

INSPECTION REPORT

VINE TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Crewe

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111143

Headteacher: Mr. I. Gower

Reporting inspector: Mike Capper
23239

Dates of inspection: 12th – 14th November 2001

Inspection number: 195907

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Dane Bank Avenue, Crewe, Cheshire
Postcode:	CW2 8AD
Telephone number:	01270 661526
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. L. T. Wood
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23239	Mike Capper	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology PE Foundation Stage	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
1112	Peter Oldfield	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
30904	Maureen Reardon	Team Inspector	English Geography History RE Special Educational Needs	
25509	Judith Clarke	Team Inspector	Science Art and Design Design and Technology Equal opportunities	How good are curricular opportunities?
23609	Alison Cartlidge	Team inspector	Mathematics Music	How well are pupils taught?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Vine Tree Primary School is located in Crewe in Cheshire. Pupils come from the local and surrounding area, and are admitted between the ages of 4 to 11. There are 245 pupils on roll. With the exception of single-age Reception and Year 6 classes, they are taught in six mixed-age classes. Each of these classes contains two age groups. Pupils come from a range of social backgrounds. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average, but a significant number of pupils come from families that have lower than average incomes. There are 18 pupils on the register of special educational need, with one pupil having a statement of special educational needs. These figures are below average. Test results show that pupils' attainment on entering school is below average. There are two pupils who do not have English as their first language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school that is helping pupils of all abilities to achieve well. The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership, and he is supported by a committed team of teachers and teaching assistants. The quality of teaching is at least good throughout the school. Pupils enjoy their work and behave well. Taking all of these factors into account, the school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- By the end of Year 6, standards of attainment are above average in English, mathematics, science, art and physical education.
- Teaching is good and helps pupils to learn effectively.
- The school is well led by the headteacher.
- Pupils behave well and are keen to learn.
- The curriculum is good. It is rich and stimulating and supported by good links with the local community.
- Provision for children in their reception year helps them to settle quickly and develop good levels of independence.

What could be improved

- The role of co-ordinators in monitoring learning and further developing teaching and the curriculum.

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 progress since the previous inspection in 1997. Pupils' attainment has risen in many subjects, especially in Years 3 to 6. The school has maintained the good quality of teaching and has successfully addressed most of the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. Provision in information and communication technology and religious education has improved and pupils' attainment is now satisfactory. The only area that requires more attention is the role of subject co-ordinators. This remains underdeveloped. The shared sense of purpose means that the school is in a good position to improve further.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A	B	A	A
Mathematics	B	B	A	A
Science	A	C	B	B

Key

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

Standards of attainment vary from year to year because of the variations in the number of pupils with special educational needs in each year group. Inspection findings are that all pupils achieve well for their age and in relation to their prior attainment.

Children make good progress in their first year in school and are on target to reach the expectations for their age in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development. Standards are good in personal, social and emotional development.

By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is above national averages in mathematics and science, and in line with national averages in English. Pupils continue to make at least good progress in Years 3 to 6, so that their attainment is above average, overall, in English, mathematics and science by age 11. Reading is a significant strength of the attainment of older pupils. Their writing is less well developed though still satisfactory.

Standards of attainment are above national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in art and design. Although there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on pupils' attainment in physical education by the end of Year 2, their attainment is above national expectations by the end of Year 6.

Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations in information and communication technology, design and technology, geography, history and music. A weakness in music is the poor quality of singing by pupils in Key Stage 2. Pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education.

The school makes good use of assessments of pupils' work to help set targets for individual pupils as well as year groups. The school successfully exceeded the targets set for 2001.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are enthusiastic about the work they are given and always try hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are friendly and behave well in lessons. They play in a lively but safe manner at lunchtimes and playtimes.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils and adults get on very well together. When pupils are given responsibilities, they carry them out sensibly.
Attendance	Good. Attendance rates are above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Good quality teaching has been maintained since the previous inspection, with more very good teaching of children in the reception year and in Years 3 to 6 than at that time. The school's strategy for organising pupils into classes according to their prior attainment is proving successful in helping to raise standards. Teaching is good overall in English, mathematics and science. One example of unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. In this lesson, more able pupils were unable to complete their work because it was too difficult.

In most lessons, especially in Years 3 to 6, teachers make the purpose of lessons clear to pupils, which helps them to focus their attention and understand what they are learning. Teachers make effective use of praise to encourage pupils to try hard and behave well. This firm but fair approach is successful in developing good attitudes to learning. The high expectations of the teachers mean that pupils are keen to learn and work at a quick pace. Questioning is used well to extend pupils' learning, and teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language are successfully included in activities. Occasionally, discussions at the start of lessons are too long, leaving insufficient time for pupils to complete the work they are given.

Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach and the teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy is good. Throughout the school, lessons are carefully prepared. Teachers provide a wide range of good quality resources and interesting activities, enabling pupils to maintain their concentration and interest. Effective use is made of pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills to support learning in other subjects. The quality of weekly lesson plans is satisfactory overall, but varies from teacher to teacher. There are clear plans for English and mathematics, but in other subjects the teachers do not always show what pupils are expected to learn in a lesson.

Throughout the school, skilful teaching assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning, especially with reception children and pupils with special educational needs or with English as an additional language.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a stimulating curriculum that is relevant to the needs of the pupils. Learning is made purposeful and fun.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants and make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The very small numbers of pupils who have English as an additional language make good progress, especially in their speaking skills.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Pupils explore their thoughts and feelings during school assemblies and develop good moral and social values through well-planned lessons. Pupils are given some opportunities to learn about cultures other than their own, but this could be developed further.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school promotes the pupils' welfare effectively in a caring and secure environment. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory.

The school has a sound partnership with parents. The school has many good educational and social links with the high school and colleges. These provide a wide range of activities for the pupils in a number of subject areas.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. There is a very clear, shared vision for the future of the school that is based on a good understanding of how the school could improve. Members of staff work well as a team, but subject co-ordinators are not given enough responsibility for monitoring teaching and learning in their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are supportive and fulfil their statutory duties.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Strategies for monitoring the work of the school are satisfactory overall. There are thorough procedures for analysing test data to identify where improvement is necessary and the school has taken very effective action to meet targets. However, the headteacher has not yet established a climate where the monitoring and evaluation of teachers is accepted as an everyday part of life.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Budgeting is systematic and is based on a good understanding of the needs of the school. The school applies the principles of 'best value' to its work, for example, by identifying how spending decisions will improve standards.

The school is staffed with a good number of teachers and teaching assistants. The school gives very good support to the large number of students who work in the school each year. This level of support means that the school is an ideal placement for initial teacher training.

Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. Weaknesses in accommodation are the relatively small playground for the size of the school and the field area, which is very poorly drained and not usable for much of the school year. There is a small reference library, but pupils rarely use it for personal study because it is also used as a teaching area.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The caring attitude of the headteacher and other staff. • The quality of teaching. • Standards of attainment. • Children are taught to care for each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of clubs. • Information about their children's progress.

The inspection team supports the positive views of parents. Inspection findings show that the school provides a smaller than usual number of after-school clubs for its size. This is a conscious decision to ensure that teachers have a realistic workload. Although teachers are readily available to talk to parents after school, the inspection team agrees that communication between home and school could be improved by providing an additional parent/teacher consultation meeting in the spring term.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils make good progress in the reception year and Key Stage 1, and very good progress in Key Stage 2. They achieve well for their age and in relation to their attainment on entry into the reception year, as well as in Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils' progress is significantly better than at the time of the last inspection. Attainment has risen in mathematics, religious education and information and communication technology (ICT) throughout the school, and in science at Key Stage 2. Standards in other subjects are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection.
2. Children's attainment on starting school in the reception year is below average. This is confirmed by teacher assessments made in the children's first few weeks at school. Children make good progress in their first year in school and achieve satisfactory standards. They are on target to reach the expectations for their age in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development. Standards are good in personal, social and emotional development. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is very good, which helps children to learn very quickly how to work and play together.
3. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is above national averages in mathematics and science and in line with national averages in English. Pupils continue to make at least good progress in Key Stage 2, so that their attainment is above average overall in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Reading is a significant strength of attainment in English, with writing less well developed though still satisfactory.
4. There are significant variations in National Curriculum test results from year to year because of the differing number of pupils with special educational needs in each year group. However, test results show that there has been an improvement in standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 since the last inspection. In 2001, test results at the end of Year 2 showed that pupils' attainment, when compared with all schools, was well above average in mathematics and reading and above average in writing. When compared with similar schools, pupils' attainment was broadly average.
5. Test results at the end of Year 6 in 2001 show that pupils' attainment was well above average, when compared with all schools, in English, mathematics and science. When compared with similar schools, attainment was well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Fewer than the average number of pupils attained the higher level (Level 5) in the tests at the end of Year 6 in 2000. The school identified this weakness and focused on raising the attainment of more able pupils. The approach was successful, and a much larger number of pupils achieved the higher level in English, mathematics and science in 2001.
6. Test data and inspection findings show that there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. The very small number of pupils who have English as an additional language are well supported and make good progress overall, especially in developing skills in spoken English.
7. Standards of literacy are good overall. Pupils have good reading skills and speak confidently in a range of situations by the end of Year 6. They can plan and write stories, and develop their description of characters and story settings using a range of powerful verbs, adverbs and adjectives. They write purposefully in all subjects.
8. In numeracy, pupils achieve good standards in both key stages. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of the value of numbers up to a hundred. They add and subtract tens and units, and know the properties of various regular shapes. Pupils add and subtract competently by the end of Year 6, including numbers with two decimal places. They calculate

the perimeter of a range of regular and irregular shapes. Higher attaining pupils use a wider range of strategies to tackle more complex problems. Lower attaining pupils have a less secure knowledge of decimals and the value of each digit in large numbers.

