

INSPECTION REPORT

Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Cronton, Widnes

LEA area: Knowsley

Unique reference number: 104454

Headteacher: Mrs C. Hamilton

Reporting inspector: Miss J. H. Sargent
Rgl's OIN 21113

Dates of inspection: 25th – 28th June 2001

Inspection number: 196000

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: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 – 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Hall Lane
Cronton
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Cheshire
Postcode: WA8 5DW

Telephone number: 0151 424 3926

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr V. Kelly

Date of previous inspection: 6th May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21113	Jane Sargent	Registered inspector	Science Art and design Foundation Stage	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
19335	Susan Dixon	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22482	Bruce Potter	Team inspector	Mathematics Information communication technology Geography History Equal opportunities	How well is the school led and managed?
29381	Anne Brangan	Team inspector	English Design and technology Music Physical education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Holy Family Catholic Primary School is situated in the village of Cronton, near Widnes. It is a voluntary aided school within the Archdiocese of Liverpool. Pupils come from two local parishes, the majority living in Widnes. Most local housing is privately owned. There are no pupils from minority ethnic groups and all pupils speak English as their first language. There are 167 pupils aged from four to 11 years on roll, making the school smaller than the average sized primary school. There are more boys than girls in the school with Year 2 having significantly more boys than girls. Pupil numbers have risen steadily since the previous inspection. The school is overcrowded and is due to have additional accommodation built. Pupils are taught in seven classes each morning and six each afternoon, when Years 4 and 5 combine. Nearly all pupils have experienced pre-school education and on entry to school their attainment is broadly in line with what might be expected for children of four years of age; a significant minority of children attain more highly. Two per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need is broadly in line with the national average at two per cent. At the time of the inspection, the school was managing a period of long term staff illness affecting one class. The headteacher will be leaving the school in July 2001 to take up a new post and the deputy head will become acting headteacher until the governing body appoint a new headteacher. The school aims to provide a Christian ethos in which to educate children to their full potential. The school's priorities are to further raise standards in reading and mathematics at Key Stage 1.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school where standards have risen significantly since the previous inspection. The school is working to make further improvements to levels of attainment in reading and mathematics at Key Stage 1. Key Stage 2 is more effective in helping pupils to make progress than Key Stage 1 and the Foundation Stage, due to differences in the quality of teaching. Pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 receive a curriculum that offers them particular breadth and interest. The school benefits from the good leadership and management of the headteacher, senior staff and governing body. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- ◆ Standards of attainment at Key Stage 2 are good in most subjects.
- ◆ The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 2 is good and often very good.
- ◆ Science is a strength of the school's curriculum for pupils of all ages.
- ◆ The headteacher, governors and senior staff provide good leadership and management.
- ◆ At Key Stages 1 and 2, learning opportunities are wide ranging and capture pupils' interests.
- ◆ Pupils' good attitudes, behaviour and very good relationships contribute significantly to their very good social development.

What could be improved

- ◆ The level of challenge provided in reading and mathematics for higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 1.
- ◆ The opportunities for parents to find out about how their children are getting on.
- ◆ The school's strategic plans for the longer term.
- ◆ The level of book provision.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since its last inspection in May 1997, the school has made significant improvement. This is largely as a result of the good leadership and management by the headteacher, who was newly appointed at the time of the last inspection. Through the introduction of effective monitoring procedures she has improved the quality of teaching across the school. Standards have risen in English, mathematics and science at both key stages, although there are still too few pupils attaining at higher levels in reading and mathematics at Key Stage 1. Targets for pupils at Key Stage 2 have been exceeded, due to pupils' very good progress between the ages of 7 and 11. The governing body have become more involved in the work of the school. They have improved the school's systems of financial management and developed their knowledge of the work of the school. The school buildings have been improved and extended and a computer suite has been created. Staff show a keen desire to know how their work and their school can be improved further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

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

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

In the Foundation Stage (Reception year), children are likely to meet the national Early Learning Goals, and a significant minority will exceed them. At the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000, standards were in line with national averages in reading, very good in writing and below national averages in mathematics. Results between 1998 and 2000 indicate similar levels of attainment. Standards of work seen in the inspection show sound attainment in English and mathematics and good attainment in science. Too few pupils are attaining at higher levels in reading and mathematics at Key Stage 1. The table above shows that in 2000, at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' standards of attainment were in line with national averages in English, and good and above average in mathematics and science. Targets for assessment were exceeded. Work seen in the inspection indicates that standards in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2 are good. The school is likely to meet its targets for 2001. Over the three years from 1998 to 2000, Key Stage 2 results in English and science have remained above average with mathematics being in line. Results in 1999 show the good performance of a high attaining group of pupils whose English results were in the top five per cent nationally. Achievements of pupils between the ages of 5 and 7 are sound; those of older pupils and pupils with special educational needs are good. Standards in information and communication technology are sound and in line with those expected nationally.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are good. They are enthusiastic about their lessons and enjoy their work. Pupils are well motivated.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils show consideration for adults and other pupils.
Personal development and relationships	Very good relationships contribute effectively to pupils' personal development; they show sensitivity towards others.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory.

Pupils show great respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. Their good attitudes and values have a positive impact on the school's quality of education.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Good	Good/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.

The quality of teaching seen was good overall. The proportion of teaching which was good or better was greater at Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1. Teaching in the Foundation Stage was satisfactory with some good lessons seen. Across the school, 28 per cent of lessons seen were very good, 34 per cent were good and the remainder satisfactory. Lessons meet the needs of most pupils, with the exception of reading and mathematics at Key Stage 1, where higher attainers do not always receive sufficient challenge. Literacy and numeracy skills are effectively taught. Writing is taught very well, resulting in the high standards seen across the age groups and the curriculum.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Sound for children in their Reception year. Good for pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2, with interesting and wide ranging learning opportunities
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good, with careful attention being given to the planning of appropriate work at an individual level.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual and moral development and for their social development it is very good. Provision for cultural development is sound; multicultural education requires further development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has a strong, caring and welcoming Christian family atmosphere. Pupils develop self-confidence through the good support that they receive.

The school has a sound partnership with pupils' parents. There are insufficient occasions organised each year for parents to find out how their children are getting on. The science curriculum is well developed, with a strong focus on investigative science.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led and managed. The headteacher works closely with the deputy head and there is effective delegation to key staff. They work well as a team to ensure that the school's aims and values are reflected in day-to-day work.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They gain information through regular visits, reports and meetings. They give the school and the headteacher good support.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school makes effective use of available information on attainment and teaching to improve its work.
The strategic use of resources	Financial management is good, but plans for the longer term are not well documented. Resources are allocated to support the school's educational priorities.

The school has sufficient staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. Some accommodation is overcrowded. Two classrooms are cramped with poor ventilation in warmer weather. The school library is not adequate. Resources are generally satisfactory, but there are too few books for pupils to use or borrow. The school is beginning to apply the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Children like school. ◆ Behaviour is good and children are expected to work hard and do their best. ◆ The school helps children to become mature and responsible. ◆ The school is approachable if parents have questions or problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Parents would like to be better informed about how their children are getting on. ◆ Some parents feel that children do not receive the right amount of homework. ◆ Some parents would like a more interesting range of activities outside school.

A significant number of questionnaires were returned and the views expressed by most parents are positive and supportive of the school. The judgements of the inspection team are that pupils receive appropriate amounts of homework which are broadly in line with national recommendations and that a good range of extra-curricular activities is offered, covering arts, sports and information and communication technology. The team agrees that parents could be better informed about how their children are getting on. It is in agreement with all of the positive views expressed by parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school was last inspected in May 1997. At that time, standards were described as not consistently reaching a satisfactory level, especially at Key Stage 1. Too few pupils attained at the higher levels. In the time that has elapsed since the previous inspection, the school has worked hard to improve standards at both key stages. Results indicate that the strategies used by the school have been successful at both key stages, with greater improvement being made at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1. The headteacher, who was newly appointed at the time of the last inspection, has worked closely with senior staff to improve the quality of teaching across the school and this has made a major contribution to the raising of standards.

2. For the year 2000, the school's national assessment results for pupils aged 7 were close to the national average for reading and well above the national average for writing. In reading and writing, above average proportions of pupils attained the expected level 2. In writing, a significant proportion of these pupils attained at the higher level 3, but in reading, too few pupils attained at the higher level. At Key Stage 2 in 2000, the school's results were close to the national average in English. Although significant proportions of pupils attained at the expected level 4, too few pupils attained at the higher level 5.

3. National Curriculum assessment results at the end of Key Stage 1 for the year 2000 were below the national average in mathematics. The school's performance at the expected level 2 was close to the national average, but at the higher level 3, performance was below the national average. At Key Stage 2 in 2000, the school's results were above the national averages in mathematics, with a large proportion of pupils attaining level 4. The proportion attaining at level 5 was close to the national average.

4. In science at Key Stage 1, teacher assessments indicated that pupils' attainments were very high and within the top five per cent nationally. At Key Stage 2 in 2000, the school's results were above the national averages in science. In this subject also, significant proportions of pupils attained at the expected level 4. At the higher level 5, results show that above average proportions attained at this level.

5. When compared with similar schools nationally, results for pupils aged 7 in 2000, show that the school's performance was below average in reading and well below average in mathematics. In writing, results were above average. The pattern of attainment is affected by the proportions of pupils attaining at the higher level 3 in these subjects. This proportion is greatest in writing, as indicated by the good results. Comparative results for pupils aged 11 show that in English, performance was well below average. In mathematics and science, performance was in line with that of similar schools. The proportions of pupils attaining at the higher level 5 account for this, being better in mathematics and science than in English. Indicators based on pupils' prior attainment show that, between the ages of 7 and 11, pupils made progress at a level well above that seen in similar schools in English, mathematics and science. On the basis of pupils' previous assessments, the school's target for 2000 was for 60 per cent of pupils to attain at the expected level 4. This was exceeded by over 30 per cent in English, mathematics and science. The school is well placed to meet its targets for 2001.

6. At Key Stage 1, the results of the school's national reading assessments between 1998 and 2000 show that pupils attained at levels above the national average for pupils aged 7. Although standards remain above the national average, the continuing trend is downward and the school has identified reading at Key Stage 1 as an aspect of its work which requires improvement if standards are to remain above national averages. In writing, pupils' performance has been better than for reading and results have exceeded the national average for pupils of this age. In mathematics, pupils' attainment has been below the national average between 1998 and 2000, but the overall trend is one of improvement and standards are slowly rising to meet the national average. The school has identified mathematics at Key Stage 1 as requiring continued attention.

7. At Key Stage 2, the school's results between 1998 and 2000 show some variation from year to year. This is the effect of the relatively small number of pupils being tested in past years. Taken over the three years, trends indicate that in English and science, standards have exceeded national averages. In mathematics, standards have been in line with national averages.

8. Standards of work seen during the inspection indicate that attainment in English and mathematics is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Standards in science are good at both key stages. Standards within year groups are affected by cohort size, gender imbalance, as in Year 2 where there are significantly more boys than girls, and by the number of pupils with special educational needs. Differing standards of attainment between the key stages are largely accounted for by variations in the consistency of the quality of teaching. Teaching at Key Stage 1 is good overall, but that seen at Key Stage 2 was of a consistently higher quality, particularly in the level of challenge offered to higher attaining pupils.

9. The school has previously focused on writing as an area in which standards were insufficiently high. Through rigorous work, standards have risen and are now good across the school, with writing being used as an effective tool in all curriculum subjects. The use of work sheets is kept to a minimum, enabling pupils to have varied and purposeful uses for writing across the curriculum. Reading and mathematics at Key Stage 1 have now been highlighted for attention. Through evaluation of its assessment results the school has identified the need to increase the number of pupils attaining at the higher level in these areas and strategies to achieve this were being developed at the time of inspection.

10. Children enter the Foundation Stage (Reception year) attaining at standards which are broadly in line with those which might be expected of children aged 4. A significant minority of children attain at above the expected levels on entry to full-time schooling. In their Reception year, children engage in a sound range of activities and make satisfactory progress. By the end of the Foundation Stage (Reception year) the majority of these children will attain the Early Learning Goals and a significant minority will exceed them. Appropriate attention is given to the children's personal and social development and to the learning of early literacy and numeracy skills, soundly preparing them for the demands of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 1.

