop their skills at the appropriate level. For example, higher attaining children were asked to skim quickly through their 'Very Hungry Caterpillar' books to try to get the main points of the story and to point out any words that were new to them. They did this with confidence and good teaching helped them develop their vocabulary as well as an important strategy for learning. The majority of pupils are reading simple stories and the more able are reading independently, with good word recognition. Children are taught the strategies they need to help them make sense of what they are reading, such as using picture clues. Children who are experiencing difficulties with reading and writing are identified early and are supported well. For example, children who were writing captions for caterpillars they had made were encouraged by the nursery nurse to rehearse what they wanted to write. They were sensitively assisted in finding spellings in their own personal dictionaries.
82. The majority of children talk confidently about their work and events in their lives to adults and to each other. For example, a small group of children working with play dough were discussing the recent 'Harry Potter' film and sought the opinion of the inspector. Children usually listen very attentively to their teachers both when in small groups and in whole class sessions on the carpet. However, very occasionally these sessions go on too long and as a result, a few children lose concentration. All children follow instructions well and are able to get on with their work without constant adult supervision.
83. Handwriting skills are well developed through regular practice of handwriting patterns and letter formation. Most are developing good pencil control. Good use is made of the computer for example, for writing captions.

Mathematical development

84. Children make good progress and are likely to meet the early learning goals in this area by the end of reception. Well structured teaching and a thorough grounding in the basic skills encourage children to become confident with numbers. They enjoy the oral part of their daily numeracy sessions because these often contain games, which they find great fun. Children are very secure in recognising, ordering and working with numbers to twenty and in some cases, beyond. They are beginning to understand simple addition and subtraction and relate this to money. Higher attaining children can total three different amounts on a shopping list with relative ease. Most can recognise a good range of coins and can use these to purchase items from the class shop or give change when in role as the shopkeeper.
85. A strong aspect of the good teaching observed is the way children are encouraged to explain how they have worked things out. For example, staff ask, 'How did you get to that answer?' and 'How did you remember the first number?' A boy replied, 'I kept it in my head, then counted.' This deepens their understanding and increases their confidence. Staff explain different strategies to them very well, building firmly on previous learning. The pace of the daily numeracy lessons is sharp. Much is expected of the children and they rise to the challenge. They are already being encouraged to work out simple problems mentally. Activities are well chosen to match their abilities and are practical, such as working with shopping lists for higher attainers and matching coins to the amounts they represent for those who need more reinforcement. Good, focused support is given, particularly to those who find numbers difficult. There is also an appropriate balance between the tasks that are directed by the staff and those children can choose themselves. Resources are used well, as in the class shop, which is well stocked with 'goods', shopping baskets and tills. In lessons, children use real coins with which to make their purchases. This brings the activity to life as they add up the cost of their purchases and find the correct money.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

86. The majority of children are in line to meet the early learning goals and make good progress. Staff capture their interest and enthusiasm through exciting teaching and the interesting, practical experiences they provide. During the inspection they went out into the school grounds and made excellent use of the woodland trail to find 'mini-beasts' and examine them through their 'bug catcher' magnifiers. Children gasped in amazement as they pulled back a piece of dead tree bark and lots of wood lice ran out. They were fascinated to study their insects through the magnifiers. After observing and drawing them, children carefully released their 'mini-beasts' back into the wood, taking good account of the teacher's instructions about handling living creatures. This activity greatly enriched the children's experience and understanding of living things.
87. Displays and photographs show a wide range of activities. For example, they have learned about pets, using a computer programme to find fact sheets about their chosen animal. They have then produced their own animal booklets. Work with the 'Travel Bears', who go on holiday with staff all over the world, helps children develop a knowledge of the different countries of the world and their diversity.

Physical development

88. Children are on course to exceed the early learning goals in this area and make good progress. The quality of provision and teaching is good. Work is planned and prepared very well to interest and challenge the children. In physical education

sessions in the hall, children are given good opportunities to work with an appropriate and varied range of large and small apparatus. They are encouraged to jump, roll, move and climb, both freely and under the direction of the teacher. Good attention is paid to helping children develop and refine their skills. For example, in one lesson the teacher asked. 'Next time, try a different way of climbing and jumping up and down'. Staff have a good understanding of each child's capabilities and as a result, all learn quickly. Higher attaining pupils, for example, could attempt a scissor jump from the wall bars. Some less able children made good progress because of the help and support they received and by the end of the lesson could jump off the box with confidence Children are beginning to understand that before exercise they need to warm up their bodies and afterwards to cool them down.

89. The outdoor play area provides a rich range of activities that build on and extend the indoor provision, such as sand, water and construction toys. It is also well resourced with a range of wheeled toys including bikes and prams. A good range of activities is planned by teachers to help children to develop appropriate control and co-ordination.
90. The children are also developing their manipulative skills well. The majority have good pencil control and artwork displays show that they use tools such as crayons and paintbrushes with good hand-eye co-ordination. This is a direct result of good teaching of these skills.

Creative development

91. Children's creative development is on course to exceed the expected level by the end of reception. They make good progress, overall and they make very good progress in art activities. Pupils are given a very good range of opportunities to paint, print, draw, cut and stick and to explore texture, shape and colour. Displays and photographs show that children learn different techniques such as printing and pattern making. For example, they have experienced exciting techniques such as batik work. They have also worked in the style of famous artists, with very good results for children of this age. Their work shows confidence and care. Staff pay good attention to displaying work attractively and children are able to see that it is valued. They also gain experience of working collaboratively on larger projects and see how their work can be combined with that of others to form a large display.
92. Children are given good opportunities to make music. A good range of instruments is available for them in the classroom and they have regular music lessons in which develop their knowledge, skills and enjoyment. Photographs show children beaming with pleasure as they play the percussion instruments together.
93. Children are given regular opportunities for role-play, both independently and with adult input. For example, the class shop is currently being used well to encourage children to apply the skills they have learned in numeracy. They also have a range of 'dressing up' clothes available for imaginative play to support them in acting out different roles as they play freely.