9. Standards of attainment are above national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6 in art and design. Although there is not enough evidence to make a judgement on pupils' attainment in physical education by the end of Year 2, attainment is above national expectations by the end of Year 6. In both physical education and art and design, pupils learn well because of the good quality of teaching, with teachers' subject knowledge being particularly noteworthy.
10. In ICT, pupils are beginning to make good progress because of the improved resources and more effective use of computers to support learning in different subjects. Pupils' attainment is now in line with national expectations.
11. Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations in design and technology, geography, history and music. A weakness in music is the poor quality of singing by pupils in Key Stage 2. The amount of time allowed for teaching music is lower than normally found, and this has a negative impact on learning. Pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education.
12. Pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs receive good quality support from learning support assistants, and they make good progress overall. They are given detailed individual education plans, which help to ensure that their needs are met. More able or gifted pupils are well supported in lessons, particularly when the organisation of classes means that they are able to work with older pupils.
13. The school makes good use of assessments of pupils' work to help set targets for individuals as well as year groups. These targets are based on a good knowledge of pupils' prior learning and are realistically challenging, given the capability of different year groups. The school successfully exceeded the targets set for 2001.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils have a positive attitude to their work and show very good levels of respect for others' feelings, values and beliefs. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection, and the school continues to be a friendly place for pupils to learn. The school is welcoming to pupils from different backgrounds and with different needs. The willingness to learn that is evident in all classes and the caring atmosphere that has been established by the headteacher and members of staff make a good contribution to the learning of all pupils.
15. Assessments made when children start school show that a high number of children have poorly developed personal and social skills. However, the very good quality of provision in this area of learning means that this weakness was not evident during the inspection. Children settle well into school life and most become happy and confident. They are given opportunities to choose activities. When they do so, they largely behave sensibly, although their behaviour is best when children are directly supported by an adult. Children are enthusiastic about their schoolwork, try hard in activities, and learn to co-operate with each other. They show respect for property as well as care and concern for each other. They develop a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Their relationships with adults in the class are very good.
16. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 have good attitudes to school, and this has a positive impact on their learning. They enjoy school and are interested in the work in lessons. They understand clearly that their teachers expect them to work hard and behave well. Behaviour is generally good, although there were a few instances seen in assemblies when older pupils did not listen well, which limited their participation. Behaviour is almost always good in classes. At playtimes, play is boisterous but safe. Pupils generally cope well with the limited amount of space on the playground. There have been no recent exclusions.

17. The school works hard to provide a friendly environment. Clear rules are displayed in classrooms, and pupils respond very well to these requests. Pupils were seen to behave particularly well on a visit to the local swimming baths. They followed instructions and behaved very maturely. Pupils eat their lunches in the classroom, where good levels of supervision by experienced mid-day staff help to ensure good behaviour. The head teacher and deputy head are also freely available to supervise the lunch period and generally the time is much enjoyed.
18. The very good relationships in the school encourage a good feeling and the development of 'team spirit'. Classroom helpers and lunchtime assistants have a positive part to play in the team and feel very much valued. The very good relationships allow pupils to feel very secure. A few parents expressed concerns about bullying, and a discussion with some older pupils confirmed that they felt that there were occasional instances of such behaviour. However, none was seen during inspection week. Pupils have a good understanding of what to do if they have a concern and feel it is dealt with well if they talk to a teacher. Pupils play happily together at break times and help each other during lessons. A very good example of the value placed upon relationships by the school is the system of 'Buddy' reading, where older pupils are paired with reception children to read stories to them each week. Older children in Year 6 were seen enjoying the individual attention of younger children during this session. When questioned, pupils spoke to visitors confidently and courteously.
19. Pupils' personal development is good. When there are opportunities for duties, pupils perform them willingly and very well, with a good attitude. An example of this was seen in the Year 6 class where pupils were seen cleaning up the classroom area, sharpening pencils at lunchtime and helping to get the hall ready for assemblies. However, pupils have no formal opportunities to express a contribution to school life, such as in a 'school council', and there are limited chances for pupils to show initiative when working in class. Teachers and teaching assistants give close support, but opportunities for pupils to develop their own learning and show initiative in lessons are not always given. Nevertheless, older pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and develop an understanding of citizenship. For example, pupils who are appointed as road safety officers perform an important function in the school, helping to ensure the safety of others.
20. Pupils respect the school's property and keep the playground free from litter by carefully placing their own rubbish in litterbins. Older pupils have a very good understanding of how their actions may affect others, and respond positively to others' ideas, views and feelings. In one school assembly during the inspection week, older pupils read 'Peace' statements and other pupils listened attentively. A good feature of personal development is the involvement of pupils in reviewing their own learning at the end of each year. This helps to develop pupils' own awareness of how they can improve their work.
21. Pupils' attendance is good, with attendance rates higher than national averages. There is very little unauthorised absence, and most pupils arrive punctually for the start of each school day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

22. The quality of teaching is good overall, with very good teaching in Key Stage 2. Good quality teaching has been maintained since the time of the last inspection, with more very good teaching in the reception year and at Key Stage 2 than previously. Most parents are pleased with the quality of teaching. Throughout the school, there is greater evidence of the impact of good teaching on pupils' learning. The school's strategy for organising pupils into classes according to their prior attainment is proving successful in raising standards. Teaching is good overall in English, mathematics and science. One example of unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection in a Year 1 lesson. In this lesson, the task was not explained clearly to the pupils, behaviour was not managed effectively, and pupils were unable to complete their work because it was too difficult.
23. In most lessons, especially at Key Stage 2, teachers make the purpose of lessons clear to pupils, helping them to focus their attention and understand what they are learning. Teachers

make effective use of praise to encourage pupils to try hard and behave well, and this firm but fair approach is successful in developing pupils' good attitudes to learning. The high expectations of the teachers mean that pupils are keen to learn and work at a quick pace. Questioning is used well during whole-class work to extend pupils' learning, and teachers ensure that questions are asked of all individuals so that those with special educational needs or English as an additional language are successfully included in discussions. Teachers' questioning has improved since the last inspection when it did not enable pupils to develop their own ideas. Discussions at the start of lessons are occasionally too long, leaving insufficient time for pupils to complete the work they are given. The overuse of whole-class teaching in some subjects can also limit pupils' opportunities to take the initiative in their learning. For example, in most music lessons, few pupils have a turn at experimenting with and playing percussion instruments, and in several subjects limited use is made of the library as a resource for research work.

24. Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach, and this is particularly evident in Key Stage 2 when good attention is paid to the correct use of subject-specific vocabulary. The teaching of basic skills is good, with very good support given to reception children in their personal development and to pupils in Key Stage 2 in English, mathematics and science. Throughout the school, lessons are carefully prepared, with teachers providing a wide range of good quality resources and interesting activities that enable pupils to maintain their concentration and interest. Effective use is made in other subjects of what pupils have learnt in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) lessons. The quality of weekly lesson plans is satisfactory overall, though it varies from teacher to teacher. Whilst there are clear plans for English and mathematics, the teachers do not always show in other subjects what pupils are expected to learn in a lesson. In addition, the variable quality of teachers' marking and the information collected on pupils' progress is not always used successfully to adapt work that follows to meet the needs of all pupils.
25. Throughout the school, skilful teaching assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning, especially reception children and pupils with special educational needs or with English as an additional language. However, pupils at Key Stage 1 do not always work well when they are not supported by an adult, and they sometimes rely on adults too heavily. In the reception class, members of staff and other helpers are well informed about the nature of support they are to give, which means that their support is well targeted and there is a good mix between adult-led and child-initiated activities. Homework makes an appropriate contribution to pupils' learning, and most parents are happy with this provision.

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

26. The quality of the curriculum is good, including that for children in the reception year. It is broad, balanced and relevant, offering a good range and quality of learning experiences. This is an improvement on the last inspection when the curriculum was satisfactory. All subjects meet statutory requirements, and religious education meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
27. The school has successfully put the National Literacy Strategy in place. The teachers have worked hard to develop and refine their use of the literacy hour to ensure that pupils make maximum gains in these lessons. The school's recent emphasis on improving writing skills has not led to a fall in the high standards in reading. Extra literacy support, funded by government grants, has been well implemented to improve the skills of a small number of pupils in the lower juniors. Booster classes are run for the pupils in Year 6, and are designed to give all pupils in this year group extra help with their English, mathematics and science. The adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy has produced good results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The school develops cross-curricular links well. For example, information and communication technology supports the teaching of mathematics, and pupils draw graphs showing the results of their experiments in science.
28. The curriculum for the mixed aged classes is carefully planned so that pupils are well catered for. Subjects such as art, geography, history and physical education have securely

maintained their place within the curriculum. However, only a short time is allocated to music each week in Key Stage 2, which means that pupils do not have long enough to consolidate and develop their learning.

29. Appropriate first-hand experiences are planned into the curriculum, and this is a very positive feature. Visitors are invited to give talks and pupils visit places of educational interest in the immediate and wider community. Medium term plans are thorough and give good direction to teachers' work. There are policies and schemes of work for all subjects, but some are currently outdated and do not reflect current practice in the school. Subject co-ordinators monitor medium term planning to ensure that the curriculum builds securely on what has gone before. However, they do not watch lessons and so have a limited role in supporting teachers and monitoring the delivery of curriculum.
30. As at the time of the last inspection, the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, and they have equal opportunity to benefit from the curriculum. These pupils are given good opportunities and support in all subjects. Their individual education plans are thorough and provide good detail about what they need to learn next.
31. There is equality of access and opportunities for all pupils. A positive feature of the school is the way that all pupils value the input of others and work collaboratively together. For example, a physically disabled pupil is fully included in all lessons alongside his peers and so has exactly the same learning experiences. The small number of pupils for whom English is not their first language are well catered for. They have additional specialised help from the local education authority in developing their spoken and written English. Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled in making sure that these pupils are fully involved in all lessons. All members of staff make strenuous efforts to include pupils of all abilities and backgrounds into every activity. Social inclusion for all pupils is given a high priority by the school and is a good feature of its work.
32. Pupils' personal development is addressed through a programme that includes personal, social and health education, drugs awareness and sex education. This helps pupils prepare to play an active role as good citizens within the local community and the wider world. The visit of the "Life Education Caravan" is particularly welcome because it makes a very good contribution to health education, showing pupils how to develop good habits.
33. The range of out-of-school activities is satisfactory, and includes many sporting opportunities. Older pupils have the opportunity to go on residential educational experiences, and these give good support to their personal development. A high percentage of parents feel that provision of after-school clubs is limited. The inspection team agrees that there are fewer clubs than is normal for a school of this size. This is a conscious decision by the headteacher to lessen the workload of teachers but it does mean that pupils are not given many opportunities to develop their skills outside lessons.
34. Relationships with local high schools and colleges are good. The many educational and social links provide a wide range of activities for the pupils in a number of subject areas. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils are well prepared for the next phase of their education.
35. Provision for pupils' spiritual education is good. Pupils explore their thoughts and feelings in prayer and reflection during school assemblies. They think about people in their own lives whom they want to remember and write their memories on poppies to display in the school hall. One pupil wrote fond memories of playing with her great-grandmother. The youngest pupils in the school thought about how light fills a room and that Jesus is always there to guide and light their way. The bringing together of the effects of music, lighted candles and time for thought and reflection makes a good contribution to spiritual development. There are also occasions for thought and reflection built into the school day, for example in an art lesson when the pupils viewed a picture of *'Christ in the Wilderness'* and thought about how the picture made them feel. The pupils are pleased to talk about their work in school and their likes and dislikes.