11. Pupils across the school are very competent speakers and good listeners. Pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 listen carefully to their teachers and older pupils respond with detailed answers to questions. They show good progression throughout the school. Standards in reading are satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. By the end of Key Stage 1 some pupils read well, with good expression and obvious enjoyment. A significant number of pupils lack the range of skills they require to tackle unfamiliar words. Too few pupils attain

at the higher level in reading by the end of Key Stage 1. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have made very good progress. The pupils in Year 6 are self-motivated, enjoy reading and

are reading some demanding texts. Standards of writing are good at the end of both key stages. Writing has been effectively developed throughout the school, across the curriculum. Pupils use their writing skills to good effect in a variety of ways.

12. Standards in mathematics are satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented effectively at both key stages, but there is too little opportunity for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 to practice more challenging concepts. As a result, too few pupils attain at the higher level in mathematics in Key Stage 1. Pupils make very good progress in Key Stage 2 and become able mathematicians who use and apply their mathematical knowledge in other curriculum subjects, for example, in measuring accurately in science and recording results in graph form.

13. Standards in science are good at both key stages. Pupils quickly develop the ability to question and challenge what they see or discover. They learn through well planned practical tasks which have a strong focus on investigation. In Year 1, pupils are quick to identify why a test is fair and what elements of the test must not change. Across the school these investigative skills are effectively developed. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils engage in good scientific discussions and use their knowledge effectively to justify their ideas and findings.

14. Standards in information and communication technology are sound at both key stages. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection, when the subject was judged to be an area of weakness. Standards in art and design have been maintained at a satisfactory level at both key stages, across a broader range of experiences. In design and technology, standards are now satisfactory at both key stages, representing an improvement in standards. Standards in geography and history are good at both key stages. Both subjects show improvements in standards since the last inspection. In music and physical education, standards are satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. During the last inspection music was judged to be satisfactory at both key stages and physical education was above national expectations.

15. At the time of the previous inspection, pupils with special educational needs were judged to have been making satisfactory progress. Progress for these pupils is now good and they achieve at standards which are appropriate to their abilities. They are set targets which are reviewed regularly to sustain a suitable level of challenge. The school makes effective use of a range of initiatives, such as booster classes, 'catch-up' programmes and support within class to assist pupils with special educational needs. Provision for gifted pupils is good. Individual programmes are devised, drawing on expertise from a neighbouring high school to ensure that work is suitably challenging. The school works closely with the parents of gifted children.

16. Children's achievements at the Foundation Stage are sound, being secured by satisfactory teaching. Pupils' achievements at Key Stage 2 are better than those at Key Stage 1. The teaching at Key Stage 1, although good, is not as consistent in its quality as that at Key Stage 2. Higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 2 receive more appropriate challenge, especially in English and mathematics. Marking of pupils' work at Key Stage 2 is of a very high quality, engaging pupils in dialogue and demanding more of them, whilst indicating where work is of good quality. The more rapid pace of work and the challenging

nature of the marking helps to secure greater progress for pupils within Key Stage 2, so leading them to better achievements.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. Pupils have good and often very good attitudes to their work. This reflects a similar picture to that seen at the last inspection. Pupils come to school eager to learn; lessons and activities are approached with great enthusiasm. This has a positive effect upon their learning and creates a purposeful environment. Pupils' attitudes reflect the quality of teaching that they receive and thus they are sometimes less good when work is not sufficiently challenging.

18. Pupils respond well to stimulating questions and they provide full and confident replies. For example, in a Foundation Stage science activity, children evaluated each other's work and explained the need for small creatures to find safe habitats. Pupils listen well to their teachers and each other and instructions are followed quickly and quietly. Throughout the school all pupils work hard and maintain concentration throughout the school day. Most pupils have good independent learning skills. They have a good knowledge of reference material and can confidently access additional information through the use of CD-ROMs and the Internet.

19. Parents feel that the school promotes an interest in learning that extends beyond the school day. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and throughout the school pupils are involved in regular reviews of their targets for improvement. Pupils work together well in groups and work alone when required. Pupils' work is valued and displays of work are attractive, adding to pupils' levels of motivation. Pupils are proud to share their work with others in lessons, but the sharing of work with their parents is at present underdeveloped.

20. Pupils' behaviour is good. This has a beneficial effect upon their learning and upon the school community as a whole. In lessons, behaviour is usually good. It occasionally deteriorates when teachers' expectations are insufficiently high. Pupils treat the resources and equipment they use in a sensible way and take care when tidying up at the end of lessons. Behaviour at lunchtimes and playtimes is very good and there is no evidence of conflict. There have been no exclusions in the past year. Appropriate procedures are in place should they be needed.

21. The relationships amongst all members of the school community are very good. Adults in school present good role models and pupils are treated with individual care and respect. In turn, pupils are polite and helpful towards each other and to adults. In particular, pupils display a caring and thoughtful approach to each other and older pupils are considerate towards younger pupils. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Pupils are encouraged to act responsibly and to consider the needs of others. They are given opportunities in lessons to express their opinions and feelings and they grow in confidence as they progress through the school. For example, in a Year 6 religious education lesson, where pupils explained choices that they had made in their lives to their classmates.

22. Attendance rates are in line with the national average and are satisfactory. Over the past few years there has been a decline in attendance rates. Pupils usually arrive in good time and the school day begins promptly. Registration time is brief and efficient. Parents

provide the school with good information about absences. A considerable number of these are due to holidays being taken in term time and for these pupils this has a detrimental effect upon their learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

23. The previous inspection judged that 20 per cent of the teaching seen was unsatisfactory, with the remainder being satisfactory or better. Particular weaknesses were identified at the end of Key Stage 1. The quality of teaching seen during this inspection shows a significant improvement, being good overall. No unsatisfactory teaching has been seen. The improved quality of teaching has been an important contributory factor in the raising of standards in the school. Staff remain keen to continue improving their own performance and therefore to continue to raise the standards attained within the school.

24. Fifty lessons were observed during the inspection. Of these, 28 per cent were very good, 34 per cent good and the remainder satisfactory. There is some variation in the quality of teaching within the three stages of the school. Teaching in the Foundation Stage (Reception year) was sound and sometimes good. At Key Stage 1, teaching was good and sometimes very good and teaching at Key Stage 2 was good and often very good. The rate of pupils' progress in their learning across the school is closely linked to the quality of teaching, with progress being best at Key Stage 2, where the teaching is more consistently good or very good.

25. At the time of the previous inspection, teachers' planning was identified as an area for development. Planning is now good. Work is carefully matched to the requirements of the National Curriculum or to the areas of learning for children in Reception. Scrutiny of a series of plans clearly demonstrates that teachers ensure that over time, pupils build on previous learning. The results of regularly planned assessments are used to inform teachers of what pupils need to study next. Teachers evaluate their lessons and briefly record where they feel their work has been most effective. The best evaluations also indicate the levels at which pupils are attaining. The headteacher and the subject co-ordinators monitor planning and evaluations.

26. Teachers' planning generally pays sufficient attention to the differing needs of the pupils within each class. This ensures that pupils achieve at appropriate levels, by engaging them in work which challenges them. An example of this was observed in a Year 4 science lesson, where pupils were recording the outcome of work about slopes, friction and different surfaces. Planning built on previous experiences and clearly indicated the different levels of the teacher's expectations. Pupils of differing abilities recorded their findings in a variety of ways, such as tables, graphs and written descriptions. More was demanded of the higher attaining pupils, who also offered more detailed explanations of their understanding of the results obtained. The lesson moved on at a good pace and all pupils remained interested and occupied by their work, enthusiastically answering the teacher's questions to explain their hypotheses. By the end of the lesson all pupils had achieved at a suitable level for their ability.

27. Where work is not matched effectively to pupils' abilities, too many pupils are engaged in similar tasks and too little account is taken of what pupils already know. This was seen in a Key Stage 1 numeracy lesson, where average and higher attaining pupils worked on the same task, and only those pupils whose rate of work was fast enough could attempt the planned higher level activity if time allowed. This strategy was noted in the planning for a series of numeracy lessons at Key Stage 1, giving rise to a unit of work in

which very few pupils would manage to attain at the higher levels of which they were capable.

28. In the Foundation Stage, teaching is sound. The most effective teaching occurs when the teacher and support assistant work as a team, with a clear focus for the lesson which builds on previous learning. For example, in an outdoor lesson using balls and hockey sticks, children quickly learned how to control the ball with their feet. The lesson progressed at a good pace and children were kept actively engaged in their work. They practised ball control using a hockey stick and by the end of the lesson most children could guide a ball around a series of cones. This good teaching ensured that children made good progress. Where teaching is less effective, children spend too much time sitting listening to the teacher. They become restless and inattentive and there is too little time for them to engage in practical tasks which help them to consolidate their learning.

29. At Key Stage 1, literacy skills are soundly taught. The teaching of writing is good. Staff make good use of opportunities in literacy lessons and in other lessons to reinforce good writing practice. Expectations of presentation and handwriting are always high and the pupils respond well to teachers' high standards. Tasks are meaningful and varied and spelling is soundly taught. The teaching of reading is satisfactory at Key Stage 1. Pupils make generally sound progress but the teaching of the sounds made by groups of letters is not always effective. Pupils are sometime unable to tackle words which are not familiar to them, as they do not have sufficient strategies for this. The match of reading books to the levels of pupils' abilities is not always carefully made and this also impacts on pupils' progress in reading at Key Stage 1.

30. The teaching of literacy at Key Stage 2 is good and sometimes very good. Learning objectives are shared with pupils and revisited at the close of the lesson to assess the level of progress made. Teachers keep lessons moving at a good pace and manage pupils effectively, using a range of teaching strategies which require pupils to work in groups, in pairs and individually. Marking is particularly helpful in illustrating what is effective in pupils' writing.

31. Numeracy skills are taught soundly in Key Stage 1. Teachers are making effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy to assist in the raising of standards. The most effective teaching at Key Stage 1 incorporates good teaching of mental skills in which pupils are expected to respond as quickly as they are able to questions posed at exactly the right level for their abilities. This good teaching communicates difficult concepts clearly, with the teacher constantly assessing how securely pupils are grasping new mathematical ideas, such as learning that subtraction can be done by finding the difference between two numbers, rather than the more familiar 'take away' sums. In some lessons there is insufficient attention paid to pupils' differing abilities.

32. At Key Stage 2, numeracy is taught well. Teachers pay good attention to the differing levels of attainment within their classes. Lessons have good pace and teachers have high expectations. Mental skills are sharpened through challenging oral mathematics sessions. Learning objectives are revisited to check pupils' progress during lessons. Homework tasks are used to provide reinforcement for work covered in the classroom.

33. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is of a consistently better quality than at Key Stage 1. Very good teaching was seen at both key stages and was characterised by similar features, such as good pace and challenge for all pupils, causing pupils to become animated about learning and engrossed in their work. Teachers make use of a variety of tools to assist their

work, including computers. Helpers are well briefed about their tasks. In an effective Year 1 information and communication technology lesson, many of these features were present. Work was covered at a very good pace through the rotation of groups. Use was made of a scanner, tape recorder, a programmable floor toy and simple control software. The teacher's very good knowledge of her pupils and good preparation of adult helpers enabled the effective teaching of several groups of children. Very good relationships and good discipline within a confined space meant that changes of activity were quickly and sensibly carried out. The excitement generated by the well chosen tasks and the pace of the lesson kept the pupils busy and resulted in the very good development of skills in information and communication technology, together with good learning in English, geography and mathematics.

34. Appropriate attention is given to identifying suitable tasks for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers know and understand pupils' needs through the use of individual education plans and this knowledge is used to plan appropriately adapted work. Teachers discuss their plans with support staff in advance of lessons, enabling full participation by pupils with special educational needs. Homework is specially tailored to suit pupils' individual needs. The good management of pupils with special educational needs leads to their good behaviour and appropriate achievement.