ENGLISH

94. Standards in English are close to the average for pupils both at 7 and at 11. This is a similar picture to the time of the last inspection. The trend has been one of improvement in writing at Key Stage 1 over the last 3 years, but a decline in reading. This is because the school placed a high emphasis on writing to raise standards across the school. Whilst this has been effective, however, this change in emphasis has had a detrimental effect on reading standards. The school has recognised this

and is working hard to redress the balance and inspection findings now show that standards are rising. The relatively high proportion of pupils with special needs partly accounts for the variability in standards over the last few years. At Key Stage 2, the trend in the tests for 11-year-olds has been steeply upward. Girls and boys perform equally well now because the school has addressed the differences that emerged in previous years, through making reading and writing more interesting and appealing for them. This is evident in boys' animated responses to stories, poems and information books, which show a positive attitude towards reading and writing.

95. There are several key factors contributing to improvements. One is the effective and consistent implementation of the national literacy strategy methods of teaching across the school. The breadth of learning is underpinned by the wealth of literature used in English and other subjects. The impact of staff training and adjustments to the curriculum in writing can be clearly seen in the improved standards throughout the school. Another factor is the strength of the subject leadership in providing a very good model for teaching and a strong commitment to move pupils on rapidly. The co-ordinator uses assessment strategies very well in her class to identify individual and common weaknesses but also acts swiftly to tackle these by adapting teaching plans and checking day-to-day progress so that pupils move on. She consistently sets work at the right level of challenge for her pupils. A close analysis of test results is used to identify weaknesses in different aspects of the subject so that the school can address these. For example, the identification of some reasons for the downward trend in reading has led to swift action being taken which is changing the picture.
96. Standards in speaking and listening at age 7 and age 11 are average. Pupils make good progress from a below average starting point on entry to reception. There are lots of opportunities for pupils to work in pairs, to talk and re-consider their work. This is a consistent practice across subjects throughout the school. Pupils are given time to answer and are encouraged to refine their thinking. This results in confident and competent speakers who listen to and respect what others have to say. The hearing impaired pupils bring a greater awareness of communication to the children around them. Other pupils often assist by thoughtfully facing each other when speaking to ensure that messages are understood. This happens because teachers plan opportunities for such experiences to take place.
97. Overall, the majority of pupils are making good progress in reading throughout the school. Only a small number of pupils within each year group now fail to reach average standards. Pupils develop a wide range of reading skills, which are reinforced and extended well in group reading sessions. Pupils gain a comprehensive breadth of early reading strategies. For example, when reading, they work out unfamiliar words through using letter sounds and parts of words, such as 'lar- ge' to decipher large. Others eagerly search for clues to establish what might happen to favourite characters. Children are delighted to express their views about different authors and their books, for example, 'The Hodgeheg' by Dick King-Smith. The pleasure of stories pervades the whole school and is a prime reason why pupils enjoy the subject. Higher attaining pupils achieve well because they understand the stories at a deeper level. However, they need more opportunities to record their inferences and evaluations of the text.
98. The teaching of phonic skills is good and pupils use letter sounds and blends in Years 1 and 2 confidently to help them work out unfamiliar words. The emphasis that teachers place on developing pupils' understanding of sentences in both reading and writing gives pupils a solid base for their own writing. Teachers also pay good attention to developing pupils' understanding of different story types, such as fairy

tales. Pupils can identify the different elements they contain, such as magical characters, common phrases like 'Once upon a time' and 'good overcoming evil.'

99. Good teaching of reading continues in junior classes, where pupils read increasingly challenging texts and are encouraged to extend the strategies they use. This leads to good progress for the majority. In Years 4 and 5 for example, pupils participate well in shared class reading sessions and read clearly, with understanding. They show good knowledge of non-fiction books and explain the purpose of captions, labels and the reasons why authors organise information to make it easier to read. Books have been very well chosen to match pupils' interests and abilities and particularly to support their learning. As a result, they make at least sound but often good progress in understanding non-fiction features in a variety of formats such as instructions, explanations and reports. Pupils' skills are extended further in a range of subjects as pupils search contents and indexes to locate information sections well enough for their age. However, occasionally in lessons, the work they are to undertake is not clearly spelled out for them. This results in some pupils achieving less than they might. There are also occasions in some classes when work is not matched closely enough to pupils' abilities, which affects the progress of some higher attaining and some below average pupils, in particular. This is because the work set for a small number of higher attaining pupils does not always stretch them as well as it could do. Very occasionally, lower ability pupils are given work, which is too hard for them to cope with without a high level of teacher support.
100. Pupils in the Year 5/6 class are challenged very effectively. They are guided to use a wide range of study skills to extract information for themselves. This prepares them very well for the next stage in their education. Pupils annotate and highlight key features in texts, as a matter of course. They make notes in margins about characters' feelings and intentions. The higher attaining pupils scrutinise the effect of words and phrases as the writer creates suspense or builds the mood of poem. They can explain figurative language, such as metaphors well. Pupils' continual use of the computer as a learning tool has considerably enhanced their knowledge and use of text types. As a result, most pupils can explain the purpose, for example, of different layouts in newspaper reports. The school makes great efforts to enrich pupils' breadth of experiences through the books used. In one lesson, year 6 pupils were avidly gauging opinion, locating eyewitnesses and experts' remarks in material ranging from alleged Roman history reports to the Children's BBC website hosting current news reports. These features were then to be used in their own report writing. One boy noted: 'Headlines make you intrigued to read more'.
101. From the earliest opportunity, pupils are given a wide range of imaginative opportunities to write. Because pupils read enthusiastically, often capturing and relishing enjoyable repetitive phrases such as 'Don't worry little bear!' they begin to use such features in their own writing. Teachers plan successfully so pupils learn to write stories together and for themselves. They learn to plan and start stories and the impact of the wealth of stories they have read flows across into their own writing. Similarly, pupils learn to write for information purposes because they are taught how information is organised. For example, well thought out activities help pupils to use text features such as bullet points, lists and charts in history and geography. Occasionally teachers expect too much too soon of below average pupils in Year 1 and there is a tendency to over reinforce some learning for higher attainers in Year 2 pupils, rather than moving them on quickly to the next steps. This accounts for the lack of higher attainment in writing in the tests at age 7. Pupils are not always taught to include features they can identify in their reading even though they write at length. Teachers are increasingly effective in teaching the grammar and punctuation needed to raise standards in writing. This is a direct result of the teamwork and training to

increase teachers' knowledge. Older pupils in Year 5 are now used to identifying complex sentences and higher attaining pupils are beginning to use them in their writing. A good proportion of pupils draw upon the use of similes and metaphors to enhance their writing and enjoy searching for more potent words to create a better effect. In one piece of first-hand historical writing, to re-create the Danes landing near Runcorn bridge, a boy wrote, ' I am nervous. We saw them scatter like jack-rabbits.'