36. Moral development is well promoted throughout the school. Class rules provide a secure and clear framework so that pupils are quite clear about the school's expectations for their behaviour. This approach is applied consistently, with the result that pupils know the positive expectations of all staff. Members of staff provide good role models, and relationships within the school provide a firm basis for the development of moral understanding. Pupils are taught right from wrong, with the very youngest children in the school having a clear understanding of what is expected of them.
37. Social development is promoted well. Parents feel that the school strongly encourages their children to develop as mature and responsible people. Social values are sustained and pupils are expected to care and take responsibility for others. For example, the pupils in Year 6 look after or act as *Buddies* of reception children. The older pupils hear the younger children read and provide a familiar face in the playground if they have no one to play with. Year 6 pupils feel a great responsibility for the reception children and make them an intricate pop-up book to keep at the end of the year. Pupils willingly accept responsibility, for example when distributing materials in lessons, tidying up at the end, and helping in the organisation of school assemblies. The pupils celebrated Harvest Festival by collecting a large number of toys, which they gave to the Salvation Army to use in their work with families at Christmas time. The school successfully promotes an atmosphere in which pupils are able to discuss important questions and concerns. The inclusion of pupils with statements of special need and those on the special educational needs register supports pupils' social development and promotes very positive attitudes to all pupils.
38. Provision for cultural education is satisfactory. The pupils have a good understanding of the locality and its cultural heritage. They study the work of a range of artists, though these tend to be of white European origin. They study a wide range of ancient civilisations and gain an understanding of the life and times of these ancient peoples. In religious education, pupils learn about other faiths and customs. Nevertheless, there is only a limited coverage of issues to prepare pupils for living in a multi-cultural society, and this aspect needs further development.
39. Provision for spiritual development has improved since the last inspection and is now good, while other elements of provision for personal development continue to be of good quality.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The school offers a warm and very welcoming environment where pupils feel supported and secure. Members of staff have a genuine concern for all pupils, whatever their needs, and support staff work very well with individuals to promote their learning. The school offers a safe, welcoming environment where adults value and support children of all ages.
41. Good procedures are in place for ensuring pupils' welfare and their health and safety, for example in the wearing of goggles during design and technology lessons. The head teacher is the designated person for child protection, very well supported by another senior teacher with special responsibilities, who is very well trained and has full knowledge of the local area child protection committee's requirements. Matters regarding the care of pupils are carefully considered before being put into place. For example, the school decided to let younger pupils eat second at lunchtimes so that they had time to play on the playground without bigger boys or girls to disturb them. Unfortunately, this has resulted in reception children having less time to eat, with a small number regularly still eating when it is time to start work. This arrangement is unsatisfactory and requires attention.
42. A detailed health and safety policy is in place to ensure the welfare of pupils, and assessments of risks have been carried out. The governing body has a high regard for all matters of health and safety and monitors the position well. There are a high number of trained first-aiders in the school. Minor accidents are dealt with very well, but they are not always recorded in an accident book. This aspect of care needs further appraisal by the head teacher. However, a good procedure exists, in line with school policy, whereby parents are informed about injuries sustained by their children.

43. Pastoral care is strong and there are good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and improving attendance. Class teachers supervise attendance well by marking registers very clearly and following up absences. There is appropriate liaison with the education welfare officer. Good attendance is expected and reinforced by the school. Most parents appreciate the need for good attendance and punctuality, although the school does not formally record the reasons for lateness.
44. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour work very well. The very high quality of relationships and the focus on children's self-esteem encourage tolerance and have a most positive effect on pupils' learning. Rules are displayed in classrooms and incidents of poor behaviour are very rare. Pupils have a good understanding of what to do if they are concerned about bullying or behaviour. The school's discipline policy stresses the requirement for a high level of supervision. This is always on hand, in a quiet yet firm manner. The school's bullying policy is satisfactory. Although parents expressed some concern about bullying, pupils are clear about what they should do if they have a concern.
45. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are satisfactory. Teachers know the pupils well, and all members of staff share any concerns or information when they arise. This arrangement is effective but there is no formal structure in place to record personal development.
46. The school demonstrates a good level of care for pupils with special educational needs. Teaching and support staff know them well, monitoring their needs carefully so as to give them the best help. The school is appropriately supported by outside agencies.
47. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are satisfactory. Children's attainment on starting school is assessed using a baseline test. Their progress is monitored to identify their needs so that they make a smooth transition to the National Curriculum. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' academic progress in English and mathematics is assessed effectively. Good use is made of statutory and non-statutory tests to set targets for individuals and year groups and to organise classes so that pupils are placed with others of broadly similar ability. A good feature of current assessment procedures is the involvement of pupils in reviewing their own learning at the end of each year. This makes a good contribution to their personal development.
48. Teachers have a good knowledge of the progress that pupils are making, and they record what is significant in pupils' records of achievement. However, these largely show progress over time and provide little information about progress on a daily or weekly basis. Many subject co-ordinators have identified the need to further develop short-term assessment and record-keeping procedures in their own subjects. They hope to do this when they are given more time out of the classroom.
49. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Other agencies, such as occupational therapists and physiotherapists, are contacted where appropriate.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. The school has a sound partnership with parents. Many parents have very positive views of the school and the good care that it provides for their children. During the week of inspection, a large number of parents expressed their full satisfaction with the work of the school. They indicated that their children are happy and settled. However, a number of parents feel that they are not kept well enough informed about the progress of their children, especially through parent/teacher consultation evenings. Currently, the school offers two such meetings a year: one in November and one at the end of the school year to discuss pupils' annual progress reports. Although teachers are readily available to talk to parents at the end of each day, the inspection team agrees that an additional meeting in the spring term would improve communication between school and parents.
51. The greatest concern expressed by parents was about the range of activities provided by the school outside lessons. Inspection evidence indicates that the school offers a wide range of

activities, such as visits and visitors, as well as a small number of clubs for pupils in Key Stage 2. The inspection team agrees that the number of clubs offered is smaller than is normally found in a school of this size. This limits pupils' opportunities to learn outside lessons.

52. The level of parental involvement in school life is satisfactory. Parents are supportive of the work of the school but they are not heavily involved in its daily life, and only a small number regularly help in classes. The school regularly puts on curriculum evenings, but these are not well attended and only half of parents have returned home-school agreements.
53. The active home-school association provides generous funds. This generous support makes a very good contribution to the work of the school, including the purchase of very good quality resources and funding social events, such as a 'Disney' evening.
54. The school keeps parents well informed about its life. A regular supply of letters and information is sent to parents, giving appropriate notice of events. The prospectus is informative, and the decision to hold the annual meeting of the governing body at the same time as the home-school association has resulted in good attendance of parents. Annual reports to parents on their children's progress are detailed and include targets for improvement.
55. Parents of children with special educational needs express satisfaction for the support their children are given. Parents of those with statements of special educational needs are invited to an annual review with school staff and other professionals involved in support. Parents discuss their child's individual education plan with class teachers at the autumn term parent/teacher meeting, with subsequent reviews throughout the year carried out informally between parent and teacher. The headteacher is the special educational needs co-ordinator, and parents feel that they are able to approach him if they are concerned about their child's progress in school.
56. Homework is regularly set, and many parents reported that they particularly like the opportunity to put comments in the home-reading book, which teachers read and respond to. However, a few parents feel that provision for homework is variable across the school. The inspection team did not find evidence of this and feels that arrangements for homework are satisfactory.
57. The impact of parents' involvement in the work of the school is satisfactory. The governing body has established a school improvement committee to identify how the partnership can be further improved, and a questionnaire to parents is proposed as the first stage of the process.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

58. The headteacher provides strong leadership for the work of the school. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Parents are very happy with the quality of leadership of the headteacher. They particularly like the fact that he knows all the pupils very well and is easy to talk to. They feel that he provides good care for their children, ensuring that they are happy and secure at school. Inspection findings support these views.
59. There is a very clear, shared vision for the future of the school that is based on a good understanding of its potential for improvement. The school development plan is good. It is detailed and sets a clear and appropriate agenda for school improvement. The headteacher has maintained the caring ethos that was evident at the time of the last inspection, and has successfully addressed most of the weaknesses identified at that time. Standards have improved significantly, particularly in Key Stage 2. The teamwork and shared sense of purpose that is apparent throughout the school is a significant feature of the school's work, with all members of staff placing their pupils' well being and education to the forefront of their planning. This means that the school is in a strong position to improve further in the future.
60. Strategies for monitoring the work of the school are satisfactory. Detailed records of pupils' individual test scores are kept and used very effectively to set targets for improving standards.

The headteacher has established thorough procedures for analysing test data to identify where improvement is necessary. However, subject co-ordinators are not sufficiently involved in this process and their role in monitoring teaching and learning continues to be limited. The headteacher has not yet established a climate where the monitoring and evaluation of teachers is accepted as an everyday part of life.

61. There have been some improvements in the role of the subject co-ordinator since the last inspection, and the headteacher has identified this as a priority for school development. The school has recently appointed a part-time teacher so that co-ordinators can be released from teaching to develop a more systematic approach to their roles. Co-ordinators have begun to look at pupils' work in a more structured way, which has identified what is going well and what could be improved. However, no written records are kept of the outcomes of this monitoring. They have also had some opportunities to observe teachers at work in their classrooms. Where this has happened, in subjects such as English and mathematics, the observations have been thorough and have acknowledged strengths in teaching and identified areas for improvement. However, few of these observations are recent and the impact of monitoring has been limited because of the lack of structure to procedures. There is no regular pattern to the monitoring of teaching and learning and, where weaknesses have been identified, they have not been sufficiently followed up. As a result, weaknesses in the work in one class were still evident at the time of the inspection although they had been identified by the Key Stage 1 team leader.
62. The co-ordination of special educational needs is good, with the headteacher identifying under-achieving children from the data and employing additional staff as needed. The school's strategic plan identifies the need for further training in the identification and assessment of pupils with special learning difficulties and in suitable intervention strategies.
63. Governors are supportive of the school's work and are committed to developing it further. They have sound understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, based on the detailed information provided by the headteacher and occasional visits. The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and publish a prospectus and report to parents.
64. The day-to-day administration of the school by the headteacher and school secretary is good. Financial planning is very thorough, with spending clearly targeted on raising standards. The finance committee of the governing body makes a good contribution to planning spending. The school development plan includes appropriate detail of how improvements are to be funded. The school successfully seeks additional funding from a range of sources, and these grants are used effectively so that they have a positive impact on learning. The school applies the principles of 'best value' to its work, for example, by ensuring that competitive bids are sought for all large purchases. The school has a much larger than average carry forward. This is being used appropriately to maintain high staffing levels, for example by employing a part-time teacher so that subject co-ordinators have some time out of the classroom to develop their roles.
65. Additional funding for information and communication technology has been used well to improve provision in this subject. Parents make a significant contribution to the financial security of the school. The money they raise is spent well to improve resources and accommodation. Parental contributions recently paid for new books and equipment.
66. The school has a good number of teachers and support staff. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning, particularly in the reception classes and when supporting small groups of pupils in literacy and numeracy lessons. Teachers are given good opportunities for professional development through a range of training opportunities. The school gives very good support to the large number of students who work in the school each year. This level of support means that the school is an ideal location for initial teacher training.
67. Accommodation is satisfactory and has been improved since the last inspection to provide more space in classrooms. The building is well maintained, and attractive displays help to make the school welcoming to pupils. Weaknesses in accommodation are the relatively small

playground for the number of pupils, and the field area, which is very poorly drained and out of use for much of the school year.