35. The headteacher, together with the subject co-ordinators, regularly monitors teaching through the observation of lessons. She has developed a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the quality of teaching and identifies areas of development from her lesson observations and through discussions with individual teachers. This strategy has helped teachers to recognise the best features of their teaching and enabled them to reflect on ways of improving their practice, so raising the quality of teaching and learning within the school.

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

36. The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. It provides good opportunities for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to experience the range of National Curriculum subjects and also to develop the social, moral and personal skills which are prominent in the school's mission statement.

37. The school gives due emphasis to the teaching of English, mathematics and science, since these are priorities in the school. In recent years it has successfully introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies which are beginning to drive up standards. More recently the school has adopted new nationally approved schemes of work for most other subjects. The schemes give a solid framework to the curriculum and ensure pupils acquire knowledge and understanding more methodically. This has helped the school to overcome the serious weaknesses identified in the planning of the curriculum at the time of the previous report.

38. Although the school has a suitable curriculum across all subjects, the higher attaining pupils in mathematics and reading at Key Stage 1 are not being extended to their full potential. This is the result of some inconsistencies which remain in the detail of teachers' planning. Curriculum planning has improved since the previous inspection. Developments in long term planning ensure a better balance than before in terms of coverage of the National Curriculum. Teachers no longer plan in isolation. Medium term planning is more

consistent across the school and is monitored by the headteacher and subject co-ordinators.

39. The school provides equality of access and opportunity for pupils to learn. The quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall and these pupils are making good progress in all subjects. Class teachers are aware of particular literacy and numeracy needs through good diagnostic assessment and the school provides differentiated activities and generous levels of support. The requirements of the special educational needs Code of Practice are met. There is a draft policy for gifted pupils. Gifted pupils access work from higher year groups and the school is planning future provision in consultation with pupils' parents.

40. The quality of education provided for in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and supports their rate of learning and the standards they achieve. The needs of these children are being met through a variety of experiences, but at times some children are inattentive and they do not always follow instructions carefully.

41. The school has effective strategies for teaching both literacy and numeracy. This is evident in their improved attainment in writing and mathematics since the last report. For example, booster classes to target Year 6 pupils identified as working below the expected level 4 were innovated earlier in the year. Rigorous target setting helps to identify areas of weakness across the curriculum. By analysing areas of weakness within a group of pupils it enables the school to focus on particular aspects within a subject in order to improve performance, for example, the improved writing across both key stages since the previous report. The school has plans to apply these strategies to reading and mathematics at Key Stage 1.

42. Attainment in all subjects is at least satisfactory. At the time of the previous report, writing at Key Stage 1, design and technology, information technology and geography across both key stages failed to reach the nationally expected standards. Many subjects of the curriculum are now very well covered by cross-curricular teaching. For example, in design and technology, pupils produce written plans and so develop their literacy skills. Similarly, pupils use elements of mathematics in geography, for example, to produce graphs and tables. Literacy skills are extended and very much in evidence in the good descriptive writing on displays and in the pupils' books. Literacy skills are further developed in science by a range of different diagrams, tables, experiments, evaluations and detailed explanations.

43. The statutory curriculum is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities that are supported by all members of staff. An environmental club and music are provided for Key Stage 2 pupils at lunchtime, run by teachers. Opportunities are provided for the older pupils after school hours. These are wide ranging and include football with a coach from Everton, netball, guitar lessons, Spanish and a computer club. Apart from football, the other clubs are taken by teachers. Rounders and choir alternate according to the season and are taken by the same teacher. The school enriches the curriculum further by the many educational visits to complement the topics being studied by the pupils. Visits to Llandudno, Wigan Pier, Liverpool Museum, Chester and other places broaden the pupils' experiences. They also benefit from visitors to the school, for example, theatre groups perform Macbeth and Pinocchio, or visiting artists work alongside the pupils. Year 6 pupils are enthusiastic about their residential visit to Winmarleigh Hall where many outdoor activities, including abseiling, orienteering and archery, are provided. Daily computer sessions are a feature of the visit.

44. There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. The school has a policy (which is in the process of being reviewed) to address sex education and this

work is supported by the school nurse. The development of health education and the attention to drugs misuse is coherent and appropriate to the age and needs of the pupils. Much of this teaching is delivered through the science curriculum. The school uses the local education authority's Drugs Misuse Policy and an independent consultant comes to give talks to parents and workshops for the pupils. In the week following this inspection, a theatre group catering for the older pupils, is to perform a play promoting a healthy lifestyle and especially highlighting the ill effects of smoking.

45. The community makes satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning. Visitors such as the Road Safety Officers and the police come in to school to talk to pupils about their work. Recently the police brought their horses on to the school field to demonstrate the value of the horses in police work. A school governor comes in to talk to pupils about her wartime experiences. A villager discusses environmental issues with the pupils and gives practical advice about the wildlife garden at the bottom of the school field. There is relatively little parental involvement in activities except for religious occasions, for example, observing class assemblies. Relationships with the school's partner institutions are sound. Sports tournaments, for example, involving rounders matches, are organised with other primary schools. Links with the secondary schools are effective. Year 6 pupils have the chance to visit their new schools for 'taster' days before they transfer. The younger children are inducted effectively into school. Most have attended a local nursery.

46. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. The ethos of the school, based on Christian principles, is very strong and makes a significant contribution to pupils' progress. As a Roman Catholic school, the headteacher and staff maintain close links with the church. Teaching is clearly based on Christian principles and values. The school's mission statement is reflected in the daily life and conduct of all its pupils. Arrangements for assemblies, planned and agreed by staff, provide a sound framework throughout the day for pupils to gain further insight into the Christian faith and offer daily opportunities for prayer and reflection. Pupils develop a good understanding of faith from a very early age. Candles used in each class for their class collective worship time generate a calm atmosphere and are conducive to prayer and reflection. One whole school period of collective worship gave the pupils the opportunity to reflect about choices they make daily. Pupils listened intently to a story from the New Testament about Jesus giving freedom of choice to all.

47. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong. Most have a clear understanding of the impact of their behaviour and attitudes on other people. Having respect, being friendly, caring, including others and being fair in sharing resources is present in the everyday life of pupils. This was evident in most of the lessons observed. In a Year 4 and 5 design and technology lesson, pupils with good co-ordination willingly helped their peers who may have had difficulty threading a needle.

48. Provision for social development is very good with very good relationships throughout the school. The school teaches very good social skills. Pupils listen to each other carefully and value others' contributions. Levels of co-operation are high and pupils actively support each other in group activities when solving problems and organising teams. For example, in a physical education lesson, Year 6 pupils were excellent at organising themselves, playing as teams and following the rules fairly. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into this caring environment. Pupils welcome visitors politely and make the most of these opportunities to talk. At lunchtimes and at breaks pupils create a pleasant and enjoyable atmosphere. Teachers consistently reinforce the appropriate ways of taking part in discussions or working with partners and groups.

49. The school takes an active part in developing pupils' own cultural traditions through many subjects of the curriculum and through visits. Visits out of school, for example, a Year 3 visit to Victorian Manchester and a Year 5 visit to Wigan Pier, provide pupils with an awareness of the world beyond the school and an awareness of their own cultural heritage. Within the curriculum some experiences of other western European cultures are provided, for example, through extra-curricular Spanish sessions and literacy lessons involving European holiday places. An assembly observed during the inspection encompassed cultural values by pupils dressed in costumes representing different countries and encouraging friendship across the world. Years 4 and 5 have developed a friendship with a Chinese boy from Beijing through correspondence. The school is beginning to develop a multicultural awareness by world book days, book fairs and poetry days promoting other cultures. Displays in the hall from National Book Week contained a strong multicultural element illustrating stories from the Cameroons, Brother Eagle and Sister Sky, stories from India and the African story of Handa's Surprise with details of fruit carried by Handa. Year 3 contributed a range of celebrations and festivals from major world faiths. The number of resources available to promote pupils' awareness of other major world religions is limited.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

50. The school has good arrangements for the care and protection of its pupils. The pupils are all well known and well supported by the very good relationships that exist throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs are also well supported and provided for. Parents feel that the pastoral support offered to all its pupils and their families is a strength of the school and inspection findings support this view.

51. Health and safety procedures are good and these benefit from a comprehensive policy and the involvement of the governing body. Pupils are encouraged to be aware of their own safety and to act responsibly. The procedures for child protection are very good. All adults in the school receive appropriate training and this is very well supported by written guidance of a high quality.

52. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic performance and personal development are satisfactory. Individual pupils are involved in discussions about their own targets for English and mathematics and annual written reports identify personal targets for improvement. There is a consistent system throughout the school and termly reviews are held with pupils and also shared with parents. This motivates pupils and provides good support for their learning.

53. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. This is an improved area since the last inspection. A range of tests and assessments take place in English, mathematics and science. In other subjects pupils' work is analysed and the level of their work is identified. The use made of this information to guide curricular planning is also satisfactory. Whilst assessment information is generally well used to plan future work, it is not used consistently to identify and provide for higher attaining pupils across the school. In Key Stage 1, assessment information has identified the higher attaining pupils in mathematics and reading, but curriculum planning does not fully reflect this. Assessment information is well used to identify pupils with special educational needs. Appropriate individual education plans are created and the support of specialist agencies is sought as needed. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

54. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good. There are clear rules for pupils to follow and these are well understood. Pupils respond well to praise and receive house points with pride. A weekly celebration assembly provides recognition for effort, good work and behaviour. Incidents of misbehaviour are handled effectively and in general, clear messages about unacceptable behaviour are provided. There is a good policy to promote good behaviour and also to deal with issues surrounding oppressive behaviour. Incidents are rare and parents report that any that do occur are handled swiftly and effectively.

55. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. Attendance is closely monitored and the administrative arrangements are efficient. The school meets the statutory requirements with regard to the publishing of attendance figures and in the registration of pupils each day. The completion of registers is accurate and efficient. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

56. The parents' views of the school are good. Parents are appreciative of the education provided for their children and of the hard work and commitment shown by all the staff. In particular they are appreciative of the considerable improvements made since the last inspection. They feel that the school promotes good attitudes and values and that the staff treat their children with sensitivity and respect.

57. Some parents are unhappy about the amount of homework provided and the range of activities offered outside lessons. A significant number of parents were not happy with the amount of information they receive about how their child is getting on. The inspection findings support all the positive views of parents. Additionally, they find that the amount and type of homework is appropriate and supports pupils' learning well. The range of activities offered is judged to be good and enhances the curriculum. The provision of information about how children are getting on is satisfactory.

58. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is satisfactory. Parents are welcomed into school and parents feel that the relationships between them and the school are good. The teaching staff are readily available at the end of the day and parents are invited to make appointments should they wish to discuss their child's progress. Parents are invited to school assemblies and services and these are very well supported. Other special events are also well supported. On balance, there are insufficient opportunities for parents to gain insight into the work that their children do. Whilst there are opportunities at the end of the school year to view their children's work, there are not enough occasions throughout the year where parents may gain an understanding of what is taught and where their children may benefit from support.

59. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is satisfactory. A small number of parents are able to offer to help in school and school visits are well supported. The Parent, Teacher and Friends Association provide good support for the school. They hold a variety of fund-raising events that are well attended. Funds raised provide the school with welcome additional resources.

60. The quality of the information provided for parents is satisfactory. The school brochure, governors' report and newsletters are well written and keep parents well informed about the life of the school. Information about the curriculum is conveyed through year group letters issued each term. These provide useful information. Information about pupils' work and progress is provided in written reports that are issued towards the end of the

school year. These provide useful detail and areas of difficulty are identified; parents are appreciative of these. Consultation evenings are held in the autumn term and at the end of the summer term. A significant number of parents have expressed a wish for more frequent detailed information about their child's progress in order to provide better support at home. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved at an early stage with the identification of their child's needs and are involved in regular reviews of their child's progress.