102. The standard of pupils' handwriting is above average at age 11. Progress is very good across the school because the school places great emphasis on correct letter formation and joins, with the expectation that pupils will adopt a cursive mature style by the age of 11. The consistent approach and swift action taken to provide extra support for any inconsistencies or difficulties is particularly effective and contributes to pupils' confidence in their abilities. Spelling is secure because it is taught regularly and systematically from the earliest stages. However, not all teachers develop pupils' independence in spelling as well as they could because they sometimes give children words instead of encouraging them to 'have a go' themselves.
103. Overall teaching is good. Teachers employ successful common approaches to reading and writing across the school and this is gradually raising standards and is providing sustained and enriched literacy experiences for all pupils. Teachers also have very good relationships with pupils in their classes and manage them well. They provide pupils with a secure climate in which mistakes are part of learning and because of this, reticent children learn to read and write early and with pleasure. In the majority of lessons, work is interesting and teaching is animated. Teachers increasingly provide extended, varied and often rich ways for pupils to use their reading and writing skills, for example in history, science and geography. In one science lesson, for example, pupils were undertaking research on the Internet, locating habitats, creatures and classifying them then giving feedback to others. They re-visited key ideas, re-thinking their own scientific understanding and practised their note making skills. Hearing impaired pupils were equally involved in giving feedback with good teaching assistant support.
104. A weaker area of teaching is the use of marking, which is not always used to support pupils' learning well enough. Where it is best, pupils take responsibility to improve their work and marking reflects this. However, although most teachers correct pupils work promptly they do not always tell pupils how they might improve.

MATHEMATICS

105. Standards in mathematics are average at age 11. The pattern that emerges from looking at test results for pupils of this age is that standards in mathematics are rising steadily. This is reflected by the work of the current Year 6 children, though their overall performance in the national tests is unlikely to be as good as that of the top junior group in 2001. Last year's class contained more high fliers than usual in the subject, so results were well above average and not typical. Fewer children are likely to reach above average standards (Level 5) this year. The rising standards are due to better teaching and more emphasis on mental arithmetic, brought about by the implementation of the national numeracy framework. Older pupils are excited by the new ways of teaching mathematics and as one pupil put it, 'mathematics used to be all written work and boring but now it's far more exciting'.
106. Standards are also rising in Key Stage 1, although they remain below average. The improvement has been more recent and has not yet shown in test results. In this year's tests at age 7 (as yet unconfirmed) all the children reached Level 2, which is the level expected at this age. However only a few reached the higher Level 3, so the

school's results are unlikely to compare well with either the national picture or similar schools. This has been the pattern for the past few years and is again a fair reflection of standards. Pupils' work samples show that the most able children have not been challenged with hard enough work during the year, though they have gained a good grounding for the future. The work of pupils currently in Year 1 shows they are ahead of where they should be and many are therefore on course to reach the higher level 3 in 2003, if stretched.

107. A significant improvement across the school since the previous inspection is the way in which teachers now give children the opportunity to apply the skills that they learn to solve problems and investigations. Typically, Year 6 pupils are tackling problems such as 'A pool is 25 metres long; how many lengths do you swim in a 150m race?' or 'The River Nile is 6669 km long, the Yangtze-Kiang is 680 km shorter; how long is the Yangtze-Kiang?' There are also many opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects such as science, when they measure temperatures or present their results in tables and graphs. Whilst there is a sufficient emphasis on number work, there is a good balance of work across the different parts of the mathematics curriculum. Pupils build up a good understanding about shape, space and measures and become proficient at handling data. For example, by the time they leave most Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of co-ordinates, with the more able working in the 4 quadrants. Many pupils can find the area of a rectangle using a formula. They know how to compile graphs or pie charts and most can interpret them successfully. Pupils set out their written work well and present it neatly.
108. Pupils achieve at a satisfactory rate in the infant classes and achieve well in the junior classes. The better achievement in Key Stage 2 reflects the higher level of challenge to, and therefore faster progress of, more able pupils. The school identifies pupils who would benefit from extra help and makes appropriate arrangements to meet their needs. For example, pupils with special needs and lower attaining pupils in Year 3 are taught as a separate group whilst those in Year 5 are given additional support through 'Springboard' (part of a national initiative). The headteacher takes a group of more able pupils from the Year 5/6 class.
109. Most of the mathematics teaching is good, with the best teaching towards the end of Key Stage 2. Teachers are confident and have a good knowledge about the best ways to teach number. Lessons begin with mental arithmetic sessions, which fire pupils' enthusiasm for mathematics. As one of the older pupils put it 'these sessions are for fun, more like games; they get the brains working!' Another aspect appreciated by the pupils is the very high quality of the resources that support these sessions and enable them to be involved all the time. For example, in both infant and junior classes, pupils were seen to be using whiteboards and pens, which allowed them all to answer the teacher's questions and to check their answers. Teachers ask pupils to explain their methods of working out their answers and by the time they reach Year 6, pupils can calculate in more than one way and explain their workings. For example, in making 442 from 5,4,6,6,8,100, some pupils calculated $4 \times 100 = 400 + 6 \times 8 = 48 - 6 = 442$ whilst another worked it out as $100 \times 5 = 500 - 6 \times 8 = 48 - (6 + 4) = 442$. This reflects the secure standards pupils are reaching in their number work.
110. There are other good features seen in the teaching. Teachers' explanations to pupils help them to learn new ideas such as different ways of calculating or recording. For example, in Year 1, through direct teaching, the teacher moved children on from counting on in ones to counting in tens. In Year 4/5, pupils were able to use less than and greater than notation (< >) to compare fractions by the end of a lesson. In the best lessons, teachers' questions are well chosen to challenge pupils thinking and