68. Resources are satisfactory. There have been good improvements in resources for information and communication technology since the last inspection. There are many books in classrooms and there is a small reference library. However, this is rarely used by pupils for personal study because it is also used as a teaching area. This is a weakness that limits the opportunities pupils have to carry out individual research.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

To further raise standards of achievement, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- Carry out existing plans to extend the roles of subject co-ordinators by:
 - Implementing a realistic timetable for co-ordinators to take responsibility for monitoring teaching and pupils' learning in order to identify strengths and weaknesses in provision;
 - Ensuring that written records are kept of the outcomes of monitoring procedures;
 - Giving co-ordinators opportunities to review schemes of work, assessment procedures and out-of-date policies to ensure that they are appropriate to the needs of the school;
 - Increasing co-ordinators' involvement in reviewing test data and setting targets.

(Paragraphs 29, 60, 61, 124, 134, 167, 174, 181)

In addition, the following areas for improvement should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Make better use of the library to help pupils develop research skills. (Paragraphs 68, 159)
- Review the amount of time allowed for the teaching of music. (Paragraphs 11, 28)
- Introduce an additional teacher-parent consultation meeting in the spring term. (Paragraph 50)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	51
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	42

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	17	23	10	1	0	0
Percentage	0	33	45	20	2	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 approximately two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	245
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	16
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	18
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
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	18	15	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	18
	Girls	15	15	14
	Total	33	33	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (94)	100 (94)	97 (94)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	18
	Girls	15	14	15
	Total	33	32	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (94)	97 (94)	100 (94)
	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	19	22	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	17	19
	Girls	19	16	20
	Total	36	33	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (84)	80 (84)	95 (91)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	17	19
	Girls	19	17	21
	Total	36	34	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (88)	83 (91)	97 (94)
	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	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	0
Any other minority ethnic group	8

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.7
Average class size	30.25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	130

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
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.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	464907
Total expenditure	438717
Expenditure per pupil	1791
Balance brought forward from previous year	29878
Balance carried forward to next year	56068

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	245
Number of questionnaires returned	123

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	30	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	54	41	3	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	44	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	50	5	2	1
The teaching is good.	60	34	2	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	46	9	5	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	35	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	37	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	41	47	9	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	52	45	2	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	43	2	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	37	24	5	9

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

69. The quality of provision for children in the reception year is good. The curriculum has been developed, and the good teaching seen during the inspection is having a positive impact on children's learning. The last report contained no clear statements about provision for children in their first year in school. This means it is not possible to make a judgement on improvements in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection.
70. Children's attainment on starting school in the reception year is below average. This is confirmed by teacher assessments made in the children's first few weeks at school. Children make good progress in their first year and achieve satisfactory standards. They are on target to reach the expectations for their age in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development. Standards are good in personal, social and emotional development. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is very good, which helps children to develop quickly good levels of independence.
71. The curriculum for children in the reception year is good. The majority of children in the reception year are taught in a reception class. A small number of children are taught for some of the time in a mixed Reception/Year 1 class. This arrangement is effective because the school moves children between the two classes for different activities according to their needs. For example, more able children in the reception class join Year 1 pupils for literacy and numeracy lessons. This means that all children have equal access to the curriculum and, on most occasions, the needs of all children are met successfully. Activities are carefully planned and help children develop a range of skills. Planning is based on the nationally recommended 'Early Learning Goals' and, where appropriate, the expectations of the National Curriculum. A good balance is achieved between activities that are closely directed by the teacher and activities that children choose for themselves from the range on offer. However, these self-chosen activities sometimes lack a clear focus, and there is too little adult intervention to guide and encourage children. Appropriate use is made of the outdoor area, and children are given good opportunities to show independence in their learning.
72. The assessment of children's attainment and progress is satisfactory. Assessments are made when children start school, and this information is used appropriately to identify what individual children need to learn next. The teacher keeps clear records of their progress, and uses this information successfully to ensure that activities build on previous learning. Teaching assistants give good support in the ongoing assessment of children's learning.
73. There is good liaison between the school and home when children start school. Parents are welcomed into school at any time to discuss concerns, and new children spend time in the class before they are due to start. These activities help them to settle into school quickly.

Personal, social and emotional development

74. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is very good. The teacher and teaching assistants are calm, caring and patient, and have a very good knowledge of both the social and educational needs of individual children. Children benefit from the high number of adults in the class, with all members of staff working well as a team and acting as good role models. Behaviour is well managed, with good use of praise to develop self-esteem. Throughout all areas of the curriculum, teachers and teaching assistants ensure that children are encouraged to become independent, to relate well to each other and behave sensibly. Children are given opportunities to choose activities and they largely behave sensibly when they do so, although their behaviour is best when an adult directly supports them. Times when children talk together are used effectively to encourage them to think about things that affect them. However, they are rarely given opportunities to talk about what they have been doing after they have been working on an activity without an adult. This is a comparative

weakness of provision, which means that some opportunities to extend learning and teach new skills are missed.

75. Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of children's independence, expecting them to get out resources without adult help. They do this sensibly and then happily tidy away at the end of an activity. As a result, levels of independence in the reception year are good, with children becoming confident and secure individuals. Children are enthusiastic about school and try hard in all their activities. They show respect for property as well as care and concern for each other, and develop a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong.

Communication, language and literacy

76. There is a strong emphasis on developing language skills through all activities, which helps children to make good progress overall in this area of learning in both the reception class and mixed Reception/Year 1 class. Many children start school with a limited vocabulary, but teachers work hard to improve their speaking and listening skills. Teachers give children many opportunities to take part in discussions and talk about their lives, so they become confident in talking to large or small groups as well as to individuals. They explain what they are doing when they are working with an adult, and talk happily to visitors about the work they are doing. Strong emphasis is given to introducing children to new vocabulary and ensuring that they understand what it means. For example, when listening to a story about a train, the teacher talked about the meaning of words such as 'ticket collector' and 'similar'.
77. Reading skills are taught effectively, with elements of the literacy hour used appropriately to ensure that there is sufficient challenge for higher attaining children. The teachers and the teaching assistants have high expectations of what children should achieve. Stories are read well and children enjoy listening to them. They respond appropriately, joining in with the teacher when they recognise a text. Although only in school a few weeks, some children are beginning to read very simple texts and can talk accurately about the events in the story. More able children already know a few letter sounds and use this knowledge when trying to read simple unknown words. All children develop positive attitudes to reading because of the emphasis placed on developing skills. As a result, even children with lower attainment are happy to talk about and share books with an adult.
78. Similarly, children develop a positive attitude towards writing and are given good opportunities to improve their skills, with teachers working hard to ensure that writing is made purposeful. As a result, children become confident about recording their ideas on paper. The quality of teaching is good, although on occasions too little time is allowed for work to be finished. One instance of this was seen when children were given opportunities to write postcards to a friend or relative. They responded very well to this task, but because they drew pictures first, some of the group did not complete the writing element of the task. Nevertheless, even less able children are enthusiastic about using their writing skills. They are always willing to record their ideas on paper, often using recognisable words or letters. Supplies of paper, pens and pencils are always available, and children readily use them. For example, many children 'write' appointments for the 'hospital' and make notes for the mechanic in the 'garage'.
79. Homework is well planned and makes a sound contribution to children's learning, especially in the development of reading skills.

Mathematical development

80. Children make good progress in developing mathematical skills. Many recognise numbers to ten, with some higher attaining children recognising higher numbers. When working orally, higher attaining children can work out 'one more than' a given number. Children enjoy playing simple number games on the computer, and confidently use appropriate mathematical language, such as 'bigger than' and 'smaller than'.
81. The very good teaching of the subject in the reception class by the teacher and teaching assistants ensures that all children are well motivated and interested. However, the work

given to the more able children who go into the Reception/Year 1 class for mathematics lessons is not always matched to the needs of reception age children. For example, a reception child was given a task that involved counting the number of corners on a 3-dimensional shape. However, the child did not know what a corner was, so was unable to complete the work. In this case, the teacher did not have a good enough awareness of what the child had already learnt, so the work was not matched to previous learning.

82. In the reception class, activities are exciting and stimulating, and so encourage children to think of themselves as mathematicians. The teacher uses children's errors effectively to develop learning. This means that children are willing to have a go at giving an answer and are not afraid of making mistakes. Mathematical concepts are often taught in a practical way that involves the children and promotes good learning. For example, the concept of height was very effectively introduced by getting children to build towers and then compare their height with metre sticks.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

83. Children make good progress in this area of learning, developing an appropriate range of skills and knowledge. They know what animals eat and understand what they need to help them grow. They understand that things change over time and can talk about recent past events in their own lives. Work on festivals, such as the Diwali and Christmas, helps children to understand that not everyone is the same or believes in the same things.
84. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good in both the reception and the mixed Reception/Year 1 class. Activities are carefully planned around different topics. For example, much of the work taking place during the inspection was linked to the theme of transport. Children learnt how transport had changed over time and talked about their own experiences of train journeys. The practical focus of tasks means that learning is made purposeful and fun. Children enjoy practical activities and work well because they are well motivated. Good use is made of visits or visitors to stimulate learning. For example, a visit from 'Linda Lollipop' helped children to improve their knowledge of how to cross the road safely using a pelican crossing.
85. In the Reception/Year 1 class, good account is taken of the needs of the youngest children and work is provided that meets their needs. For example, after taking part in a whole-class discussion on sounds in which they were suitably involved because of the good use of questioning, children were given a practical activity involving making shakers. This activity developed their learning well.
86. Children show appropriate skills when using the computer and teachers take care to ensure that the use of ICT is built into the different areas of learning. Children write their names using the computer and are improving their confidence in using the keyboard and 'mouse' to control the cursor. Teachers encourage this effectively by making sure that the computer is readily available for everyday use in the classroom.