61. The contribution that parents make to their children's learning at home and at school is generally good. Parents of pupils in Key Stage 1 are well involved in maintaining reading record books but at Key Stage 2, the role of parents in monitoring their child's homework is less clear and the completion of homework books by parents to indicate their involvement and support for homework is inconsistent. Homework books are used well by many pupils in Key Stage 2 to record the requirements of homework. Again this is inconsistent, leading to some parents being better informed than others. Parents are committed to the support of their children's education but the significant number of parents who take holidays in term time mars this.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

62. The good leadership of the headteacher, working closely with the newly appointed deputy headteacher and good delegation to other key members of staff, ensures clear direction for the work and development of the school. They work well as a team to ensure that its very clear aims and values are reflected in the day-to-day work. The very good relationships that exist between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves ensure that the school is a welcoming place. All pupils are valued for the contribution they make, ensuring equal opportunity for all learning or working in it.

63. The headteacher was appointed very shortly before the previous inspection which took place in May 1997. At this time standards in both key stages were low in English, mathematics and science and also low in other key areas such as information and communications technology. The report highlighted some serious weaknesses, particularly in the management of the curriculum by the previous management structure, which adversely affected teaching in some classes and consequently, pupils' progress and standards of attainment. These were quickly rectified as the then newly appointed headteacher's management strategies were implemented. This shows such issues were well addressed. The overall effect of this improvement can be seen in the much improved national testing results which have shown an upward trend in all subjects, except reading at the higher level at Key Stage 1. The improvement made in science at both key stages is particularly significant. A further challenge that remains for the school is to develop strategies to raise attainment of the more able pupils in mathematics, particularly at the end of Key Stage 1. At present, the results are lower than they should be for this group of pupils and this is having the overall effect of depressing the school's reported results.

64. The present school development plan identifies areas that the school is working upon in the short term covering the period 2000/01. Another document looks towards items for inclusion in a subsequent development plan. The school has significant long term projects concerning its building, but the school development plan does not reflect these in sufficient detail. At the time of this inspection, very significant changes to leadership and accommodation are about to take place. The headteacher will be moving to a new post and there are firm plans to extend the school. It is thus important that the thoughts and plans for

the longer term future development of the school are more comprehensively and formally documented in the new school development plan.

65. The school is clear about its priorities for development and important amongst these is the need to improve standards at Key Stage 1 in reading and mathematics. It is clear the school is beginning to take action to address these issues and subject specific action plans have been put in place.

66. There were frequent unsatisfactory elements in teaching at the time of the previous inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during this inspection. Through an effective monitoring system devised by the headteacher, planning and teaching are regularly observed and evaluated. Teachers are given oral and written reports so that they are clear about their strengths and areas for improvement. In this way, needs for school and individual teacher training are identified and a strong impact has been made on pupils' learning and the raising of standards.

67. Staffing levels are good throughout the school. Staff are suitably qualified and able to effectively deliver the curriculum. More than half have been at the school for two years or less. There is good quality and appropriate induction of new staff into the school and newly qualified teachers are supported and provided with written targets from a programme of regular observations. There are sufficient classroom assistants who carry out their work very efficiently and make positive contributions to pupils' learning throughout the school. Staff are hard working, dedicated and committed to further improvement. Staff appraisal is in place, strongly contributed to by the regular classroom observations that take place.

68. The previous report highlighted several areas in which the governing body was not fulfilling its legal and statutory responsibilities. These have all been rectified. The governors take part in training and are well informed of the school's work through regular reports from the headteacher and a regular programme of visits to the school. This enables them to fulfil their statutory duties and they now have a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This in turn helps them to shape the direction in which the school is moving and is an improvement upon the previous findings when in common with the headteacher, the governors did not provide sufficient oversight and direction for the curriculum.

69. Various committees are now in place to regulate and approve matters such as curriculum, finance and staffing. These meet regularly and feed back to the whole governing body. Individual governors have specific statutory responsibility, such as the governor with responsibility for special educational needs. Each has taken on governor responsibility for a subject area and a class. They work effectively and give good support to the headteacher, showing confidence in her day-to-day management of the school.

70. The school follows the local authority financial procedures, which encompass the principles of best value which the school is beginning to apply. Financial management, considered by the previous report as not being rigorously applied to the management of the school budget, is now good. The school's administrative staff manage the school's budget efficiently and make good use of new technological systems to assist their work. Procedures are well established and contribute well to the smooth running of the school. Funds provided through specific grants are well used to enhance the educational opportunities of the pupils. For instance, the school buys in the services of a local authority special educational needs teacher. This enhances the good support the school provides for these pupils through the good work of teachers and support staff.

71. Accommodation, although improved, is at present unsatisfactory. The school has rightly decided to teach literacy and numeracy in separate year groups and that has meant that during the past year the information and communication technology suite has to be used for class teaching in the mornings. This clearly impacts on the opportunity for other classes to use the computers. There is a need for additional storage space, new toilets, a larger hall and a new library, all of which contribute to the school's own view that it "is desperately short of space". Outdoor areas are extensive with more than adequate areas of hard surface and field. The school is well cared for and is clean and tidy. Providing the plans the school has to extend its accommodation proceed as they should, most of these issues will be addressed resulting in more space and the opportunity to create a good school library housing an improved range and sufficiency of books. Both these factors are at present unsatisfactory. The school has already identified the deficit in book provision and is temporarily addressing the shortage of books by borrowing non-fiction stock from the local authority's library loan service.

72. The school is adequately resourced for mathematics, science and information and communication technology. This will improve further when the planned two further computers are in place. Resources for other subjects are also satisfactory.

73. The school has improved significantly since the last inspection, through the vigorous leadership of the headteacher and the very good shared commitment of the staff and the governing body. The dedication of the staff means that the school is well placed to support further improvements. In the light of the standards attained, pupils' progress and the quality of education provided, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The governors' action plan will set out how the areas for improvement identified during the inspection are to be addressed.

In order to further raise standards and the quality of education provided, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- ◆ Improve the level of challenge offered to pupils at Key Stage 1 in reading and mathematics by:
 - *giving pupils work which takes full account of their previous learning;*
 - *raising teachers' expectations of what higher attaining pupils can achieve;*
 - *ensuring that work is planned to take account of the attainments of different groups of pupils, including higher attainers;*
 - *teaching pupils a wider range of specific skills in reading which support their development as independent readers;*

(Paragraphs 2, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 16, 17, 27, 29, 38, 41, 53, 63, 65, 92, 94, 95, 97, 106, 107, 109 & 119)

- ◆ Give parents an increased number of planned opportunities to find out how their children are getting on:

(Paragraphs 19, 57, 58 and 60)

- ◆ Develop longer term strategic management plans to guide the school's work with new staff and governors in future years by:
 - *documenting future plans for raising standards and improving accommodation;*
 - *outlining the costs of planned improvements and indicating where money is committed to developments and devising measures of success;*

(Paragraph 64)

- ◆ Improve the level of book provision to provide sufficient books to support work in all subjects and for all age groups.

(Paragraphs 71, 103, 128, 153 and 161)

In addition to the above areas, the following less critical area should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. This is referred to in paragraph 49:

- ◆ Further improve the provision for pupils' education about the cultural diversity of the society in which they live.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	50
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	28	34	38	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	167
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	24

English as an additional language	Number of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	Number 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	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	13	13	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	12
	Girls	12	11	12
	Total	25	24	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (86)	92 (100)	92 (95)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	12	13
	Girls	11	12	13
	Total	24	24	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (100)	92 (95)	100 (95)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	4	9	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (100)	92 (87)	92 (93)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (100)	92 (87)	92 (93)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

As the number of boys and girls undertaking the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 were both less than 10, then only the overall school percentage results are recorded.

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	0
White	167
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26:1
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	46

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	312,219
Total expenditure	288,791
Expenditure per pupil	1,876
Balance brought forward from previous year	31,132
Balance carried forward to next year	54,560

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	167
Number of questionnaires returned	91

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	42	55	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	55	4	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	47	2	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	55	16	2	1
The teaching is good.	42	48	4	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	40	28	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44	50	3	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	47	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	32	54	13	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	38	52	5	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	36	56	2	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	38	22	3	8

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

74. Children are admitted to the school at the start of the school year in which they are five. Attainment on entry is broadly in line with what might be expected of children of a similar age. A significant minority of children attain at a higher level. At the time of the inspection the majority of children had celebrated their fifth birthdays. They were well established in the Reception class. Many were close to attaining the newly agreed Early Learning Goals and a significant minority had already attained them and were working within the National Curriculum. The results of entry assessments are used to identify children who might benefit from additional support.

75. Children attain soundly in all of the prescribed areas of learning, with particular strengths in some of the areas. In the area of communication, language and literacy, speaking skills are well developed for a significant majority of children. Within the area of knowledge and understanding of the world, the science strand is well taught and children show good levels of understanding. The standards described in the previous report are broadly similar to those seen during this inspection.

76. Teaching within the Foundation Stage is sound overall with some good teaching being seen. Planning for the Foundation Stage indicates that the teacher has a good awareness of the recently devised Early Learning Goals and the 'stepping stones' that lead to the attainment of these goals. The role of the adults in the classroom is clearly outlined within planning. Some key areas of learning are planned to provide important practical learning opportunities each day, so that children can always practice and develop their learning in areas such as reading, writing, mathematics and imaginative play. Lessons are evaluated and the outcomes of each day's teaching help to inform what children will do next. Children's progress is sometimes limited through spending too long listening to the teacher explaining activities, which reduces the time available for them to engage in practical learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

77. Children attain soundly in this area of learning and teacher's planning indicates that good provision is made within this area of learning. It is given appropriate priority, in keeping with the national guidance, and children learn important skills of co-operation and independence. They are happy and secure within the school environment and move around the classroom with confidence, selecting the activities that they wish to engage in. They work together well on most occasions and approach adults for help and support as they wish. Children are familiar with routines. For example, they can get ready for a physical activity out of doors, changing into their shorts and pumps with only a little help. Children take turns with apparatus and follow instructions carefully in their lessons, for example, waiting their turn to collect their balls and hockey sticks.

78. Relationships within the Foundation Stage are very good. Children help one another and learn to be caring and considerate for one another's feelings. For example, they listen carefully to each other's writing about a new house for a ladybird and are quick to commend a classmate whose work they like, suggesting that he should receive a reward. The children still experience some difficulties in taking turns when speaking and listening in a large group. They shout out and chatter to one another and frequently have to be reminded to be quiet.

79. Teaching within this area of provision is sound. All adults show good, caring attitudes and these provide good role models for the children. Independence is promoted through the effective organisation of resources in a way which encourages children to select equipment that they require. Good opportunities are created for children to work in pairs and in groups. Teacher's expectations are sometimes insufficiently high, particularly when there are class discussions. This results in the children's frequent calling out. The religious education programme followed by the school contributes effectively to children's personal, social and emotional development.

Communication, language and literacy

80. Children attain soundly within this area of learning. Children enjoy words and books. They are able and eager speakers, expressing themselves clearly in their work across the curriculum, but they do not always listen as carefully as they should. Adults listen carefully to children's individual responses to questions and offer good models of spoken language for the children to copy. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most children are attaining the early learning goals and a minority have exceeded them. Children listen to complex instructions, for example, when sorting shapes in mathematics. They also clearly explain the reasons for the choices that they make when they sort apparatus.

81. In developing their early reading and writing skills, children learn the sounds of the letters of the alphabet and also know the sounds made by combinations of letters, such as sh, ch and th. They use their reading and writing skills, for example, to describe a day out at the supermarket and to write a 'For Sale' advertisement for a house that would be suitable for the nursery rhyme ladybird who lost her house in a fire. They read their writing, which contains several simple sentences and carefully considered content, including, from one child, a thoughtfully included fire exit for the ladybird. A few children are beginning to use capital letters and full stops. Letters are generally well formed, although some children reverse letters and are unaware that they have made any errors. Children select different ways of organising their written work, choosing from lists and descriptive text.

82. Teaching is satisfactory. Adults use praise effectively in their work with groups and individuals. Children have good self-esteem which results in them thinking of themselves as readers and writers who have confidence to tackle the work that they are given. Home-school reading records indicate that the pace of reading work is good, but in the lessons seen during the inspection, more emphasis was placed on writing than on reading activities.