drive lessons forward at a fast pace. For example, in a Year 5/6 lesson, pupils were constantly asked 'how can you....?', 'how did you....?' and 'are you sure that....?' to help ensure their understanding. Teachers are good at making space for pupils' responses; for example giving a little more time for lower attaining pupils to respond to questions or explain their answers. In class, pupils with special needs and lower attaining pupils are given close attention and good support by classroom assistants. This enables their full participation in lessons. Teachers share objectives for the lesson with the pupils at the beginning and sometimes return to them at the end. However, the summary sessions are not as sharp as the lesson introductions. Although some pupils are given the opportunity to explain what they have been doing, not enough emphasis is put on checking out any misconceptions or who has achieved the objectives for the lesson and who has not.

111. ICT is used well in support of mathematics. Pupils work at computers on programs related to their class work. For example, pupils in Year 1 learning about pictograms, Year 3/4 learning about time and Year 5/6 learning about symmetry were all observed working at appropriate programs. Homework is used effectively to extend learning.
112. The development of mathematics is led effectively by the co-ordinator who has a good grasp of standards gained through observing lessons, analysing test results and sampling pupils' work. She has rightly identified that improving assessment and better setting out of the 'next steps' for pupils would be beneficial. At present, all teachers plan for tasks or activities at different levels of difficulty for appropriate groups of pupils. However, this work does not always match closely enough what the pupils have achieved previously and their capability, so that the level of challenge is not always right. This most affects and slows the progress of the higher attainers in the infant classes and to a lesser extent, lower junior classes. Now and again it also leads to over challenging work for lower achieving pupils in both key stages. A clearer picture of the next step forward and level would help teachers plan more precisely to ensure all pupils are stretched appropriately.

SCIENCE

113. Pupils' standards are in line with the national average by the age of 7 and 11. Since the previous inspection, standards in experimental and investigative science have improved, but overall are still slightly below average. Children's knowledge and understanding is good. Although the majority of pupils are making good overall progress throughout the school, more able pupils could develop at an even better rate with further challenge.
114. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to good and is good overall. In the best lessons, children are expected to 'think scientifically'; for example, in Year 5/6 pupils are regularly prompted to answer challenging questions, which keeps them on their toes and deepens their understanding. Pupils' own research is promoted well through the use of computers. Children are able to use the Internet competently to find specific information related, for example, to the classification of animals. Where children are given opportunities to explain their findings from investigations and form conclusions, their attainment is good; they also learn from discussion as they assess their work at the end of the lesson. For example, pupils in Year 2 could explain that they were able to change materials by using specific forces, by 'squashing, crushing, twisting and stretching'.
115. Where teaching is more ordinary, teachers are not always as clear about what they want children to learn and this slows the pace. Although most teachers use resources well, on a few occasions, they are not organised sufficiently well to

promote learning as effectively as they could. For example, a Year 3 child was able to explain that the shadow of a glass salt pot varies in shade because the light is not wholly balanced. However, all groups were not provided with a transparent object to test this out. Marking is not always used effectively enough to support learning. Where it is good, marking makes positive comment about the achievement of the child then suggests ways forward through development or improvement points. However, on many occasions, marking is simply a tick and sometimes a brief positive comment.

116. Good links are made with other areas of the curriculum. For example, children in Year 2 can make the mathematical shape of a sphere from playdough and considering all the forces required to do this. They related this to the character 'Flat Stanley', from a book they had read, as they flattened the material. Pupils in Year 5/6 can remember the four different parts of the Rainforest when considering the classification of insects. ICT is used effectively as pupils produce graphs and charts to display data.
117. Children with special needs are effectively supported. Some pupils with hearing impairment are able to respond to challenging work about the characteristics of animals because of sensitive questioning adapted to their level of ability.
118. In Year 3 pupils can understand that the rise of a shadow changes as the light source moves nearer or further away because staff encourage them to offer reasons about their investigations. They help them find ways of recording their findings, using simple diagrams and short sentences of explanation.
119. The science curriculum has improved since the last inspection. The new scheme of work covers all areas of the national curriculum and ensures that children have progressively harder work, as they grow older.
120. Assessment of children's work has improved since the previous inspection. It is carried out systematically; achievements are tracked and children who underachieve are supported in order to understand difficult work. A strength of assessment lies in children having knowledge of their targets. Children record their targets when achieved and decide where they need to move forward. For example, a child thinking about the next steps for learning writes 'I would like to know how micro-organisms make your teeth rot'. A portfolio gives examples of the standards of work from all classes. However this would be a more effective assessment tool if the work had been levelled in relation to the national curriculum standards, to provide guidance for staff. Assessment needs to be further developed in order that information gained is used more effectively to plan the next steps in learning for pupils and ensure they are set work at the right level of challenge. Setting clear expectations for each child's progress through the levels of the four attainment targets in each year group would help to accelerate learning.
121. Leadership of science is satisfactory. It has changed since the previous inspection and the new co-ordinator works hard to support colleagues. Resources have been re-organised and are now centrally stored and checked for quality. This has proved to be more effective in supporting the staff's preparations of lessons. The co-ordinator has prioritised improvement of certain aspects of the curriculum, such as the promotion of experimental and investigative methods. The support provided to improve teachers' planning and practice in this aspect has had an impact on both teaching and learning. Teachers are now more confident in their planning and delivery in this area. The co-ordinator has found areas of weakness in some teacher's knowledge through checking on teaching and learning. However, as yet little has been done to systematically address these. There are lessons where the co-ordinator is able to

use her specialist skills well to provide specific support for hearing impaired children or for a particular year group in a mixed-age class.