Physical development

87. Children make sound progress in developing physical skills. They have regular opportunities to work outside, and their learning is also enhanced by regularly timetabled physical education lessons. The quality of teaching is good in these lessons. Careful planning helps to ensure that all children are fully involved in activities. Good links are made with other subjects. For example, the story of 'The Hungry Caterpillar' was used as a stimulus in a dance lesson, when children were encouraged to make up movements to go with the story. They did this confidently, with more able children sequencing more than one movement. The teacher allows sufficient time in lessons for the teaching of specific skills, but also gives children time to 'experiment' with ideas in their own way. At these times the teacher gives good support to individuals, so helping to ensure that the needs of children with differing prior attainment are fully met.

88. There is a small outdoor area adjacent to the reception classroom and planning shows that children are given suitable opportunities to use it, although this was not evident during the inspection. The teachers and teaching assistants also provide an interesting range of activities in the classroom to extend children's physical skills. For example, children improved their co-ordination and body control by 'driving' small cars around a track.

Creative development

89. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good and children make good progress. An imaginative range of resources is used to stimulate interest and promote good learning. Children draw and paint confidently, with increasing control of a range of tools, for example when using different materials to make pictures of different types of vehicles. Teachers successfully encourage pupils to work independently and expect them to make choices about which materials to use. Children often show good levels of imagination, for example when making three-dimensional models of moving vehicles. Children enjoy singing and join in with enthusiasm when making music in the classroom or in assembly.
90. Role-play is often used to good effect. A 'garage' and 'hospital' are used purposefully by the children to work and play together. At these times they show good levels of co-operation. However, on occasions, children are expected to work for too long without adult intervention. When this occurs, children sometimes lose interest and become fractious with each other. This is most evident in the Reception/Year 1 class, where the role-play area is sometimes used as a time-filler after other activities have been finished.

ENGLISH

91. Pupils' attainment is in line with national averages by the end of Year 2 and above national averages overall by the end of Year 6, when standards are above expectations in reading and in line with expectations in writing. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' standards of attainment in English at the end of both key stages were above the national average. Inspection findings confirm that standards vary from year to year according to the number of pupils in a year group who have been identified as having special educational needs. Nevertheless, test results confirm that pupils make good progress throughout the school, from their below average attainment on entry.
92. National Curriculum test results for pupils at the end of Year 2 have improved over the last four years, from well below national averages in both reading and writing in 1998 to well above the national average in reading and above the national average in writing in 2001. When the school's results in 2001 are compared with those of similar schools, they are close to the average overall, though the percentage of children achieving the higher level (Level 3) is below average. The school is aware of this and has plans in place to focus on the higher attainers who could achieve Level 3 in 2002.
93. National Curriculum results for pupils at the end of Year 6 have remained well above average since 1998, with a very slight dip in 2000, but rising again to well above average in 2001. The number of pupils achieving the higher level (Level 5) was identified as a weakness in 2000. This is no longer the case, with the number of pupils reaching the higher level in 2001 being very high compared with other schools nationally, and well above average when compared with similar schools.
94. Test data and inspection findings show that there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. The very small numbers of pupils who have English as an additional language are well supported and make good progress, especially in developing skills in spoken English.
95. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain above average standards of listening and satisfactory standards of speaking. Pupils listen attentively because teachers provide varied activities, reminding pupils to listen and giving them a clear focus for their listening. Contributions from pupils in response to questions are, however, still relatively short, and pupils sometimes struggle to find the correct vocabulary with which to express themselves. Pupils make good

progress in developing speaking and listening skills in Key Stage 2 so that, by the end of Year 6, pupils attain above average standards of speaking and listening. Pupils sit absorbed while their teacher explains the work, and they interact with good, relevant questions, using a wide vocabulary to express themselves confidently.

96. Pupils attain average standards in reading by the end of Year 2. They respond satisfactorily to shared reading during the literacy hour and in their guided reading groups. Pupils recognise letter sounds and use this knowledge with clues from the pictures to work out and read unknown words. For example, a pupil who had learnt the 'scr' sound in a literacy lesson was able to work out the word "scratched" when she met this in her individual reading. Higher attaining pupils can read fluently and with good understanding, using the context of the story as an additional help in working out the meaning when they meet new words. Higher attaining pupils also know the difference between fiction and non-fiction and, with support, can use the contents page to find information.
97. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain above average standards of reading and enjoy reading demanding texts. They read aloud fluently and with expression. Pupils have strong opinions about the authors they like and dislike and the types of books they prefer to read. They are absorbed in the shared reading part of the literacy hour and enjoy regular group reading, guided by the teacher. They read books from home, the public library and the recently held book fair, as well as those in classroom collections. They have a good understanding of what they are reading and use the higher order skills of inference and deduction to understand many subtleties in what they read. In a shared reading lesson, using the biography of Alan Shearer, Year 6 pupils were able to quote from the text to support their views.
98. Pupils in Year 6 are confident in reading non-fiction books, using the index, contents page and glossary correctly, and skimming the text for information. Classrooms and a central library area contain a wide range of non-fiction books to support topics, but no examples of independent research were seen during the inspection. The library is not used for this purpose because it is also used as a teaching area, which is a weakness in provision.
99. Pupils attain average standards in writing at the end of both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils can write in sentences using full stops and capital letters. Average and higher attaining pupils spell words correctly or make a recognisable attempt. Pupils are given a lot of support in writing stories using 'writing frames' to sequence the work, in writing books with a repetitive sentence structure, and in writing instructions, as in "How to use a cassette player". They are well supported by the structured teaching of phonics and spelling, by appropriate shared texts and by relevant and exciting events to write about. One class wrote an account of their visit to Crewe library. Other pupils write instructions on how to make a model dragonfly that they were making in design and technology.
100. Pupils form their letters accurately and their handwriting is of a consistent size. Higher attainers learn to join letters but do not always do so. Teachers do not give more able pupils enough opportunity to write independently without the tight structure that supports the average and lower attainers. Opportunities are often missed in other subjects, like history or religious education where there is either no recording or recording is in the form of pictures and single words only.
101. By the end of Year 6, pupils can plan and write stories with a beginning, middle and end. They develop their description of characters and story settings using a range of powerful verbs, adverbs and adjectives, as in a story about "The Great Fire of Nantwich". Pupils in Key Stage 2 use punctuation and grammar accurately. They make use of speech marks, though they do not always write in paragraphs. Handwriting is satisfactory, with letters correctly formed and usually joined.
102. In Key Stage 2, teachers give pupils good opportunities to write for a wide range of purposes, including writing instructions, diaries, interviews, reports, recounts, book reviews, play scripts, newspapers, autobiographies, summaries, letters and poetry. Pupils revisit some forms of writing, like poems, several times during Key Stage 2. This helps to reinforce learning so that by Year 6 they confidently use similes, metaphors, rhymes and alliteration in their work.

Teachers in Key Stage 2 give pupils more opportunity to write in other subjects, for instance accounts of visits in history and geography, and poems in religious education. This helps to make learning purposeful. Classrooms are set up well with resources to help pupils with their writing. Dictionaries and thesauruses are used well and the key features of writing and good vocabulary are displayed.

103. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. Teaching is most effective when lesson planning shows expectations for pupils of differing ability. This happens most often where the teacher is confident in the subject and has high expectations of pupils' achievements. On these occasions, all pupils learn well. For example, in a Year 6 lesson about biographies, the teacher had planned activities very carefully to meet the needs of pupils of differing ability and there was a range of material to support their learning. The very good relationships and the enthusiasm of the teacher made learning fun. As a result, pupils worked hard and made very good progress in learning how to differentiate between biographies and autobiographies.
104. Teachers work hard to make learning purposeful by sharing the learning objectives with the pupils and continually reinforcing these throughout the lesson. Very good teaching was distinguished by the use that teachers made of a final plenary session to reinforce what had been learned. Where teaching is satisfactory, learning objectives are shared with the pupils at the beginning of the lesson, but they are not reinforced throughout and reviewed in the plenary. In the very good teaching, teachers not only ask questions but probe further to ask for reasons and to ensure understanding by asking for references from the text. On these occasions, pupils are particularly attentive and keen to answer questions. Pupils then stay on task when working independently, working well as individuals or collaboratively.
105. Teachers manage behaviour well. They have good relationships with the pupils, making good use of praise to ensure that less confident pupils are well supported. As a result, behaviour is consistently good, which promotes good learning.
106. The teaching of basic literacy skills is effective and is based on a good understanding of what pupils have already learnt. Teachers have a good knowledge of various strategies to teach rules about letter sounds. During the inspection there were some good examples of teachers 'modelling' reading effectively so that pupils learnt new vocabulary and improved their understanding of grammatical rules. Teachers carefully assess pupils' work for the next stage of planning. Work is well marked, with constructive feedback to individuals on how to improve. Pupils are consistently praised for achieving the learning objective of the lesson or for remembering to use prior learning.
107. Sound use is made of homework, especially in Key Stage 2, to support learning. Pupils regularly take home English activities to extend their work in class, and this helps to involve parents in their children's work.
108. The curriculum is broad and balanced. The national literacy strategy is firmly embedded in the school's provision, and teachers plan work carefully using the literacy framework. Good use is made of ICT to support literacy skills. Teaching assistants are all well deployed and provide effective support for pupils with low attainment or special educational needs.

MATHEMATICS

109. When pupils start school in the reception year, teacher assessments show that they are below average overall. They have weaker than average number skills, though their skills at using reasoning and logic are better than average.
110. Pupils' attainment is above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. All pupils, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, achieve well throughout the school, especially in developing number skills and knowledge about shape and measuring.