Mathematical development

83. Attainment within mathematical development is satisfactory and it is soundly taught. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children will attain the early learning goals and a significant minority will exceed them. Children are interested in mathematical activities and enjoy the challenge of mental mathematics sessions. All children can recognise numbers to 10 and many can recognise up to 20. Responses are quick and correct and indicate good understanding of numerical and ordinal number order. Children understand the concept of one more and one less and can work out the answers to questions of this nature. They have a broad experience of mathematics, including sorting items by more than one criteria and recording their answers on a large grid. They also show a sound grasp of positional language, such as through, over, under and behind, and some begin to distinguish between their right and left hands. Work scrutiny shows that children experience weighing and measuring activities and begin to learn about money.

84. Lessons do not always select the most effective method for teaching mathematics. In a practical lesson on positional language, the lesson organisation took the form of a game of Follow My Leader. Work was over directed and there were too few opportunities for all children to demonstrate their understanding, as the lesson only required two children at a time to show others what was meant by the positional words they were learning. In a lesson focusing on sorting shapes, the activities were well chosen and carefully matched to children's previous learning. Adults were well prepared for their role, but the teacher talked for too long before asking the children to go and engage in the activities, so that they had too little time to play the selected games, limiting opportunities for individual learning and reinforcement. Good use is made of information and communication technology to support learning in this area of learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

85. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is sound. Teaching is satisfactory and offers a suitable range of activities to give children the required breadth for this area of learning. Good use is made of the local environment to further children's knowledge.

86. Children enjoy the activities planned and set about their work enthusiastically. They enjoy using the computers independently and show appropriate levels of skill in controlling the mouse to play sorting games. Some children are able to alter the level of difficulty required in the game they play. Children find out about the world in which they live by studying the weather. They learn the names of the seasons and learn the order in which they occur and the weather and activities which might be typical of each season. The children record their journeys around the school in pictorial form, showing an early awareness of simple plans and maps. They match animal babies to their parents and learn the names of some baby animals, such as kittens, chicks, lambs and puppies, and know that these babies will grow into adult animals. In their studies of minibeasts, children create minibeast 'homes' out of suitable materials and carefully hunt for creatures in the school's wildlife garden. They learn about insects and spiders, worms and slugs and delight in talking about the things that they have found and the characteristics of the creatures that they learn of. They enjoy looking at books which are connected to their work. Children build models of vehicles and structures using a range of construction kits, working both individually and in small groups.

87. Adults offer good support in this area of learning. They teach children to use vocabulary linked to their work. Lessons do not always make good use of opportunities to use computers across the curriculum, for example, in supporting reading and writing activities.

Physical development

88. Children's physical development is satisfactory and all children will attain the early learning goals. The standards of attainment are affected by the lack of a designated outdoor activity area for children in the Foundation Stage. Children can only engage in energetic physical activity during their physical education lessons and at playtimes. There are no opportunities for children to choose to work out of doors or to develop their skills of co-ordination and balance through using wheeled toys or climbing frames. There are firm plans for an outdoor play area to be created when the school is extended in the near future, as the school is aware of this gap in its provision. Children show sound abilities in running,

jumping and controlling balls with their feet. They are good at using hockey sticks to control balls around a small course, showing great concentration and perseverance in an activity which had the potential to be very frustrating!

89. Within the classroom, children are adept at joining pieces of construction kits. They build structures of various sizes and are able to describe the purpose for their model. When using scissors and writing and drawing with pencils, they control these tools well and create recognisable shapes when cutting and soundly formed letters when writing. Lessons are planned to enable children to develop and refine their skills, especially their pencil control. Activities include tracing over outlines, and following mazes and spirals. Computer programs require the use of a mouse to control the screen cursor, these programs being set at appropriate levels of difficulty for most children, although some children require work with additional challenge.

Creative development

90. Children's creative development is satisfactory. Planning indicates that a suitable range of activities is offered to enable children to experience across the area of learning. Teaching is satisfactory. Children create collages using a range of materials. They select the materials that they believe will create the effect that they are seeking. For example, when creating a collage of their favourite food, they choose sticky paper, pasta and paint to represent a meal that they enjoy. They print patterns using bright colours and illustrate the story of Handa's Surprise, painting bowls of exotic fruit, similar to those in the story. Children draw recognisable illustrations to accompany their work. When creating their advertisement for the ladybird's house, they draw good representations of houses which would suit a ladybird, surrounded by grass where the ladybird could find greenfly to eat.

91. Children in the Foundation Stage sing enthusiastically during assemblies and hymn practice. They learn the words of the hymns and sing tunefully, sometimes providing an 'echo' line. In their imaginary role-play, children immerse themselves in the activities that are on offer. They use small world equipment to re-enact stories and act out stories with one another in the role-play area, where they enjoy dressing up. They assume the roles of different characters and interact well with one another, such as when playing in the 'pond area', where they use scientific equipment to 'study' wildlife or they act out songs and rhymes that they know.

ENGLISH

92. In the National Curriculum assessment of 2000, pupils' attainments at the end of Key Stage 2 were satisfactory. They were well below average in comparison with similar schools. On the basis of prior attainment, results are well above similar schools. Boys perform better than girls when compared to the national average. The overall trend is above the national average. Too few pupils attained the higher level 5, although high percentages are attained at level 4.

93. In 2000, pupils' attainments in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 were satisfactory and in line with national averages for reading. They were below average when compared with similar schools. Attainment was well above average for writing and above average for similar schools. Writing results are consistently better than reading both for 2000 and over time. Girls and boys' scores for both reading and writing are similar. Too

few pupils are attaining the higher level for reading whilst for writing a good proportion of pupils are attaining the higher level.

94. Evidence from the current inspection shows that pupils' attainment in English is good and above average by the end of Key Stage 2. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is satisfactory for reading and good for writing. Higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in their reading. Across both key stages, standards in speaking and listening are high. Standards at the end of both key stages at the time of the previous report were below average for writing at Key Stage 1. The school has concentrated on improving writing at Key Stage 1 and this has been successful with good results sustained over time. Pupils across Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress. Pupils make good progress by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs are given effective support which helps them to make good progress.

95. The school is implementing the National Literacy Strategy successfully. The focus on teaching basic skills and the emphasis on writing is contributing effectively to improvement in spelling and writing for different audiences. Teachers plan very effectively to national literacy guidelines. The quality of planning has improved significantly throughout the school since the previous inspection. The school has identified the need to improve standards in reading at Key Stage 1. A new comprehensive scheme has been purchased focusing on reading with comprehension skills. Targets have been set to help more pupils reach the higher level 3.

96. Standards of reading and comprehension are high by the end of Key Stage 2. Knowledge and understanding of fiction and non-fiction texts have been extended using the literacy strategy, particularly with the older pupils. The pupils in Year 6 are self-motivated, enjoy reading and are reading some demanding texts. They discuss the characters and storylines in their current reading book, for example, C. S. Lewis' "Magician's Nephew" with understanding and obvious enjoyment of literature. Across Key Stage 2 the skills needed to read with deeper understanding are being taught at an appropriate level in whole class and guided group reading time. All pupils appear to enjoy reading and regularly take books home. Many can discuss a favourite author and illustrator and although J. K. Rowling and Roald Dahl are very popular, pupils are generally also able to talk about other authors in depth.

97. By the end of Key Stage 1 some pupils read well with good expression and obvious enjoyment. One pupil recounts Terry Deary's "Rotten Romans" and laughs as he explains the contents of this book. The teaching of letters and letter blends to help pupils identify unknown words is not always effective. A significant number of pupils at Key Stage 1 are experiencing difficulties with letter blends and reading books are sometimes pitched at a level which is either too easy or too difficult for them. They recognise a range of common words but have not developed the ability to identify unfamiliar words by breaking them down and sounding out parts. Some very good whole class phonic teaching was seen in Year 1 with all pupils involved. A very successful Book Week was held at the school where pupils dressed as their favourite characters, for example, Harry Potter and Alice in Wonderland. This helps pupils to relate to the characters and further promotes their enjoyment of literature.

98. Standards in speaking and listening are very high throughout the school. Pupils listen attentively and are interested in what others say. This was clearly evident in Year 6 where pupils are very good at giving reasons why they enjoy the humour of the personification of 'McCavity' in T. S. Elliot's poem. Year 4 pupils willingly

give their ideas about persuasive writing and are confident about their own opinions when discussing "Big Sister's Tale". Year 2 pupils gave ideas in their music lesson about imagining a sun coming in from the sunset and used the percussion instruments appropriately to illustrate this imagery. Good questioning by most teachers ensures that all pupils are drawn into the subject being discussed and are given good opportunities to contribute their own ideas. Pupils benefit greatly from the friendly and encouraging atmosphere created by most teachers who have the skills to wait for each contribution whilst keeping a pace to the lesson.

99. Standards in writing are good at the end of Key Stage 1. Most pupils form their letters correctly, have an awareness of sentence construction and produce neat work. Pupils often transfer skills they have learnt in the literacy hour lessons such as, sentence construction, successfully to other subjects. For example, pupils list the things they will need in design and technology for designing a car and show different assembly techniques for assembling with wheels and axles. The best work is seen when pupils engage in free writing activities rather than on worksheets. Year 1 pupils write about Saturdays, for example, "I went on the swings and roundabouts". A Year 2 pupil describes fireworks as "running, skipping through the sky". By the end of Key Stage 2 standards are good. Pupils benefit from a wide range of writing challenges both in the literacy lessons and in work linked to other subjects. For example, pupils make full use of their writing skills when recording science or historical accounts. Teachers regularly remind pupils to apply what they have learned in literacy lessons to all their work, to spell words correctly and to use the most effective grammar. Year 3 pupils write poems and describe a Troll as moving with "gurgles ghastly groans". Year 4 create imaginative stories. One pupil writes "the ball began to glow lighting up the whole street". A Year 5 pupil uses effective expressions, for example, "in the blink of an eye" to illustrate a story about the gold nugget. Year 5 pupils grab the reader's interest by a good introduction to their stories, for example, "a hundred thousand years ago I went on an expedition into the future".

100. Teachers succeed in making much of the written work relevant by using the pupils' own experiences as a focus and pupils respond by showing good levels of interest. Teachers' high expectations are a feature of work throughout the key stage, the consistently good quality of handwriting bearing testimony to this. By the age of 11, fluency, accuracy and flexibility are seen in most pupils' written work with many pupils reaching above average standards. Year 6 pupils recommend their favourite stories with very good examples of descriptive writing, for example, "a sense of shock and panic from everyone" or "as quickly as a bullet coming out of a gun".

101. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. There is a whole school commitment to raising standards. Since the previous inspection, teachers have undertaken a wide range of courses and other training, to address identified weaknesses in the teaching of the subject. The benefits gained are evident in the good quality of the lessons taught and the confidence with which teachers approach the subject. Pupils in Year 1 are particularly responsive with good attitudes and behaviour leading to good learning.

102. Across Key Stage 2 most of the teaching is good with some very good teaching with the oldest pupils. The teaching of basic literacy skills is clearly evident and underlines the teachers' good subject knowledge. Learning objectives are shared with pupils and lessons move along at a brisk pace with no time wasted. The assessment of what pupils know, understand and can do is good and as a result, learning activities are carefully planned. A strength in teaching, especially at Key Stage 2, is the very good handwriting skills being taught. Work is neat, well presented and legible. Careful and very helpful marking,

especially at Key Stage 2, promotes English writing in a very effective way. The management of pupils is generally good, ensuring they respond well to their tasks and purposeful learning takes place. The occasions when management is not as good pupils are inattentive, take too long to settle down to work or talk at inappropriate times in the lesson. Such weaknesses are not always tackled with enough vigour and as a result, the behaviour of some pupils in two classes is only just satisfactory. Generally pupils have good relationships with adults and each other and, throughout the school relationships are very good. Most pupils work amicably and collaboratively in groups and learn from each other. When their interest is aroused, they are keen to involve themselves in discussion and to share their ideas and views.