ART AND DESIGN

122. Pupils' standards in art, by the ages of 7 and 11, will exceed those seen in most schools. They have improved since the previous inspection. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress.
123. The subject has a high profile and the school offers exceptional opportunities through a rich curriculum that includes a wide variety of creative experiences in school and on residential visits, for example, to 'Foxhowl'. This ensures pupils have a vibrant and stimulating artistic diet.
124. Children develop a very good range of skills and use a wide variety of techniques, working with a range of media. For example, Year 6 children describe their creation of forest sculpture animals from natural form, left in the forest 'for others to have pleasure' in observing when found. They developed skills in aesthetic appreciation and have enthusiasm to share their work with the wider community. In Year 5/6, where the work of artist David Hockney has inspired children to use pastels in opposing colours, they are well challenged to think more deeply and create effective abstract representations. In Year 3 and 4 they confidently use this wide variety of exciting materials to produce sensitive portraits of their peers from paint, pen and pastels; these are mounted on subtle marbled-ink backgrounds, having drawn inspiration from examples of many famous artists such as Klee, Modigliani, Renoir and Rembrandt. At an earlier age, children in Year 2 are inspired by other artists such as Mondrian to explore line and shape; they create screen prints, using a limited range of colour, that are powerfully bold. In Year 1, the artist Van Gogh is used to stimulate careful mixing of colour and use of bold brush strokes for effective landscapes.
125. Good use is made of computers for design purposes. Their creative use of programs, such as 'Paint' and 'Clipart' enable them to explore and develop their understanding of the concepts of line, tone, shape and colour.
126. The quality of teaching is good, overall. There were also examples of satisfactory and very good lessons seen. Children enjoy a wide variety of activities that are well planned and taught and consequently make good progress. Teachers demonstrate skills very well and as children work they regularly prompt pupils to critically analyse their own work. For example, as children press-printed, they were regularly prompted to investigate and techniques soon became sophisticated. Children understood that print becomes 'lighter' with re-print and too much paint produces a poor print. Teachers use good questioning to enable children to think and make decisions about their work. For example, children were able to decide that a 'dull background' was more appropriate for a city landscape. Support staff worked well with pupils with special needs in these lessons, ensuring they understood instructions and techniques. As a result, they made very good progress. Pupils with particular talent in art are encouraged well and extra curricular activities provide exciting opportunities, such as the study of texture portrayed in three dimensions by Years 5/6 in Art Club. A child with hearing impairment was able to enjoy and perform well in this experience.
127. The subject leadership is good. The co-ordinators work hard and have a sound knowledge of the standards throughout the school. They support colleagues very well in their planning, preparation of activities and development of skills. Very good resource packs on themes and famous artists have been produced, that give all

teachers support; they encourage use of investigative methods of teaching. However, more use could be made of portfolios of work that have been collected by helping staff to analyse standards and develop consistent expectations of what pupils can achieve. All staff show great commitment to the subject, they value and celebrate pupils' effort and achievements; they display work sensitively and well. This enables pupils to be confident and successful as artists.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

128. Pupils in Key Stage 1 get off to a good start so that, by age 7, they are reaching standards better than pupils in most schools. In Key Stage 2, they make satisfactory progress and at age 11 standards are similar to those found in most schools. Standards are higher in the infant classes than at the time of the previous inspection and pupils progression across the years in the junior classes is more even. The improvement has come about because the co-ordinator who leads the subject has provided staff with a better framework from which to plan their lessons, so they are clearer about what to teach.
129. Although no lessons were seen during the inspection, it is clear from the products and records of work that there is good teaching in the infant classes. This ensures that pupils achieve well from the start. In Year 1, models in the 'Pet Shop' made from recyclable materials are impressive. They are finished to a high standard. Models with moving parts are also made and pupils evaluate how successful they have been. For example, in making a flower with moving petals one child wrote 'This has turned out as I expected. If I made another I would do the stem differently.' In Year 2, pupils effectively build their skills such as cutting, using templates and sewing as they make finger puppets. The very good links made with other subjects are seen in Year 2 when pupils' science tests on 'floating and sinking' are linked to designing a doll, which will float. In the younger junior class, links with literacy are used well when pupils make doors with 'horrible door knockers' from paper, card and split pins. Based on a Leon Garfield story, they effectively reproduce images such as 'Tall thin doors with iron down the middle like a Bishop's buttons'.
130. Teachers have made good use of the locality, as when pupils studied their nearby bridge over the River Mersey before making models. They were able to evaluate the effectiveness of different ways of joining materials and how to make the best supports for carrying loads. Food technology is included in the younger junior classes when pupils plan menus, which including vegetarian foods. This enables them to understand, for example, the requirements of a balanced diet. As pupils move through the older junior classes, they undertake more research into a range of products and assess their suitability for use. School events such as Christmas productions are used as an opportunity to design an invitation. Pupils design drawings show greater detail and quality. Links with ICT are made as pupils undertake graphic modelling on computers. Towards the top of the key stage the level of challenge is not as high; for example there is little evidence of the application of pupils knowledge in electronics or mechanics in their work. However, Year 6 pupils show appropriate skills when they construct 'Andersen' shelters as part of their history work.
131. The co-ordinator's leadership of the subject is sound. The vision for which she was credited at the last inspection is still evident and there have been some improvements through a time when other subjects have taken priority. For example, samples of pupils' work are collected to provide a record of what they have done in each year group and to show how work builds from year to year. However the co-ordinator does not have opportunities to monitor pupils' learning and it is therefore difficult for her to get a clear picture of standards in Key Stage 2. Priorities for development in the future

should be brought together in an action plan as part of whole school improvement. This could usefully include more rigorous assessment and recording of pupils' skills on which to base challenges for more able older junior pupils, and better reporting to parents on how good their child's skills are.