111. In the National Curriculum tests in 2001, pupils were well above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The year groups taking the tests in 2001 included a greater number of higher attaining pupils than usual.
112. The targets the school set for the tests at the end of Year 6 were exceeded in 2001. The school focused effectively on raising the number of pupils attaining the higher level (Level 5) and this figure was well above average. Pupils' attainment has improved since the last inspection when it was average at the end of Years 2 and 6 and pupils made satisfactory progress. Whilst test results vary from year to year, the trend has been mostly upwards and is above average overall.
113. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of the value of numbers up to a hundred. They add and subtract tens and units and know the properties of various regular shapes. Higher attaining pupils work with slightly larger numbers, tell the time to the nearest five minutes and read various numbered scales accurately. A small number of lower attaining pupils are still adding and subtracting numbers up to twenty and have less understanding of mathematical vocabulary, such as less and more.
114. By the end of Year 6, pupils add and subtract competently, including numbers with two decimal places. They calculate the perimeter of a range of regular and irregular shapes. Higher attaining pupils use a wider range of strategies to tackle more complex problems. Lower attaining pupils have a less secure knowledge of decimals and the value of each digit in large numbers.
115. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is good overall, with examples of very good teaching observed in Years 4, 5 and 6. In the very good lessons, the teachers ensure that pupils have a thorough understanding by making clear the purpose of the work and how it relates to everyday lives. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, the teacher discussed the need to calculate the perimeter of the class when purchasing skirting boards following the recent refurbishment of the classroom.
116. Teaching was unsatisfactory in one lesson for Year 1 pupils. In this lesson, tasks were not explained well enough and the pupils did not listen carefully. As a result, some pupils did not know what a 'corner' was and were unable to count the number of corners on three-dimensional shapes. There is a strong link between the quality of teaching and how well pupils respond in class. For example, during a lesson in Year 6, pupils worked quickly and with good concentration because the tasks were explained clearly with the help of practical activities and all pupils understood what they needed to do and why.
117. Mental mathematics sessions at the start of lessons are a strong feature of teachers' work. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 were keen to answer the teacher's questions and enjoyed taking part in the interesting mental mathematics activities, such as finding errors in number sequences and taking part in a multiplication domino competition. However, their interest wanes when they are working individually, especially when insufficient time is spent explaining the work they are to complete and when the work provided is too difficult. Throughout the school, pupils particularly enjoy practical activities and are well motivated at these times.
118. As at the time of the last inspection, teachers have established good relationships with the pupils. Behaviour is managed successfully by the effective use of praise to encourage pupils to try hard, and suitable disappointment shown when pupils do not respond positively. Pupils were generally well motivated at the time of the last inspection. An improvement since that time is the way teachers encourage pupils to discuss the methods they have used when calculating a sum. A good example of this was seen in Year 6 when, at the end of the lesson, pupils shared their methods with the rest of the class, furthering each other's knowledge.
119. Teachers continue to show a good knowledge of the subject and use questioning effectively to extend pupils' learning. Lesson plans are clear and show effectively what pupils are expected to learn. In most lessons, teachers have high expectations and provide work that meets the needs of pupils of differing capabilities, especially in number work. Effective use is made of a good range of resources to make learning interesting, such as number fans,

counting sticks and number games. Information and communication technology makes an appropriate contribution towards pupils' learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 use spreadsheets to show clearly the information they have collected.

120. Teachers ensure, by asking specific well-judged questions that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, are given good opportunities to participate in whole-class work. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution towards the learning of pupils with special educational needs by providing very effective support.
121. Whilst all teachers mark pupils' work regularly, not all teachers make helpful comments to show the pupils what they need to learn next. Regular homework makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning.
122. Effective use is made of numeracy skills to support learning in other subjects. For example, in a science lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, a teaching assistant gave effective support to lower attaining pupils so that they understood how to use graphs to record their test results on pulse rates. In a Year 6 design and technology lesson, pupils needed to measure wood carefully before cutting and to work out the angle at which it needed to be attached.
123. There is a good curriculum for mathematics. The school follows the National Numeracy Strategy effectively and has identified correctly the need to further develop pupils' problem solving skills. There is less evidence of this work in pupils' books than other aspects of the subject. Results from end-of-year tests are used constructively to identify areas for further development and to provide additional support for pupils where needed. Pupils' work is assessed at the end of topics, but information collected by teachers is not always used to plan future work.
124. There is a clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the subject, drawn from an analysis of test information. The school has carried out some lesson observations, identifying areas for improvement. Nevertheless, these observations have not been followed-up and weak aspects of teachers' work remain.

SCIENCE

125. Pupils' attainment is above national averages by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and they are achieving well throughout the school. At the time of the last inspection, standards in science were above average for pupils by the end of Year 2 and average for pupils by the end of Year 6. Standards have risen, especially in Key Stage 2, and the school has made good progress since the last inspection.
126. There are significant variations in National Curriculum test results from year to year because of the differing number of pupils with special educational needs in each year group. Results in 2001 showed that pupils achieved standards well above the national average. Ninety-five per cent of pupils achieved the expected level (Level 4), with five out of ten pupils achieving the higher level (Level 5). Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 in 2001 showed that attainment was very high in relation to the national average. All the pupils achieved the expected level, with four out of ten pupils achieving the higher level (Level 3). These results show that pupils are achieving well from a relatively low starting point when they join the school. Their levels of achievement reflect the secure curriculum and the good teaching that they receive.
127. In all classes, there is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. The pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language are supported effectively by their class teachers and the teaching assistants. These pupils work with the others in the class and make good progress in relation to their prior attainment in developing their scientific skills and knowledge.
128. By the end of Year 2, pupils can label different body parts. They know that they need bones to move and can describe the purpose of the five senses. They know which types of food are

good for you and which are less healthy. By the end of Year 6, pupils have improved their knowledge of their bodies. They record their daily diet, showing the different types of food they have eaten. They recognise the effects of exercise on the body, for example describing why the heart beats faster after you have been running. They describe how the different muscles in their body work and can name the function of the major body organs. There is a good understanding of what is meant by a healthy lifestyle. This includes describing why alcohol and drugs are bad for you and why it is important to take exercise and have regular health checks.

129. Pupils' ability to apply their scientific knowledge to practical situations is good. Pupils are beginning to understand what is meant by a fair test and measure accurately, using equipment such as thermometers. In Key Stage 2, pupils develop good skills in observing, recording and explaining their observations.
130. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school, with examples of very good teaching in Key Stage 2. The good teaching that is evident throughout the school is reflected in the achievements. Teachers make learning interesting and fun and this is reflected in the positive attitudes and concentration shown by pupils in lessons.
131. In Key Stage 1, teachers give a good emphasis to developing pupils' skills and using them in practical situations. For example, pupils in the Year 1/2 class were asked to think about germs and how they are spread. Through a careful development of ideas, the pupils talked about germs being transmitted from hands into mouths and the effect this could have. They recognised that germs, although invisible, are present on your hands, concluding that the best way to keep yourself safe from the germs was to regularly wash your hands. They knew that this was especially important before eating and after going to the toilet. This science activity was reinforced by the design and technology session that was also going on in the class. Here the pupils were busy making their designer sandwiches after first carefully washing their hands. The pupils saw the link between learning about germs and making sure that their food technology lesson was conducted in a hygienic way. Pupils in the Year 2/3 class, carefully guided by the class teacher, talked knowledgeably about making sure the test they were to conduct about smells was done fairly. The clear explanations helped pupils to clearly understand that if they shook one of the containers and not the others, it would affect the testing of the smell. They also realised that they would be able to hear the items rattle, which might help them to identify them. The teacher engaged the pupils' interests with the activity she had planned and this meant that the pupils were keen to learn.
132. In Key Stage 2, teachers plan work carefully ensuring that the needs of differing groups of pupils are met. Pupils are given good opportunities to apply their knowledge to a range of investigations and experiments. Pupils are encouraged to use the correct scientific terms and vocabulary in their work, such as *proteins* and *carbohydrates*, as they learn about different kinds of foods. They extend their scientific knowledge through a range of interesting contexts. Pupils in Year 3/4 sort a range of groceries according to their groups. They decide whether they are foods designed to build the body or to provide energy or to maintain the body. They listened carefully to the class teacher and thought about the different foods in her basket before tackling this activity on their own. The pupils demonstrated good collaborative skills as they organised themselves within their groups to complete the task. Good recording of their results and the use of a program on the computer to consolidate and extend their understanding meant that the pupils achieved very well in this session. In the Year 4/5 class, a well planned activity helped pupils to develop their understanding of food groups to realise that nuts are a valuable source of protein especially for people who do not eat meat.
133. The science curriculum is carefully planned to ensure that new learning is introduced in a well-structured way. All areas of science are given appropriate coverage, and pupils are given opportunities to consolidate and extend their learning. Good use is made of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in lessons. For example, pupils in Year 6 use increasingly complex scientific vocabulary and accurately draw and label diagrams. Pupils in Year 5/6 record their findings of their pulse rates with accuracy and then graph their results. They regularly use computers to record their findings. Written explanations of the experiments are promoted well

by the class teachers and pupils take good care with their written work. The quality of work in their books shows that pupils take good care with the presentation of their work.

134. The subject co-ordinator has plans for the further development of the subject. However, she is insufficiently involved in monitoring teaching and learning, although the school is clear about the need to maintain and improve even further pupils' standards in science.
135. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. Teachers regularly mark work, but do not always write useful comments to help pupils identify what they need to do to improve. Significant gains in knowledge are recorded in pupils' individual records. These vary in quality, and are not sufficient in themselves to help teachers decide on a weekly basis what needs to be taught next.
136. There is a good range of resources, with many opportunities for investigation and enquiry in the school grounds and the locality.

ART AND DESIGN

137. Pupils' attainment is above national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is a similar position to that at the time of the last inspection. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection, so judgements have been based on interviews with the pupils, scrutiny of their work and teachers' planning.
138. By the end of Year 2, pupils use a range of media to record their observations. Pupils in Year 1/2 drew and photographed a number of cars, closely observing the detail. They then selected a particular section that interested them and drew and painted an enlarged version. Pupils in Year 2 have worked with a range of media, producing particularly pleasing fishes, now displayed swimming on the window. The entrance hall has at present a huge display of portraits of all the pupils and adults in the school, drawn and completed using a wide range of techniques and media. The completed faces showed a clear development of observational skills in different media. The effect demonstrates the inclusive nature of the school as all, including the lollypop lady, have their portrait displayed.
139. By the end of Year 6, pupils have built on the skills and techniques acquired earlier and have developed a critical awareness of their own and others' art. They speak knowledgeably about their pictures. Pupils study a range of artists and their work. For example, pupils in Year 3/4 have studied portraits by Klee and Picasso, and then painted portraits that reflect these very different styles. Pupils in Year 4/5 are at present working with textiles, weaving with wool through hessian fabric to create their own landscape, and their work is developing well. Clay tiles reflecting the topic of water have been well designed and made in the Year 6 class.
140. In a very good lesson observed in Year 5/6, the class teacher showed the pupils a picture by Nikolaevich Kramskoy of "Christ in the Wilderness". She talked about the artist and what he was trying to convey in his picture and why he had drawn Christ in the way he had. The pupils then carefully analysed the shapes and colours of the landscape. In this way they understood the profound effect the choice of colours and shapes made upon the whole composition. The pupils then thought about their own landscapes and used their sketch books to work on a number of ideas. The very good subject knowledge of the teacher and the careful observation and discussion of the picture alongside the evident enthusiasm of the pupils ensured that the lesson was very successful.
141. The evidence of pupils' work indicates that the teaching of art is very good overall. Pupils throughout the school are given opportunities to use a wide range of materials and techniques. They draw and use clay, paint, and a variety of pastels. They choose their materials with care and show good levels of application in their work. Observation skills are highly developed. The standard of artwork produced by pupils after a residential visit at the seaside was very high. Collage work, pastel drawings and very fine pen and ink drawings show an obvious interest and perseverance, resulting in good quality work.