103. The headteacher and co-ordinator have monitored teaching and learning standards and have successfully promoted ideas for development and change. The school lacks an adequate library area and there are plans to incorporate this into the new building. Resources are barely satisfactory and the school has identified this as a future priority. The school's book stock is being temporarily supplemented through use of the local authority's library loan service. Future planning includes purchasing resources to improve speaking and listening skills at Key Stage 1, new shared reading innovation, class reading books and further resources for pupils with special educational needs. The subject is effectively co-ordinated. Teachers use support assistants effectively when pupils are involved in groups. Support assistants work well with pupils with special educational needs and this support helps the pupils to make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.

104. These findings represent a significant improvement on those of the previous inspection, particularly in the standards of writing and the quality of teaching. Procedures for assessing pupils' learning are sound and effective. This is also a significant improvement and enables the school to see clearly how far it has come and what remains to be done to raise standards further.

MATHEMATICS

105. The overall standard attained by pupils leaving the school at the end of Key Stage 2 is good. This favourable situation is brought about by good teaching and learning and the good attitudes to learning shown by the majority of pupils.

106. The school's results in the 2000 national assessment tests for mathematics for 7 year olds were below the national average. Although the proportion who achieved the expected level 2 was close to the national average, the proportion who achieved the higher level was disappointing and accounts for the overall judgement. This is consistent with the results that have been attained over the last four years, although standards show a significant rise since 1996. The school's performance for 2000 when compared with similar schools was well below the average.

107. The findings of this current inspection indicate that pupils at the age of 7 are working in line with the national expectation. This supports the expected results of the 2001 tests and shows a slight improvement in standards. Inspection findings and anticipated results are still confirming that the low proportion of pupils who are able to achieve the higher level is the factor depressing the overall results of the school when compared nationally and with the results obtained from similar schools.

108. Pupils make a good start in Year 1 where the work is well matched to individual needs. Teaching was very good in the lessons observed for this year group and all groups of pupils are finding good challenge in their work. This leads to good development of mathematical language and good acquisition of strategies for mental calculations. Pupils are interested and quick to answer their teacher's careful questioning. Most have the ability to explain how they have arrived at their answer. They work hard at their tasks and show growing ability to work independently.

109. Throughout Key Stage 1, the National Numeracy Strategy is well followed and well implemented. Both Year 1 and Year 2 achieve the key learning objectives which are identified in the national strategy for their respective years. For example, pupils in Year 1 can count reliably up to 20 and recognise and describe the features of regular two- and three-dimensional shapes. By the end of Year 2, the majority of pupils have learnt how to count, read, write and order numbers to at least 100 and can now use the mathematical names for common two- and three-dimensional shapes. This progress in learning is within the expected range, but it is apparent that the potential of the older higher achievers in Key Stage 1, although recognised, is not accommodated in the tasks that are set them. The teaching requirement to practice work that is already known and understood, results in many of the high achievers not having time to complete the extension work which is provided for them. There is therefore insufficient opportunity to work with more challenging concepts. This is a factor that must be addressed if the school is to achieve its stated ambition to raise the overall standard of attainment for these pupils by the time they are 7.

110. The results for 11 year olds in the 2000 national assessments present a more favourable picture, with results that show the school's performance in mathematics is above the national average with results for pupils who attain the higher level 5 closely matching the national achievement. The results are in line when compared with similar schools. Standards have risen since 1996 with only 1998 showing a significant fall in results.

111. The findings of the recent inspection show good standards and good learning are evident, both of which substantiate national testing results for Key Stage 2. The results from the 2001 tests should further support the view that these standards are being maintained.

112. Throughout the key stage pupils work hard at a well planned curriculum which extends their learning and satisfies the needs of all abilities. Pupils in Year 3 quickly show improved quality and quantity of work with good evidence of investigative work being carried out, building their concepts and understanding. Evidence indicates that where expectations and pace of working are good, the higher achieving pupils are attaining at appropriate levels for their ability. The example of teaching seen in Year 3 showed the pupils to be working confidently and successfully at the curriculum which is outlined for Year 4. The progress in learning made at this time is very good. The progress the pupils make is closely associated with good teaching which is sensitive to needs of all ability groups. For example, some pupils in a Year 5 class were having difficulty with two step calculations in problems involving journey times. The teacher quickly identified this and provided the extra help needed for those pupils to succeed.

113. By the time they are 11 years old, the majority are achieving well and have reached the expected standards with a good proportion attaining the higher level. They have learnt positive attitudes throughout their time at the school, which has a very positive effect upon their learning. They have a wide range of strategies for calculation at their disposal and wide experience of the full breadth of the mathematics curriculum. Good opportunities for investigation have provided them with good opportunities to use their knowledge and skills

and the foundations are secure and well laid for the more advanced work they should soon meet in their secondary education.

114. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is sound and at Key Stage 2 it is good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching observed during the period of inspection. Nearly 40 per cent of all mathematics lessons seen were judged to be satisfactory whilst just over 12 per cent were good. A very pleasing 50 per cent were found to be very good. Such standards illustrate the good improvement in teaching made since the previous inspection and without doubt this is a strong, contributory factor to the improved standards in attainment and learning. Where teaching is very good the needs of different attainment groups of pupils are well met and teacher expectations are high resulting in good pace lessons in which pupil productivity is high.

115. All teachers are implementing the national strategy well and they all have very good and caring relationships with their pupils. The support of those pupils with special educational needs is good with strong contributions made by the good and caring work of the support assistants. The quality of marking is exceptionally high and through this pupils are helped to know what to do to succeed. Other aspects of the assessment procedures for mathematics and the use that is made of them are satisfactory. All teachers use homework well and pupils work is well linked to the focus of work taking place within lessons. Pupils' achievements and efforts are consistently well recognised.

116. Pupils' attitudes are good and the quantity and quality of work, particularly Key Stage 2, is especially apparent in the very high standards of presentation. All pupils work hard with very good concentration and perseverance. They work very well together and respond well to their teachers' expectations of high standards of behaviour. By the time they are nearing the end of Year 6 they have developed very responsible attitudes and well deserve the trust their teacher shows in them.

117. There are some good links with numeracy across the curriculum. A particular example is seen in a science lesson for Year 3 in which pupils measure shadows and make graphic representation of their results. The curriculum for geography provides frequent opportunity for collection, representation and analysis of data.

118. The use of information and communication technology to support the curriculum is not yet consistent. There are many examples where it was seen being used. In these instances it is used well. For example, use of a programmable floor toy to develop awareness of shape and direction at Year 2 and use of 'Excel' to present information in a variety of ways, including pie charts, line graphs and bar graphs.

119. The management of the subject is in capable hands and the interest and ability of the teacher, who has comparatively recently been put in charge, should ensure that the subject continues to improve. Her monitoring of teaching and learning is being used to identify how the most significant area for improvement, namely, the progress of higher attainers in Key Stage 1, is addressed. A start to this is already apparent in an action plan which has been devised to improve levels in Key Stage 1 tests.

SCIENCE

120. Teaching and learning in science are good and are a strength of the school. Standards of attainment at the end of both key stages are good. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be below

national expectations at both key stages. Practical and investigative science was weak and there was a lack of continuity and progression. Investigative science and practical work are now well represented in the science curriculum and pupils quickly learn about fair tests and their importance within science work. For pupils at Key Stage 1, teacher assessments made in 2000 showed that attainment was very good, with the percentage of pupils attaining at or above the expected level 2 being within the top five per cent nationally. The percentage of pupils attaining at the higher level 3 was above the national average. At Key Stage 2 in 2000, standards of attainment were good and above those found nationally. They were in line with those found in similar schools. In the years from 1998 to 2000, the trend of attainment for pupils aged 11, shows that standards remained above those found nationally.

121. Pupils' learning is thoroughly planned to ensure that work builds on pupils' previous experiences and that the coverage provided includes regular revision of areas of work. It has a strong practical element and emphasises the investigative strand included within the National Curriculum. This is used very effectively as a vehicle for the teaching of science, with concepts being demonstrated through practical examples. Pupils are encouraged to question what they see and to reflect on whether tests and experiments can be described as fair. Year 1 pupils worked with their teacher to answer the question 'How far away can you hear sound?' With support, they devised an experiment and they predicted the outcome of a listening test. Throughout the lesson the teacher encouraged the pupils to be highly involved and to generate ideas of ways to answer the posed question. The pupils correctly used vocabulary such as 'vibrations' and 'sound waves' in answering the teacher. They identified problems with suggestions, such as the different volume of the sounds if a different musical instrument is used at each distance tested. Pupils learn to use scientific approaches in the recording of their work, making good use of mathematical tables and graphs to display their findings. Tests and experiments are written in a way which identifies the method used, the outcome expected and the actual outcome using the correct scientific vocabulary.

122. At both key stages, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their learning. Work is well matched to pupils' abilities and tasks are adapted to suit pupils' learning needs. All pupils have equal access to the science curriculum. Scrutiny of work shows that the pace of work and coverage of the National Curriculum is good. Marking is very effective, especially at Key Stage 2, demanding more of the pupils and encouraging them to justify their thoughts. In consequence, pupils' learning is good and their knowledge and understanding is secure.

123. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know about healthy living. They are able to identify the elements of a healthy meal, and make correct use of vocabulary such as proteins, vitamins and fibre. They classify and categorise information, for example, putting food into groups using different headings. They know about the importance of a healthy lifestyle, including the importance of exercise. Pupils also learn about the dangers of drugs misuse. When learning about materials, pupils group them into those which are natural and those which are man-made and their properties are further investigated in experiments about friction. Pupils suggest ways of testing out their ideas and identify the effect of gravity on their tests. They make predictions about which material will offer the best friction on a ramp and test out their ideas. In a Year 2 science lesson, pupils demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of how simple electrical circuits work. They worked effectively as a group, solving problems together and identifying why bulbs will not light. They looked at the problem and used their knowledge and understanding to reason why the circuit did not work, checking their ideas by correcting the faults. Results were recorded using the correct symbols in diagrams. Pupils of all abilities participate fully in science lessons. The quality of

pupils' recording is good; they make good use of skills acquired in English and mathematics. Work is well presented, with neat handwriting and good spelling.

124. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to make good progress as a result of the carefully planned programme of lessons. In Year 3, pupils study the effect of the movement of the sun during a day. They gather and record information from measuring shadows, making predictions about the lengths of shadows at different times of the day. They quickly see the importance of measuring the same person each time. In Year 4, pupils revisit the subject of friction in experiments with slopes and different materials which are more sophisticated than those conducted in Key Stage 1. The questions that are posed are more challenging and the conclusions drawn are increasingly detailed and technical. Year 5 pupils devise and carry out an experiment to test the best shape to move through water. They articulate their thinking and generate hypotheses. At the end of the key stage, pupils are researching information about healthy living to create information leaflets of their own. They are able to

identify key pieces of information and to describe the effect of smoking and excessive drinking on the body. They are aware of the importance of leisure activities in promoting mental and emotional well being and recognise these as being part of healthy living.

125. Teaching is good and sometimes very good at Key Stage 1 and good and often very good at Key Stage 2. All teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. They prepare thoroughly for their lessons, ensuring that all pupils are able to achieve at appropriate levels. Work is adapted to suit the needs of individual pupils or groups of pupils. At Key Stage 2 this often means taking account of pupils' attainment in English and mathematics and adapting the way in which an experiment is recorded. Teachers' expectations are high and their enthusiasm for the subject draws pupils into lessons. There is an air of excitement during science lessons, generated by the highly practical nature of the learning and the challenge to discover, investigate and respond to questions which are posed.

126. Teachers at both key stages demonstrate good capabilities in using questions which require more than single word answers. For example, in Year 3 lesson about shadows, pupils concluded from their recorded data that 'shadows are shortest at midday'. The teacher asks why this happens and this open question results in pupils discussing the possible reasons and correcting one another in a guided class discussion. Even the pupils in Year 1 are aware that they must support their thinking and give reasons for the predictions that they make, such as, when they predict that a sound will be fainter if it is further away from the listener. They reason that it is 'because it has to travel a greater distance'. Lessons have very clearly stated learning outcomes which are shared with pupils and pursued throughout the lesson. They are used as a focus for work and referred to in order to keep pupils on task, resulting in very effective and efficient use of the available lesson time. Rigorous marking at Key Stage 2 which identifies good scientific practice and questions unsupported statements is a significant feature of the good teaching and the consequent good learning seen.

127. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour during science lessons are good. Concentration is very good and pupils remain focused on the task in hand. They persevere with difficult ideas and discuss their own thoughts with other pupils. Attention is paid to the ideas and thoughts of others and contributions in discussions are mostly received sensibly and ideas extended and corrected politely. Resources are shared fairly and pupils organise themselves to work effectively in groups. They appoint people to carry out particular tasks, such as recording results and take turns in testing out ideas. They demonstrate a good level of personal organisation and co-operation. Pupils in Key Stage 1 show considerable maturity in their

self-discipline, such as when looking at incorrect electrical circuits. No pupils attempted to touch the circuits until they had made a visual assessment of what was wrong with the equipment they were given, as instructed by the teacher. The very good relationships within the school result in a good climate for learning which is particularly evident in science.

128. The science co-ordinator assumed responsibility for the subject shortly after the previous inspection and has played an important part in raising the standards attained within the school. Together with the headteacher, she has followed a rigorous programme of monitoring planning, reviewing pupils' work and observing teaching within the subject. Evaluations of progress in the subject have been used very effectively to identify areas for staff training. The school's science curriculum is carefully considered and reviewed each year that class organisation has to be changed, in order to ensure that pupils in mixed age classes do not duplicate work or receive inappropriate levels of challenge. Good links have been developed with the local community. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 visit a local high school to engage in science activities. When visiting the North West Water Education Centre, pupils in Key Stage 2 conduct experiments on filtration and carry out experiments which require the use of Bunsen burners. Visits are also made to a local museum associated with the Widnes chemical industry. An action plan is being written to further improve science. This will include the development of the use of information and communication technology. The stock of science reference books requires development. This is planned to be addressed when the new library is created.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

129. Pupils are learning well and achieving satisfactory standards which are in line with national expectations at both key stages. This is an improvement upon the findings of the previous report when standards for all pupils were reported as below average and the progress of all pupils as unsatisfactory. Present standards have been achieved in spite of some difficulty with access to the computer suite, caused through accommodation problems. Fortunately this problem is likely to be overcome by September 2001.

130. Early opportunities to use the computer give children some knowledge of names such as mouse, keyboard and screen and the opportunity to develop simple skills such as being able to position the cursor and being able to delete. This lays good foundations for work in Year 1 when the use of the classroom computer supports learning well through many other areas of the curriculum.

131. Good use of the limited opportunity to use the computer suite is made by Year 1 and pupils are seen to make good progress in their learning. For example, they gain good experience in the use of the scanner to provide support and enhancement to the work they are doing in geography. In spite of the comparatively short time available to them there is good coverage of the programme of study. They quickly develop positive attitudes to the subject and enjoy a sense of achievement.

132. This good progress and development of positive attitudes continues in Year 2. Progress is particularly significant in the group with which the teacher is working. They learn how to control a programmable floor toy and give it a series of instructions. There is evidence here of some very good use of the computer to support mathematics in the use of the knowledge of angles, such as, knowing 90 degrees will turn the floor toy to the left or right. The rest of the pupils work responsibly and with good degree of independence at

making shapes on the screen using 'Logo'. These pupils receive support from the good work of the support assistant.

133. By Year 3, pupils are showing that they are confident with many aspects of control and are gaining good knowledge of the many things it is possible to do using information and communication technology. Significant in this knowledge is the ability to send and receive e-mails, the content of which is carefully supervised by the teacher. Very good use of the Internet is seen when pupils access the BBC website to find information about world weather. This information is gathered for the specific purpose of providing data for the work they are doing in geography. Good learning takes place, for example, they learn that the 'hand symbol' on the Internet means more links are available on the World Wide Web.

134. Progress is less marked for Year 4 pupils for whom the adverse effects caused by the overcrowded accommodation are more significant. They have only a limited amount of time in which to progress through their planned work. Classroom arrangements are more favourable for Year 5 and there are much better opportunities for use. These factors that have been outside the schools' control do not prevent the standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 6 being at least satisfactory, with good attainment and very good learning taking place in the particular lesson seen. The lesson had as its objective the production of a school magazine using a publishing program. The pupils already have good basic skills which are extended by the very good teaching that takes place. They learn how to use the various formats possible in the program, for example, choice of the number of columns. The task is one that interests and motivates the pupils and their very good attitudes ensure that the teacher's plan to pair less able with a more able partner works very well. This is an example of how lower attaining pupils or those with special educational needs are supported and so progress well in their learning. Where possible, key learning objectives for Year 6 are either well or satisfactorily achieved unless prevented by lack of an appropriate resource, for example, a temperature sensor.

135. Teachers are much more confident and their plans to use computers to support the curriculum are improving. The lessons seen where direct teaching of computer skills took place were all effective and impacted well on pupils' learning. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen, 20 per cent of lessons seen were satisfactory, 40 per cent were good and 40 per cent very good. Good skills by the teachers in organisation and management are particularly important in information and communication technology, as there is unlikely to be one machine for each pupil. Teachers manage this situation well and equal opportunity for all is assured where it is possible. Pupils throughout the school show interest and enthusiasm and show good application of the skills and knowledge needed to effectively use information and communication technology.

136. The management of the subject is good. There is an awareness that some classes are not quite at the standards appropriate to their age and ability but much ground has been made up in a comparatively short time. There are immediate plans to increase the number of computers available for use and this will increase the opportunity for regular use within the classrooms and so make the already good use to support other areas of the curriculum even better. Very good use is made of the Internet link and very good use of the digital camera and the scanner is evident.

137. The school correctly identifies further development of control equipment needs to take place and anticipates that a newly purchased scheme of work, which will begin its implementation in September, should improve the curriculum strand for modelling and improve its assessment procedures.

ART AND DESIGN

138. No lessons in art and design were observed during the inspection, so it is not possible to make a judgement about the quality of teaching in the subject. Judgements are based on the scrutiny of work, photographic evidence, work on display, the school's scheme of work, teachers' planning and discussions with pupils. From this evidence it is judged that standards of attainment at both key stages are in line with those expected. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress. Art and design is given breadth through being incorporated into other subjects, encouraging pupils to experiment with a range of different media and techniques as they use art and design to explore the curriculum.

139. Pupils experience working with a variety of media to create two and three-dimensional work in art. In Year 1, pupils have studied the work of famous artists, such as Van Gogh and Monet. Using paint and coloured paper, they make their own sunflower and lily pool pictures which are individual interpretations of the original works, rather than copies. Older pupils paint industrial townscapes in the style of L. S. Lowry. Work shows developing levels of control and thoughtful interpretations of the styles of other artists. Patterns used on three-dimensional work show increasingly complex elements and good examples of geometric designs were seen in pupils' work about the indigenous people of New Zealand and the Cook Islands. To support work in history, pupils design and create representations of Roman soldiers' shields, decorated appropriately.

140. Work at Key Stage 2 builds on the knowledge and skills acquired in Key Stage 1. In working on design found in different cultures, pupils study the geometric patterns used by the Aztecs. They design and draw their own decorations for a Greek vase using real designs as inspiration. Pupils use photographs of half of a face on which to create their own interpretation of how a person might look, developing their understanding of portrait art and of facial symmetry. Further work is done focusing on faces, using clay to model faces and creating masks when pupils learn about festivals in other cultures and religions. Pupils create abstract art using paper which they fold and curl to sculpt interesting surfaces. Pupils learn how to create and execute their own designs for a Lancashire Rose in cross stitch, with some pleasing results. Sketch books show evidence of work which experiments with the effects of shade and tone. Pupils develop their sketching skills throughout the school, but largely through work in Key Stage 2, and by the end of the key stage, pupils can make observational drawings which contain appropriate levels of detail.

141. Pupils enjoy art and design and in discussions they often named it as a favourite subject. The quality of the work seen is good and it is displayed around the school in ways which indicate that pupils' work is valued. Displays are colourful and celebrate work that has been done in class. An art exhibition is held on alternate years. Work from all age groups is displayed in the school hall and the exhibition is visited by parents and members of the local community. Artists are invited into school to work with pupils and further develop the use of different artistic techniques. Their work becomes part of the art exhibition. Pupils' works of art are also exhibited at local venues and work has been displayed in the Millennium Dome.

142. Teachers' planning shows that tasks are closely related to the requirements of the National Curriculum. Plans are monitored by the subject co-ordinator and the headteacher, to ensure that all year groups are offered work at levels which will allow them to develop their skills and understanding systematically. Teachers evaluate their planning after units of

work are completed and some teachers make assessments of pupils' levels of attainment, but this is inconsistent. There are good links with other subjects of the curriculum, including some use of information and communication technology, although this is an area of work which would benefit from development. The co-ordinator offers sound leadership within the subject and ensures that there is a good choice of resources for teachers to use in their lessons.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

143. The school has made good improvements in this subject since the previous inspection and addressed the weaknesses identified at the time. All elements of the National Curriculum are taught and pupils receive regular design and technology lessons. As a consequence standards have risen and at the end of both key stages pupils have the knowledge and skills expected of their age groups.

144. Pupils' understanding of how to construct and use designs develops systematically as they progress through the school. By the time they are 11 pupils have a clear understanding of what is involved, how they have to select the materials to suit the purpose and what level of planning is necessary before they start to construct. Year 1 pupils have made moving pictures based on the story of Red Riding Hood. They talk about how levers and sliders can be used to make movement and bring stories to life. They record a survey of fruit eaten in class. The teacher plans a future lesson using this survey to design a fruit salad. She ensures all elements of design, make and evaluate are included and organises it well to allow all pupils to participate. Year 2 pupils have designed a car. From evidence in their books they show different assembly techniques for wheels and axles.

145. Year 3 continue previous work of joining and reinforcing by designing and making a picture frame. Pupils know how to refine designs, improve them after testing and finally evaluate their designs. The majority of designs are usable with stable supports and acceptable designs. Year 4 and 5 design and are making money containers. They secure two pieces of fabric together by over-sewing. They have a simple design specification and consider whether it will serve its purpose. Pupils have good experience of evaluation. One pupil says "don't use large overstitches or it will come undone". Year 6 continue designing and making, with a slipper with Caribbean/Barbados influence, linking with their geography topic. Pupils evaluate their work as it progresses, refine designs, show good creative designs to decoration and an awareness of possible problems, for example, joining strap to sole securely. All the elements of design and technology are in place from designing to final evaluation.

146. It was only possible to see lessons at Key Stage 2, in all three lessons the teaching was good and judging from pupils' work from other classes, typical of the school as a whole. Pupils are provided with work which generates a high level of interest and encourages them to take a pride in what they are producing. All pupils make good progress, including pupils with special educational needs. This progress is through an effectively planned series of lessons in which the teachers give good developmental support. Teachers give regular advice, encouragement and praise while pupils are working, helping to keep pupils focused and to raise self-esteem. All pupils, especially at Key Stage 2, collaborate well, with the more able pupils helping the less able sensitively.

147. The subject was changed from a topic approach in December 2000 and is now taught as a discrete subject. The co-ordinator although very new to the post has a secure

understanding of the requirements of the subject and supports its development well. There is an up to date policy and a programme of work, based upon the nationally prescribed scheme, has been implemented and is providing teachers with guidance for their lessons. The subject is continuing to improve across the school and the co-ordinator has clear plans for future development based on a good understanding of the quality of teaching and learning that is taking place. The subject is well resourced.

GEOGRAPHY

148. The standards being achieved by both key stages are above those expected nationally and progress is good throughout the school. This shows very good improvement upon the findings of the previous inspection when standards were found to be below average for both key stages with unsatisfactory progress being made.

149. From the onset the school makes good use of the environment both locally and further a field. Pupils in Year 1 compare different types of dwellings and plot journeys on a map. They have visited Llandudno and this visit has provided the inspiration for much work. A good lesson seen showed that the majority of pupils begin to appreciate how different localities provide different opportunities for the people who live in them. They understand

that a visit to the beach is easy in a place such as Llandudno whilst it is not locally possible in Cronton. Good use of information and communication technology is made in the scanning of photographs of their visit which are well used in display.