GEOGRAPHY

132. Standards in geography at both key stages are similar to those found in most schools, as they were at the last inspection. Achievement in both key stages is satisfactory. The pupils' knowledge of their own local area is a strength, as is pupils' understanding of environmental issues, such as pollution and the effects of the weather. Whilst mapping skills are also well developed, there is too much emphasis on this area at Key Stage 1, at the expense of other topics. Only two geography lessons were seen during the inspection and both of these were satisfactory. An analysis of pupils' work shows a satisfactory teaching picture across the school. However, there are examples of strong teaching, particularly in the Year 4/5 classes taught by the Key Stage 2 co-ordinator. At Key Stage 2 in particular, pupils undertake a very good volume of work of a rich and interesting nature. This is largely because the Key Stage 2 co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and has planned the curriculum well. His great enthusiasm and interest are communicated well to both staff and pupils. On occasions in other classes, however, work is not always matched closely enough to the needs of the pupils. This is largely because there are no systems in place for assessment and recording in the subject. As a result, teachers find it harder to plan the next steps in learning for some pupils. This shows itself in some annual reports to parents as comments are very general.
133. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have good mapping skills. They can construct plan views from a picture and can map simple routes around the school grounds accurately. Very good use has been made of the school grounds to ensure pupils' work is practical and relevant. In Year 1, pupils had studied houses and can confidently identify the main housing types in the locality and the type of house they live in. Good links are made here with history, as children study the canal in the local area from both a historical and a geographical perspective. Most pupils in Year 2 have developed a secure understanding of compass directions and more able pupils are confident with eight points. However, because all pupils tend to be given the same work, on occasions those of lower ability struggle. For example, one particular task required children to place objects by referring to the eight compass points. Lower ability pupils had found this too hard and consequently made more limited progress.
134. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are knowledgeable about environmental issues, such as the effects of global warming and the ecosystem of the Amazon rainforests. They have a good understanding of how areas change over time, particularly in relation to their own local area. They express sensible and thoughtful opinions about the proposals for a new Runcorn-Widnes bridge. In Year 3/4 pupils are making steady progress in understanding how land use changes in relation to the needs of its inhabitants. They make sensible suggestions for example, as to why more roads may be needed and why schools and shops are built. A strength in geography at Key Stage 2 is the way in which children are encouraged to record information in a variety of ways, for example, in graphs, charts and tables. The computer is used well for research. For example, children had used the Internet to find out about the weather in this country compared to other countries. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils make a useful, ongoing study of different aspects and effects of the weather. However, some overlap occurs between classes because systems for checking on the work of the subject are not comprehensive enough.

135. Throughout the school, the geography curriculum is enriched by the excellent outdoor environment. This has been created under the direction of the Key Stage 2 co-ordinator to support children's learning. The woodland trail, the pond and the 'wild area' are used effectively for fieldwork. Very good links are made between the environmental aspects of geography and science. Another strength is the way in which residential field trips and educational visits enrich and extend pupils' experiences at both key stages. For example, visits support pupils in exploring a locality different to their own.
136. Management of the subject is satisfactory overall, despite the strengths identified at Key Stage 2. Although a rich curriculum has been developed and good support and guidance is given to staff, there are few systems in place to check on work in the subject and identify priorities for development. As a result, it is harder for the co-ordinators to have a clear picture of standards in the subject or what should be developed next.

HISTORY

137. Standards in history are similar to those found in most schools, as they were judged to be at the last inspection. Only two lessons were seen during the inspection; one of these was satisfactory and the other good. An analysis of pupils' work shows that the impact of teaching over time is satisfactory. There are strengths at both key stages in the depth with which topics are taught and particularly in the way in which links are made between history and other subjects such as literacy and art. A weakness, is that sometimes work is not always matched closely enough to the needs of the pupils. Sometimes tasks are too hard for those of lower ability and not high enough for some of the more able, so progress for these pupils is not as sharp as it could be. This is largely because systems for assessing pupils' progress in the subject have not yet been developed.
138. In Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of life in Victorian times. They can describe the differences between Victorian schools and their own schools, for example, and have some understanding of what life was like for poor people at this time. They are able to make links between the current jubilee celebrations for the present queen and those that were held for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. They know that pictures from the past can give us good information about how things were and that we can find out about the past from books and the Internet. In the Year 2 lesson seen, pupils were given good opportunities to work together and discuss their ideas.
139. By Year 6, pupils can explain the key events of the periods they have studied throughout Key Stage 2. They have a good understanding of the different ways we can find out about the past. They also understand the importance of being aware of the difference between fact and opinion when interpreting history. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils are given good opportunities to understand what life was like for people in the past. For example, they learn in Year 4 what life was like for the Cannons who lived at nearby Norton Priory. In Year 6 they develop a good understanding of what life was like for families during the Blitz.
140. A strength in provision is the way in which the immediate local area is used effectively to enrich pupils' historical understanding and their appreciation of their own local heritage. Children study the wealth of history to be found in Runcorn's buildings. They learn about the importance of the canal to the area in the past, linking it to the town's industrial heritage and the lives of people who lived and worked on the canal boats. A

study of Norton Priory helps them to understand more about life in Tudor times and the dissolution of the monasteries.