142. Art has a secure place in the work and life of the school as it is a medium in which all pupils find expression. The scheme of work for art is a thorough document, which ensures that art is taught not only in its own right but is also used to support other curriculum areas. For example, the pupils drew pictures of Tudor houses in Nantwich as an integral part of their history topic. Staff work hard to make sure that the working environment is bright and stimulating. Interesting artefacts are displayed so as to intrigue pupils. Teachers display pupils' work in such a way that it captures their imagination and encourages them to try hard.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

143. Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is a similar position to that at the time of the last inspection. The co-ordinator has recently restructured the scheme of work and introduced elements from the CITB (Construction Industry Training Board) programme of study to run alongside units from a nationally recommended scheme of work. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection. Judgements have been based on these lessons, together with interviews with the pupils and teachers, and observations of the pupils' work.
144. By the end of Year 2, pupils design, plan and make their models and artefacts using a range of materials and construction kits. They use tools sensibly and cut and stick thoughtfully and carefully. The teacher in the Year 2/3 class skilfully linked the making of dragonflies from a range of materials with instructional writing in the literacy hour. In this way, the making of the dragonflies was completed with the aid of the careful instructions the pupils had written. Pupils in Year 1/2 designed their own sandwiches and drew the different ingredients required to make them. They then learnt about the safe use of equipment and the hygienic handling of food. They evaluated their achievement after eating the sandwiches.
145. By the end of Year 6, pupils have developed their designing, making and evaluation skills. Pupils in Years 3/4 observed and tasted a range of biscuits to evaluate their appearance, texture and taste alongside their price. After a careful evaluation of the biscuits and class discussion, they recognised that different people have different preferences. They also realised that the visual appearance of the biscuit was also a key feature when making a choice and recognised that they needed to take this into account when designing and making their own biscuits. Pupils in Year 4/5 make books using a variety of hinges, springs, flaps and windows to add interest to their illustrations. Their planning and design sheets reflect their care and consideration. Not only do pupils consider the materials, methods and tools they need to use, they also evaluate the quality of their finished product, such as the slippers made by Year 6.
146. Collaborative work is a feature of some projects. For example, Year 6 pupils worked together to make a Groma, a Roman surveying tool. This project encouraged the pupils to measure correctly and to fix the pieces together accurately, using a wide range of tools. The class teacher reminded pupils about safety issues when using sharp tools and consequently they understand the need for safety goggles and the careful use of tools. They are to put the Groma to good use when they survey the school field. The pupils are making a number of artefacts in support of their history learning, such as plaques of Tudor houses, showing the black and white framing, and they are constructing samples of wattle and daub walls.

GEOGRAPHY

147. Because of the nature of the timetable, only two lessons of geography were seen during the inspection week. Inspection evidence is therefore based on these lessons, the analysis of pupils' work in books and displays, and interviews with teachers.
148. Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress.

149. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a sound understanding of their immediate locality. They know the layout of the school, their route to school and what the land use is around the school. They understand simple maps of the local area and can identify places from aerial photographs. The scheme of work shows that pupils will be introduced to places beyond their immediate locality, so they begin to understand how they might travel there and in what ways these places are different from their own locality.
150. By the end of Year 6, pupils have extended their study of locality and can use evidence, ask questions, offer explanations, and communicate their findings in a variety of ways using geographical vocabulary. They can compare Crewe with other UK localities, such as Weston or Frodsham and Beeston or Burwardsley. They do this through field study trips, through the use of photographs, maps, textbooks and other information. They can compare Crewe with an overseas locality such as Chembakoli in India. They carry out a river study in Year 6, using the local Gresty and Wistaston brooks. Children carry out an investigation into the depth and speed of the water flow at different parts of the river and use this information to understand the story of a river.
151. Teaching in the Key Stage 1 lesson was satisfactory, but the pace was often slow and children sometimes fidgeted and wasted time. Activities were well arranged for each group. Pupils were well supported by teaching assistants and adult helpers who were well informed of the purpose of the activity.
152. Teaching in the Key Stage 2 lesson was good, with good use of a video programme to reinforce the recent river study and a range of follow-up activities. Some pupils drew a cross section and labelled it, while others compiled a 3-D model. Good use was made of Ordnance Survey maps and ICT to research findings from the Internet about the River Nile and to input data into an Internet survey about the water quality in the local river. As a result of this good teaching, pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and they clearly enjoy the subject.
153. There is a satisfactory, broad and balanced curriculum for the subject. Very good use is made of local field study resources, but there are not enough resources, such as maps, globes, and atlases, to reflect the importance of world geography. This limits pupils' cultural development.

HISTORY

154. Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, make satisfactory gains in their learning.
155. The school aims to give pupils a good sense of chronology and, by Year 2, pupils understand about events that have happened in their own lives and some that happened before they were born. They begin to distinguish between events that happened in the lives of their parents, their grandparents and before that. In a topic on the Great Fire of London, pupils explain the similarities and differences between life today and at that time. They understand that the events are beyond living memory and that life today is more hygienic. In a lesson in the Year 1/2 class, pupils used Remembrance Day to explore and compare features of the event both locally and nationally. Pupils could discuss what was being commemorated and understand some of the historical sources which tell us about the past.
156. By Year 6, pupils have been introduced to different aspects of local, British and world history. They can place their study of Ancient Greece, the Romans, the Tudors and the Victorians on a timeline, and understand how evidence about these times is obtained from various sources. From a rich local history study of Nantwich, pupils in Year 6 could use many different sources of information, including their visit, to discuss the events of the Great Fire of Nantwich.
157. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1. Resources are used very effectively and activities are made purposeful. This helps to ensure that pupils are interested and take a good part in activities. For example, in a Year 1/2 lesson, the teacher helped pupils to learn

about the history of the local area by using photographs. The teacher successfully introduced a range of new vocabulary, such as cenotaph, battlefield, wreath, using questioning well to ensure that pupils understood. This lesson also had an uplifting spiritual dimension to it. A video was played of a local Remembrance Day service at which the teacher's husband played "The Last Post" on the trumpet. The teacher explained how seeing this made her feel emotional. There followed an interesting discussion on emotions, with one pupil sharing how he had felt when a member of his family died. Both the teacher and pupils responded very sensitively to this discussion.

158. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is very good. Teachers show great enthusiasm for the subject. They have good subject knowledge and support pupils' knowledge and understanding very effectively through the source material that they provide. Pupils enjoy learning about the past and have good attitudes. This was seen to good effect in a Year 6 lesson. The teacher had a good understanding of the background to the "Great Fire of Nantwich" and used this knowledge to excite the pupils. Very good use was made of questioning to extend learning, with questions ranging from the types of houses, the location of the bear pit and the source of the water used by the fire-fighters to what actually caused the fire to start. From this initial discussion, the lesson progressed to give pupils good opportunities to carry out their own research using handouts prepared by the teacher. By the end of the lesson, most pupils had gained a very good knowledge of the subject they were researching.
159. Teachers give pupils appropriate opportunities to use their literacy skills in lessons. This is most effective in Key Stage 2 where pupils are encouraged to write for a range of purposes. In Key Stage 1, there is less evidence of pupils writing purposefully, and an overuse of drawing as a means of recording. The format of the literacy hour has been adopted for history lessons, enabling good whole-class discussions and a range of writing activities to take place. A weakness in provision is the limited opportunities that pupils are given to carry out their own research in the library.
160. The curriculum is broad, balanced and carefully planned, using a nationally recommended scheme of work. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. Teachers keep their own records of what pupils have learnt in lessons and use this information to plan future learning.
161. Information and communication technology is used effectively to extend learning. For example, pupils in Years 4 and 5 used a CD-ROM to find out facts about the Egyptians.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

162. At the time of the last inspection, provision for information and communication technology was unsatisfactory. This is no longer the case, although the school has already identified further areas for development. The school has improved resources and is now using a nationally recommended scheme of work to help teachers in planning work. Teachers make more use of ICT to support learning in different curriculum areas, and this has led to a rise in standards of pupils' attainment, which are now satisfactory overall.
163. Throughout the school, pupils develop sound word-processing skills. By the end of Year 2, pupils can type in simple texts using a computer. They know how to change the colour and size of font, and, when writing on the computer, show a developing awareness of how they can alter the way that their work is presented. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 confidently play a range of language and mathematical games, and understand that data can be recorded and then classified using ICT skills. For example, pupils in Year 1 produce graphs to show the different heights and hair colours of their class. In Year 2, pupils use art programmes to produce simple pictures or to write their name. They explain how they will save this work and understand how to print it.
164. By the end of Year 6, pupils have improved their skills and are able to apply them to a wider range of tasks. They successfully enter data into the computer and then sort it using different criteria. For example, pupils in Year 6 used a database to find facts about the kings and

queens of Britain. Pupils understand that ICT can be used as a method of communication, and teachers work hard to ensure that they use these skills in a purposeful way. During the inspection, older pupils entered data from a river survey on to the computer and then sent it via the internet to a central data-collecting bureau. Teachers give pupils appropriate opportunities to record their ideas using ICT, for example by using word processing or data handling. When word processing, pupils change the font-type, colours and size of their text, and add clip art pictures to their work. They show an increasing awareness of how to make their writing attractive to the reader.