150. The evidence of a wide coverage of the curriculum can begin to be seen in the work covered in Year 2. There are some good examples of meaningful comparisons being made between their own environment at Cronton and very different places, such as a village in India. There is some good use of literacy in imaginative writing about life and conditions in India. This work clearly shows good understanding of condition in such phrases as, "It's boiling hot in Chembakolli village" and "My back is aching from carrying wood". Throughout Key Stage 1 good learning takes place, there is good acquisition of knowledge and there is the beginning of the good use of simple geographical skills.

151. The work of Key Stage 2 begins very well in Year 3. Learning is enhanced by good use of the Internet to find out about world weather. There is good development of geographical language and the subtle difference between the difference in meaning between climate and weather is taught and understood. Good cross curricular links with mathematics is apparent in a Year 4 and 5 lesson which used co-ordinates to locate the source of streams although the lesson was not one to illustrate the generally high standards to be found in geography. A very hot and humid afternoon in cramped and stuffy surroundings did little to help the climate for learning. Better examples of the achievement of these pupils is to be found in examination of past work in which the depth and very good quality of study is much more apparent, for example, their work on China, which is marked very effectively by their teacher.

152. A strength throughout the school is the very high quality of presentation and this culminates in Year 6. By this time, pupils show they have very good ability for research and use a range of geographical skills and evidence to investigate places. For example, they find facts about Barbados, concerning such things as monthly rainfall and sports opportunities, and they are showing awareness of localities very different from their own. Further evidence is available of the contribution that visits make to learning, in this case a

visit to Formby Point to study the effects of coastal erosion. There is good knowledge of physical and human features of a place and how these can change and affect the lives and activities of its inhabitants. They are aware of many of the ways that people can either damage or improve their environment.

153. The evidence that the quality of teaching is good comes from both lesson observations and looking at the outcome of teaching as seen in pupils' work. It is clearly evident that lessons are well planned and that pupils are given the knowledge and skills to achieve well. The result of high expectation by the teachers is good quality and extensive quantity of work. The pupils obviously take pride in what they are doing and they must be working hard to produce the quantity they do. All this contributes to the judgement that the attitudes of pupils to the subject are good. The subject is well managed and the subject manager has had opportunity to monitor planning and teaching across the school. Book provision would benefit from being added to.

HISTORY

154. It was not possible to see history being taught during the period of this inspection, but standards being attained and progress being made are very clear from the extensive range of work available for examination. This, together with teachers' planning enables the secure judgement that standards being achieved by both key stages are above those expected nationally and that progress is good throughout the school. This is an improvement upon the findings of the previous inspection when standards were reported as being in line with national expectations and progress as satisfactory in both key stages.

155. The work of Year 1 focuses well upon how the passage of time brings changes. They become aware of the differences between past and present through such activities as looking at old pictures, in this case from 1912 and making observations of the differences they can see. They make such comment in their books as, "the taxis are pulled by horses". They notice how costume has changed and see the progress in a particular form of transport when they look at pictures of an early airplane compared with a modern jet. From the start pupils make good progress in their ability to present their work well and produce a very creditable quantity of work for pupils of their age. Year 2 pupils' work illustrates good attainment by being able to write about The Fire of London from the perspective of a maid living at that time. This shows good use of literacy skills within the curriculum for history.

156. Through study of Florence Nightingale they begin to understand some of the conditions at the time of the Crimean War and how her work improved the welfare of the wounded soldiers. They become more clear about the reasons why she acted as she did and gain knowledge of factual events of the past. Higher than average standards by the end of Key Stage 1 are brought about not only by historical skills and knowledge but also by the quantity of work produced and the quality of presentation.

157. Pupils in Year 3 are encouraged to look closely at resource material and draw conclusions. In consequence, they discover some living conditions of the Anglo-Saxons. "Their houses have straw roofs, they cook foods in big pots". They are encouraged as much as possible to find out information for themselves in the correct belief that such information is likely to be better understood and more likely to be remembered.

158. Throughout Years 4 and 5 there is continued opportunity to gain good knowledge of history. The life and culture of the Aztecs capture the pupils' imagination and looking at the

conditions of a Victorian boy who is a chimney sweep helps them to contrast conditions between the rich and poor and life then and now. Some very good work is seen within the context of looking at Britain since 1948. Literacy skills are put to very good use in writing about growing up in the 1970s. Pupils have the opportunity to study the lives of famous people who lived at the time they are studying, for example, prominent Victorians like Dr. Barnado and Lord Shaftesbury.

159. By the end of Key Stage 2 the majority of pupils show good factual knowledge and understanding of history of Britain and other countries. They can describe characteristics of past periods and societies, for example, the Ancient Greeks, and recognise contrasts within them, for example Athens and Sparta. They show they are able to produce well structured work from information they research using a variety of sources.

160. Since no teaching was seen it is not possible to give a secure judgement on its quality. The quality of work seen and the quality of marking suggest at the very least it is satisfactory. Similarly, the pupils' positive attitudes to the subject are well illustrated in the effort they put into their work which shows in the quantity they produce and high standards of presentation seen.

161. The curriculum is guided by a nationally produced scheme of work. Resources are considered to be good although there is some need to extend the range of historical artefacts and reference books. The subject manager is efficient and keen to make further improvements such as the encouragement of the use of an increasing number of historical text for literacy. There is good use of visits from which pupils gain first hand experience, for example, a visit to a Victorian classroom enhances learning opportunities for Year 5 pupils who study the Victorians.

MUSIC

162. By the age of 11, pupils achieve above average standards in their ability to play musical instruments confidently and sing with dynamics. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

163. Key Stage 1 pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve standards in music that are broadly average. They hold and play percussion instruments correctly when they accompany songs. Most pupils maintain an accurate beat with their instruments against the rhythm of songs. Year 1 pupils are learning to control the pitch of their voice and respond to changes in pitch. A good strategy was used to reinforce this concept. Pupils chose an instrument and beat out a rhythm on it. Other pupils guessed whether it was high or low pitch. Year 2 learn about sounds made by different instruments and explore how words can describe sounds. Teachers make effective use of the opportunities music presents for pupils to use and extend their literacy skills. Year 2 play sounds of music with percussion instruments to accompany weather words they have previously planned, for example, flashing lightning, gentle breeze.

164. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a good understanding of beat and rhythm and good progress is reached. Year 3 know correct vocabulary, for example, tempo means speed. Pupils work well in groups finding a rhythm using ostinato. Most Year 3 pupils discuss sensibly and practise this repeated rhythm with their choice of instrument. Year 4 and 5 sing a range of songs confidently and with increasingly tuneful voices. They have more understanding of how songs compare to each other with repetition, rhythm, performing

actions in time and when sang as a round. Pupils listen carefully to the music, make simple appraisal of sounds and pieces of music. Pupils persevere and work hard to improve their singing and instrumental playing skills by the time they reach Year 6. Year 6 pupils' knowledge and understanding is built upon by their teacher. They learn how to create different ostinati to add depth to a piece of music. Many use good musical vocabulary, for example, they use 'accompaniment' quite naturally. Pupils appraise their peers' efforts, for example, they say "everyone kept to the beat, the sound is effective, the accompaniment is good, difference between loud and soft is heard". Year 6 is very good at singing a two part song, maintaining correct pitch whilst being aware and relating to the contribution of others.

165. Pupils develop their ability to play tuned instruments. Sound progress is made at the weekly guitar club and some Year 3 pupils have the opportunity to play cello and clarinet. The school pays for the cello and clarinet lessons from the budget, the local authority supplies the instruments. All Year 3 pupils have a taster session and those with interest, ability and potential have the chance to learn these instruments.

166. The co-ordinator organises a choir club in the winter months. Pupils perform with confidence to each other and to wider audiences. Examples of this are the end of term concerts, such as "Rock around the Flock", in which a good number of pupils take part. Last year keyboard club was offered weekly but this is not in place now. Parents paid £1 per session and this money paid for some new instruments. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress at both key stages in developing and increasing their musical skills.

167. The quality of the teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. Teachers raise pupils' interest in music and prepare them well for work at Key Stage 2. The teaching at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory to good with very good teaching in Year 6. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' achievements and most teach the subject with confidence. They use lively, interesting and enthusiastic approaches to their teaching. An example of this was seen in the teaching of the mettalophone instrument and accompaniment skills to Year 5. The Year 1 teacher ensures that the pupils enjoy their music by making the learning fun, for example, pupils move around the room starting from the centre and going outwards according to whether the teacher plays high or low notes on the xylophone. Where the teaching is very good, the challenge in the tasks makes the pupils eager and enthusiastic in their learning. The school is fortunate to have a pianist and guitarist as members of staff. Both play very effectively at collective worship times.

168. The subject is led well by a music specialist, who plays the piano and clarinet. She has a very good understanding of the requirements of the subject, is very enthusiastic and gives very effective support to her colleagues. She has played a significant role in bringing about the improvements that have been made since the previous inspection. Links with other primary schools are effective. Last year the older pupils along with other primary pupils spent an enjoyable day acting and singing at the Huyton Suite. Resources are satisfactory and plans to purchase more resources are funded by the after school clubs.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

169. Games and athletics were observed during the inspection. Plans show that all requirements of the National Curriculum programmes of study are met across both key stages. At the time of the previous inspection attainment was higher across both key stages

than it is now. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and good by the end of Key Stage 2. All pupils make good progress, including those with special educational needs.

170. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are improving their skills at throwing and catching a ball. Most demonstrate good techniques in throwing and batting. They have good practice in hand and eye co-ordination. The teacher encourages good social interaction where pupils are instructed to change partners regularly. Teachers plan sound learning opportunities where pupils are challenged to improve their previous best performance. Teachers are identifying more precise lesson objectives and these reflect the teaching of skills contained in the scheme and on pupils' achievements in earlier lessons.

171. Year 4 and 5 are improving their athletic skills by practising relay running in preparation for Sports Day. Pupils work well together and positive teamwork is highlighted. Year 6 pupils consolidate knowledge of how to dribble a ball, attack and defend a game of football and the importance of teamwork is emphasised. All pupils play games well together. They are very good at organising into teams and following the rules.

172. Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory or very good at Key Stage 2. In most lessons teachers give clear and relevant instructions. At Key Stage 1 a few pupils are inattentive, do not follow instructions and disrupt others. All teachers stress the importance of safe actions and insist on suitable dress for the lessons. Teachers raise health issues appropriately and all lessons have warming up and cooling down sessions. Most successful teachers set high expectations and make regular use of demonstrations by pupils to illustrate good practice. With the less successful teaching some pupils display

unacceptable behaviour by not listening to the teaching and prevent effective learning from taking place. Throughout most lessons a good pace of work is maintained and appropriate apparatus provided.

173. Pupils enjoy physical education throughout the school. Most pupils listen attentively, sustain concentration, are keen to explore the tasks set and work successfully in paired or grouped activities. Year 6 pupils demonstrate very good interpersonal skills and are excellent working in teams.

174. Pupils receive a balance of experiences reflecting all aspects of physical education including good provision for swimming in Year 3. Most pupils achieve the required 25 metres in swimming by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs are given full access to the broad physical education curriculum and make good progress in the different aspects of the subject.

175. The school provides good extra-curricular activities at Key Stage 2, well supported by pupils; these include football, rounders and netball. The football practice was observed during the inspection and is organised by a coach from Everton football team. Social skills and good sportsmanship are encouraged throughout this practice session. Extra-curricular activities enrich the school's curriculum promoting good social and moral values. Pupils from Year 6 experience outdoor and adventurous activities annually at a residential centre, Winmarleigh Hall. This includes abseiling, rope climbing and orienteering.

176. The subject is very well co-ordinated. All staff have received recent extra training from the local education authority in the subject. The co-ordinator has monitored all classes in gym or dance. She gives good guidelines to staff with relevant points for lesson focus and

appropriate planning. Resources are satisfactory but more are needed for athletics, for example, mini hurdles. The school has good facilities for indoor and outdoor activities. There is a hall, large playground with well marked imaginative play designs and a very large playing field.