141. Very strong links are made between literacy and history. Children are given many opportunities to use their literacy skills for recording. Very good examples were seen of historical diary writing, biography, letters and reports. The school has worked hard recently in developing this aspect and it is having a good impact on learning. Good links are also made between history and art and design technology. For example, children had made Anderson Shelters from corrugated card for a display. Good use is also made of computers. Children of all ages use the Internet confidently for research in history.
142. In contrast, throughout the school, pupils' understanding of how key historical events relate to each other in time is a weaker area. Pupils have too few opportunities, for example, to construct time lines. There are also more limited opportunities for them to pose historical questions than there are for them to answer questions posed by teachers. This limits higher attaining pupils, in particular.
143. There is satisfactory management of the subject. The co-ordinators provide guidance for colleagues on planning their work and organise resources well. They have good subject knowledge and provide good support because of this. They also collect samples of pupils' work to check on coverage. However, as yet they have had little opportunity to check on teaching in order to promote higher standards. There is no development plan with which to guide improvement in the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

144. Standards at the end of both key stages are above average and pupils' achievement is good. Although pupils' computer skills are typical of what most 7 and 11 year olds achieve, their understanding of how computers can be used in different ways for learning and their independence for example, in using the internet for research are much better developed than in most schools. This is because teachers ensure that ICT is used extensively to support work in the various subjects of the curriculum and is especially successful in the infant and upper junior classes. Much of this success is down to the co-ordinator who leads the development of ICT very well. It is also a consequence of the decision not to set up a separate computer suite because the school has moved from being in two buildings into one and space is at a premium. The computers have recently been updated and there are now four set up in each classroom, which are frequently used in most lessons. Pupils are confident in their use and see them as an everyday tool for their learning.
145. At the time of the previous inspection, the pupils' best progress in ICT was in the Year 6 class and this is still the case. However, their achievement in Key Stage 1 is faster than it was and they reach a higher standard at age 7 than before. Pupils quickly develop good attitudes towards using computers and grasp the opportunities created by staff. For example, a group of Year 2 children carried on with their science work on materials into the lunch hour, so completing much more work than they could have achieved in the lesson. It is usual at lunchtimes to find the older pupils at the computers, independently playing games, researching information or finishing previous work. Teachers' confidence and expertise have been raised since the previous inspection through training and good support from the local authority adviser.
146. The use of ICT across the subjects is strong from Year 1 onwards. For example, after visiting Chester Zoo pupils used the computers to find information about the animals they had seen and to make drawings of them. Year 2 pupils surveyed

wooded areas around the school in science and then made graphs on the computers to show how many slugs or millipedes they had found. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils were seen to be learning how to collect such data and present it in a similar way. This began with a good demonstration by the teacher using shapes on a whiteboard, which helped the children to see and understand how a pictogram is built up. From here the teacher demonstrated how to use the computer program to create a similar pictogram and helped the children connect the 'hands-on' work with that on the screen. Most pupils showed that they could use the mouse efficiently to manoeuvre blocks into the pattern. More able pupils could use the menu to clear the screen and start. Pupils with special needs coped well with the activities, with some modified cutting and pasting paper shapes work to help their understanding. In support of their science work, more able Year 2 pupils could show how 'objects made from some materials can be changed'. In literacy work, spelling programs that offer varying levels of difficulty help lower achieving pupils.

147. Pupils in the younger junior classes are confident with features such as 'drag and drop' and find their way easily around menus. Their word processing skills are developing well; they can change the size, style and colour of fonts. They work sensibly whether alone or in pairs and as well as learning new skills, frequently use those they already have to enhance their work across subjects; for example when they produce a bar chart on shoe sizes. By the time they reach the end of Year 6, skills and confidence are high. Progress is particularly good in the Year 5/6 class, which reflects the strong expertise of the co-ordinator who teaches this class. In a very good lesson seen, the teacher established clearly with the pupils what was to be taught and helped them recall what they already knew with a series of sharp questions, such as 'tell me what the manager is when we use Google?', 'what does the search engine do for you?' and 'what do you get as well as a list of websites?' More able pupils were stretched by harder questions such as explaining what a 'hyperlink' is. Pupils' responses showed a good knowledge of how to use the Internet. They were challenged hard when asked to set up a document, minimise it and cut and paste into it. As they set to work independently, clear prompt sheets supplied by the teacher were available to support them, particularly useful to lower achieving pupils. Since the pupils were researching Aztec foods for history, they had a selection to taste. This made their learning even more enjoyable! The breadth of use of ICT is at its greatest in Year 5/6. For example, pupils made full use of ICT to support their work in literacy by doing the same research on the styles and conventions newspaper journalists use, but using internet BBC reports rather than using paper texts. Similarly in mathematics, they reinforced their understanding of symmetry using screen shapes rather than mirrors and paper.
148. Priorities for future development in ICT are set out in an action plan. This shows the co-ordinator has a good grasp of what is needed to move the subject forward. One disadvantage staff feel in not having a computer suite is that they find teaching skills to a whole class more difficult. To help improve this and as a next stage of development, the co-ordinator is leading the introduction of interactive whiteboards. The school is currently trialling new ways to assess and record pupils' skills and achievements. It needs to continue to consider how it can do this most effectively to ensure that skills are taught not just systematically but at the most exacting level for different pupils.
149. To enable pupils to work with sensors as part of their control technology, useful arrangements have been made with the local secondary school, which has recently become a technology college. The co-ordinator ensures that all appropriate steps are taken to safeguard pupils in their use of the Internet and they have a strong understanding of the potential dangers and of the procedures to be followed. The

school has done well to keep pace with the rise in standards nationally throughout the disruptions caused by reducing its accommodation to one building and renewing its computers.