165. Pupils have a sound knowledge of the many applications of ICT and understand that it involves more than just working on the computer. Younger pupils confidently use tape recorders and understand how ICT can be used in everyday life. Pupils know that computers can be used to find information, either through the Internet or CD-ROMs. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 carry out research about food groups, and pupils in a Year 4/5 history lesson used a CD-ROM to find more information about life in Ancient Greece.
166. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with an example of good teaching in Key Stage 2. A strength of the school's work is the effective way that teachers build the use of ICT into all subjects. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection and teachers are now generally more confident about teaching ICT. Nevertheless, the school has identified that teachers' subject knowledge could be further improved, and specialised training is due to start shortly after the inspection. Teachers take care to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have equal access to the curriculum. Pupils were observed developing their skills in a range of subjects, including literacy, numeracy, science, geography and history. Good support is given by teaching assistants, some of whom show very good subject knowledge when working with small groups of pupils. Good quality displays of pupils' work show how skills are used in different subjects. These displays help to make learning purposeful and show the progression of skills across the school.
167. The school is now teaching all aspects of the National Curriculum. An appropriate scheme of work has been introduced to identify what pupils should be learning from year to year, and teachers' planning is more thorough than it was at the time of the last inspection. Teachers note significant pupil achievement in their records but, other than that, there is no consistent procedure for assessing pupils' attainment and progress from day to day. This arrangement is unsatisfactory because it does not provide sufficient information to help decide what individual pupils need to learn next. In particular, the needs of pupils who bring good skills from home are not identified, and planning does not show how these higher-attaining pupils are to be challenged.
168. Resources are satisfactory. The school has many more computers than at the time of the last inspection and has suitable software to support learning in different subjects. Pupils are beginning to use digital cameras in their work. However, the school has only a limited range of resources to support the 'control' element of the curriculum, especially for older or higher attaining pupils. This limits learning in this aspect of the subject.

MUSIC

169. Pupils' attainment is broadly in line with national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress overall. Standards of attainment and progress have been maintained since the time of the last inspection. Throughout the school, pupils are good at keeping a steady beat and listening carefully to a variety of pre-recorded music. Younger pupils sing sweetly and have a good knowledge of the names of various instruments. In contrast, older pupils show little enthusiasm for singing and do not sustain long notes well during assemblies. The singing of older pupils was an area of weakness at the time of the last inspection and there has been no significant improvement.
170. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with examples of good teaching. Teaching is similar to that found at the time of the last inspection. The quality of teachers' lesson planning is satisfactory overall though it varies in quality. The best planning in Years 4 and 5 shows

clearly what pupils are expected to learn in each lesson. Most teachers identify the activities they wish to cover, but some teachers provide no clear indication on a weekly basis of what pupils are to do or learn. However, teachers explain the purpose of the work during lessons so that the pupils know what they are expected to learn. Questioning is used effectively to assess what pupils already know, and teachers are careful to use the correct terminology to extend pupils' learning. For example, the teacher asked pupils about the 'tempo' of various pieces of music. Teachers manage behaviour effectively by praising good behaviour. They have good relationships with the pupils, resulting in most pupils being well behaved and responsive. Fun activities, such as a vocal 'follow my leader' game used in Years 1 and 2, help to hold pupils' interest at the same time as improving their voice control. Expectations of pupils' singing at Key Stage 2 are not high enough, resulting in pupils being half-hearted.

171. Whilst lessons during the inspection were well-structured, some teachers provided limited opportunities for pupils to develop skills in playing instruments because lessons involved the whole class and there was not enough time for all pupils to have a turn. Teachers do not carry out formal assessments of pupils' work but make satisfactory notes on significant achievements in pupils' individual records.
172. The curriculum for music is adequate. However, the time allocated to the subject is much lower than in most schools, and this restricts the amount of progress pupils can make, especially older pupils, who have fewer opportunities to sing at other times. Since the last inspection, there is no longer a choir. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to listen to and comment on pre-recorded music, and effective use is made of a wide range of music to develop pupils' awareness of different cultures. For example, in a lesson for Years 2 and 3, pupils enjoyed listening to music from South America and Africa, and during an assembly, older pupils enjoyed the calming influence of music used by Buddhists. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have the opportunity to learn the recorder, and a small number take additional lessons in the clarinet or cornet. A recent drum workshop and the visit of a professional wind and brass player provided additional interest in the subject.
173. Information and communication technology makes an appropriate contribution to pupils' learning, for instance when it is used to help them to learn the sounds various instruments make and to support pupils' musical compositions.
174. The quality of teaching and learning are not being monitored, and this means that good features of teachers' work are not being shared to help raise standards in the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

175. During the inspection, there were not enough lessons in Key Stage 1 for judgements to be made on the attainment of pupils by the end of Year 2.
176. Attainment is above average by the end of Year 6, and the school has maintained the good standards found at the time of the last inspection. Pupils' attainment in swimming is a particular strength, and the very good quality of teaching and the high adult-to-pupil ratio in swimming lessons have a good impact on standards. Pupils go to swimming lessons in Year 5, and by the end of that year, nearly all pupils are able to swim more than 25 metres, with most using well developed swimming strokes. Higher attaining pupils swim confidently for longer distances on their front and back, and pass awards for their all-round water skills. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into lessons and quickly gain new skills. They are well supported by the teachers or adult helpers in swimming lessons.
177. In games and gymnastics, pupils again show better than average skills for their age. Their throwing and catching skills are particularly well developed. They successfully apply these skills to small games of handball, showing a good awareness of space, and passing and receiving accurately. Older pupils develop a good understanding of the various strategies used in team games. They produce well co-ordinated balances in gymnastics, mirroring the movements of their partners. All pupils handle resources sensibly and work co-operatively when required to do so. They are beginning to show a good awareness of the effects of exercise on their bodies.

178. The quality of teaching is good overall, with very good teaching of swimming. Good use is made of teachers with a particular interest in the subject to take some physical education lessons. Visits to the swimming pool are very well organised, with a very good awareness of health and safety issues. All of the adults who take swimming lessons, including teachers from the school and the swimming pool, have very good subject knowledge. They introduce new skills carefully, ensuring that pupils are given many opportunities to practise new skills in order to improve their confidence. Praise is used effectively to help the less able, and one-to-one support is provided when needed. The behaviour of pupils during swimming lessons is excellent. They listen carefully to instructions and help each other when necessary.
179. In other lessons, teachers' good subject knowledge ensures that activities are interesting and fun. Skills are developed systematically, and all pupils are given good opportunities to develop and practise a range of movements. Teachers are successful in making links between specific skills and their use in competitive games. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 practised a range of throwing and receiving skills before being given the chance to apply these skills to a small team game. This helped to make learning purposeful. Behaviour is managed effectively, and pupils respond well to the sensitive way in which teachers help them as they work. Boys and girls participate equally well in activities.
180. The curriculum is carefully planned to include all aspects of the National Curriculum. Older pupils have the opportunity to extend their skills on residential trips. This includes the chance to take part in a range of outdoor and adventurous activities such as problem-solving and orienteering. Medium term planning is detailed and shows how pupils are to develop skills over time.
181. The subject co-ordinator has identified the need to develop more thorough procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress, in order to ensure that individual needs are fully met. At the moment, the school has no system for showing the progress of individual pupils over time, although teachers do record significant achievements in their records. Pupils are also encouraged to evaluate their own learning at the end of each year, identifying what they think they are good at and how they think they could improve. This practice makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
182. Accommodation for physical education is satisfactory and the school has a good range of resources. A limitation of the accommodation is the playing field, which is spacious but very poorly drained. This means that it is out of use for most of the winter, which limits pupils' opportunities to take part in some activities. For example, the school is rarely able to host football matches against other schools.
183. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities for older pupils. There are football and netball clubs, which are well attended and give pupils good opportunities to practise and develop skills outside lessons. Good use is made of visits by coaches from various sports clubs, including local football, cricket and rugby clubs, to introduce pupils to new activities and supplement learning in the classroom. Pupils are able to compete against each other in lessons and on sports days, as well as in a variety of other activities. For example, over the last year, pupils have taken part in competitive activities in swimming, athletics, football and netball. In addition, pupils regularly take part in dance workshops run by a local authority advisory teacher.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

184. Pupils' attainment meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection. At that time, pupils' attainment was unsatisfactory because the school had not fully implemented the locally agreed syllabus. This is no longer the case, and standards have risen as a result. Pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language make satisfactory progress and achieve standards appropriate to their prior attainment.

185. By the end of Year 2, pupils know about many aspects of the Christian faith. They know the significance of the Bible and the Church, and that these are special for Christians. They know some of the stories from the Bible and about the early life of Jesus and his disciples. They understand the importance of families and friends, and reflect on the need for their support in their own lives. By Year 2, they are learning about the Hindu religion and are able to compare some aspects of Hindu family life and worship with those of Christians.
186. By the end at Year 6, pupils have a deeper understanding of Christianity, Christian worship, the Bible and the stories it contains. They also learn about Judaism and Buddhism. They not only learn about these major religions but they respond to the issues raised. During the inspection, pupils were learning from a story in the Bible about guilt and peace of mind, about waiting for an important event when studying the period of Advent, and about suffering and happiness from the Buddhist story of Prince Siddhartha.
187. Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1, with an example of very good teaching in the Year 2/3 class. In this lesson, there was very clear planning and a sequence of appropriate activities. A story from the Bible was read with great dramatic effect and this held the pupils' attention. Questioning was used very effectively to find out what pupils knew about Jesus' disciples, and the ensuing discussion further extended their knowledge. Pupils were given a range of activities that met individual needs and helped them to appreciate the spiritual meaning of the story. Some of the responses of pupils indicated that this had been a very successful lesson. For example, one pupil commented that, "*Jesus died upon the cross to take away all the bad things that people do*". In contrast, all pupils in a Year 1 and 2 lesson were given the same activity, whatever their previous learning, with the result that not all their needs were met, though teaching was satisfactory overall.
188. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is good, with detailed planning, good subject knowledge and good use of personal anecdotes to engage pupils' interest and aid learning. In a good lesson with Year 4 and 5 pupils on the meaning of the story of "The Ten Lepers", the teacher made good use of pupils' own ideas to explore how somebody might lose their peace of mind. The pupils clearly understood the issues raised by the stories they heard. They were successfully encouraged by the teacher to relate these stories to their own lives by talking about times when they had felt guilty. For example, a pupil said that he had once taken some money and felt guilty so he put it back. He said he had been "robbed of his peace of mind".
189. Pupils clearly enjoy the activities they are given and often work collaboratively in mixed ability groups. The agreed syllabus and the medium term planning provide good support for teachers' lesson planning. Religious education makes an effective contribution to the teaching of literacy.
190. The curriculum is broad and balanced and makes a sound contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Visits to services at the local church reinforce learning in lessons. The school has good links with the Salvation Army, and recently held a 'toy harvest festival' to collect toys for later distribution. This helps pupils learn that they can help others in many different ways. However, there are few links with faiths other than Christianity. There are not enough artefacts or visits from members of other religious communities or visits to their places of worship. This limits pupils' cultural development.