MUSIC

150. By the time pupils leave, their standards in performing music are better than those of pupils in most schools but their standards in composing music are below average. They also build up good skills in listening to music and understanding what the composer is trying to achieve.
151. Music is strength because it plays an important part in the life of the school. In addition to regular class music lessons, the opportunity is offered to all pupils to learn to play the recorder and to sing in a choir or to play as part of an orchestra. The choir includes pupils from Year 2 through to Year 6. The school has a very good range of musical instruments which pupils have easy access to and which they handle with respect. Whole class performances are put on at times such as Harvest Festival. At other times individuals or small groups of children can be found playing a keyboard which is permanently set up outside the headteacher's room. A small number of children have keyboard lessons in school.
152. Pupils' talents in music are celebrated regularly, particularly through assemblies. For example, on one occasion pupils came into the hall with the background music being played on the piano by a Year 5 pupil. The recorder group played them out with the melody of the Beatle's number 'Fool on a Hill', accompanying a CD. At such times, all the children listen carefully to them and appreciate their performances. In another assembly, when pupils listened to an extract from a violin concerto, one Year 6 pupil was able to explain how the composer wrote the solo line 'higher up' so that it could be more easily heard. When singing together in the hall pupils sing well. They all join in and sing both tunefully and with sensitivity to the words. The quality of the sound is very good. It is even better when the choir perform; for example in the way they sustain note lengths.
153. No music lessons were seen in the infant classes. However, pupils in Year 2 showed good skills in a dance lesson when they danced an exciting jig, clapping to the beat and using body sounds and actions to match a rhythm. Lessons were seen in the older junior classes, which demonstrated that pupils' composition skills are too low for their ages. In both cases the teaching and learning were good because the teachers pitched the lessons at the right level for the pupils current achievement. In the Year 4/5 lesson the teacher gave pupils good support in their choices of percussion instruments as they sought to match sounds to the words of a poem. He encouraged them to develop their imaginations and they worked well together. In the Year 5/6 lesson, the teacher gave the pupils good guidance in how to build up the texture in their compositions whilst not losing sight of beat and rhythm. Pupils with hearing impairment were included very well in the activities through the good support of the classroom assistant and other children in their groups. For example, the children were careful to ensure that they looked directly at the hearing impaired children when they spoke to them. More talented pupils supplied good leadership within the groups to the benefit of less able musicians.
154. Standards in music have been sustained since the previous inspection under the sound leadership of the headteacher. He has a very good knowledge of the talents of the children and this is enough to promote the overall good standards of performance. However, pupils' skills are not regularly assessed and there is no formal record of their development from year to year. Thus many of the reports to parents describe

what their child has done rather than the skills they have gained. The slow development of skills such as those of writing down scores or recording and improving compositions is not picked up. A plan for raising the level of pupils' composing skills needs to be put into place.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

155. Only two physical education lessons were seen during the week of the inspection. However, scrutiny of teachers' planning and discussions with pupils and staff indicate a good range of activities are provided, including swimming, athletics, dance and games. At Key Stage 1, only one dance lesson was seen. This indicated that standards in this aspect are higher than those of pupils in most schools by age 7. At Key Stage 2, only athletics lessons were seen. Standards in this aspect at age 11 are typical of most pupils of this age overall. Some pupils reach higher standards, partly because of the high profile of sports in the school community and their talents being recognised. Pupils enthusiastically participate in the rich choice of extra-curricular sports activities. This gives them good opportunities to further develop and refine their skills. The school takes good advantage of resources and expertise to enhance pupils' achievement. This includes the 'Top Sport' programme, orienteering during residential days for Years 2, 5 and 6 and cross-country, using the facilities of the local high school.
156. Teaching was very good in the Key Stage 1 lesson and good in the Key Stage 2 lesson seen. Effective learning in physical education occurs because the organisation and management of pupils is generally strong. Relationships are good and as a result, pupils work well together and want to please their teachers. Year 1/2 pupils showed great delight and increasing skill in performing country dancing sequences, showing good co-ordination. The pupils were relaxed, confident and animated in their response to music in dance. They were able to move imaginatively and can also count and move in order to carry out more formal dance sequences. Pupils were able to display their skills and watch others demonstrate what they had learned. This developed their confidence and helps them improve their performance. At Key Stage 2, co-operative skills were developed effectively. Good opportunities were given to work with a partner in following instructions, presenting and evaluating performance.
157. Pupils are enthusiastic about PE. For example, Year 6 pupils talked enthusiastically about an Aztec dance they were preparing, which they recorded in note form in order to choreograph the steps and flow of movement. They were also keen to talk about their activities in different sports in their link high school. They have swimming lessons on a rota basis from Year 3 onwards and this ensures that the majority of pupils are able to swim 25 metres by the end of Year 6 with a high number of pupils achieving well beyond.
158. Management in the subject is good and the subject co-ordinator is committed to developing resources, maintaining inter-school sport and ensuring that all the children are given the opportunity to take part, whatever their level of skills and interest. Pupils with special educational needs, including those pupils with hearing impairment, are well supported in lessons, always play a full part in PE and are encouraged to take part in whatever sporting interest they show. Teachers ensure that talented pupils are noted and are offered further coaching skills should they wish.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

159. Pupil's standards are broadly in line with those of pupils in other schools at both 7 and 11. This is a similar picture to the time of the last inspection at Key Stage 2, but is not as strong at Key Stage 1, as standards were judged to be above last time. The subject meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and hearing impairment, make good progress.
160. Pupils' knowledge and understanding are sound in aspects of Christian and other faiths. In Year 1, they can discuss why rules are needed to help them be happy and safe and how God, like a good father, has rules for his followers to live by. By Year 2 children are able to understand simple elements of another faith; they can explain that in the Jewish faith there is a celebration of the Shabbat meal on the Sabbath and then compare it to their own family's special celebration meals. Later in Year 3/4, through the use of the Old Testament stories, pupils show awareness that God looks at the 'inside of a person, not just the outside, to choose His leaders'. They understand some moral values in society and can define characteristics such as nobility, fairness and wisdom that are required for leaders of countries. Good links are made for older pupils between religious education and other subjects. For example, in Year 6 some pupils discussed a theory that married spiritual and scientific issues about evolution.
161. In writing on other major faiths, children in Year 6 understand that the values of truth and kindness in Buddhism can be found in other faiths. They can recount features of Islamic ritual explaining the manner in which followers need to pray.
162. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In the best lessons, pupils are given opportunities to draw conclusions for themselves, such as God 'is our conscience'. Lessons are enriched by planned opportunities for visitors to come into school to share their experiences and beliefs. For example, leaders from different faiths visit and children learn first hand about festivals and events that take place in a church, chapel and synagogue. Work for some higher attaining pupils could be pitched at a better level of challenge, whereas that for some less able pupils, and very occasionally, those with special needs, should be adapted more effectively to improve their rate of learning and develop their confidence.
163. Management of the subject is sound. There is good support for colleagues with planning, preparation of lessons and resources. However, monitoring of standards and progress is at a very early stage and requires development. Staff now needs to analyse the quality of the samples of work collected. Following this, decisions need to be made on effective action, which will bring about improvement in teaching and learning.