

INSPECTION REPORT

RUNCORN ALL SAINTS C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Runcorn, Cheshire

LEA area: Halton

Unique reference number: 111314

Headteacher: Mrs J E Dutton

Reporting inspector: Mr D S Roberts
1743

Dates of inspection: 21st – 23rd May 2001

Inspection number: 196237

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:	5 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Church Street Runcorn Cheshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev J Hayes
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1743	D S Roberts	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology Physical education Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage Equal opportunities English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? School's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19669	F Kennedy	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
17913	B Frost	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Music Special educational needs	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
23453	C Cressey	Team inspector	English Geography History	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

All Saints Church of England School is situated in the old part of the town of Runcorn. It is smaller than most other primary schools, and currently provides full-time education for 117 boys and girls from four to 11 years of age. The proportion of pupils entitled to receive free school meals is well above the national average, and the attainment levels of children on entry to the Foundation Stage are generally well below those found nationally. Redevelopment in the area is contributing toward a high level of transiency. A high proportion of pupils join the school other than at the usual time of first admission, often replacing those from families who move away from the area to alternative accommodation. Over 45 per cent of the pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is well above the national average. Nine pupils are at stages 3-5, and their needs include those for specific and moderate learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural problems, speech, communication and visual impairment, and physical and autistic difficulties. Nearly two per cent of pupils have statements of specific needs. At present just under one cent of pupils are from families belonging to minority ethnic groups. The same proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language, which is a little higher than in most schools.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school, which has made very good progress in addressing fully all of the serious weaknesses identified by the last inspection. It provides a very good level of care for its pupils and makes good provision for their personal and social development. The teaching is generally good and often of high quality, particularly at the Foundation Stage. Most pupils achieve good standards in relation to their prior learning in most subjects, but there is scope for improving the quality of pupils' writing, across the curriculum, and reading standards at Key Stage 1. The headteacher, governors and staff co-operate very successfully to create a positive climate for learning, where Christian principles are strongly emphasised. The school is well led and managed, and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Children are given a very good start to their education at the Foundation Stage.
- By the time they reach the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have made good progress in developing the key skills of speaking and listening, reading, mathematics, science and information and communication technology.
- The quality of teaching is generally good and often high, particularly at the Foundation Stage.
- Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- A very strong partnership has been established with parents.

What could be improved

- Standards in reading at Key Stage 1.
- The quality of writing across the curriculum.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good progress since the last inspection in 1997, which identified serious weaknesses in pupils' attainment and in the quality of education provided. All of these weaknesses have been addressed successfully.

During the four years up to Year 2000, the school's rate of improvement was better than the national trend. Compared to figures published in the 1997 inspection report, the proportion of pupils reaching or exceeding Level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2 has increased from 20 per cent to 83 per cent in English, from 27 per cent to 75 per cent in mathematics, and from 40 per cent to 92 per cent in science. In addition, considerable progress has been made in improving standards and quality in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. The most important factor in achieving these improvements in standards has been better teaching. The proportion of lessons judged to be at least satisfactory has increased from 59 per cent, in the 1997 inspection, to 100 per cent, and the proportion judged to be very good from 8 per cent to

31 per cent. Purposeful and perceptive leadership by the headteacher, together with the successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, have contributed greatly to the improvements in the quality of teaching. All of the key issues listed in the last report have been successfully addressed. In addition to raising standards and improving the quality of teaching, the school has increased the amount of teaching time in line with national recommendations, strengthened considerably the procedures for monitoring teaching and the curriculum, and developed very effective assessment procedures for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The school benefits greatly from constructive and systematic support from the Local Education Authority. It is well placed to continue improving by building on its existing strengths and addressing the areas for improvement identified in this report.

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	E	E*	B	A*
mathematics	E	E	C	A
science	C	E*	B	A

Key

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

A: very high, A: well above, B: above, C: average, D: below average, E: well below average, E* very low*

The table shows that in Year 2000 the school's test results for English were above the average for all schools, and very high in relation to the average for similar schools. In mathematics, results were in line with all schools, but well above similar schools. Results in science were above all schools, and well above the average for similar schools.

Inspection findings indicate that children in the reception class, at the Foundation Stage, make good progress. The majority achieve the early learning goals in all areas of curriculum, but the proportion doing so in communication, language and literacy is below that expected by the time children enter Key Stage 1. By the end of both key stages, pupils achieve appropriate standards for their age in most subjects. However, in reading at the end of Key Stage 1, standards are below average. In addition, the quality of pupils' written work across the curriculum could be improved. By the time they reach the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have made particularly good progress in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT), and nearly all are able to swim at least 25 metres unaided. The varying natural ability levels of different cohorts of pupils, within very small year groups, contribute towards a significant degree of fluctuation in the pupils' performance in national tests from one year to the next.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils throughout the school demonstrate good attitudes towards their school work. They listen attentively, show interest and enthusiasm, are eager to learn and generally give of their best at all times.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is of a good standard throughout the school. This is apparent in assemblies, classrooms, playground and dining hall.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils make good progress in their personal development. Relationships are strong throughout the school. Pupils work very effectively in pairs and groups. Older pupils are keen to accept responsibilities.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

During the inspection, the teaching was at least satisfactory in all of the lessons observed. In 78 per cent of lessons, the teaching was good or better, and it was very good in 31 per cent of lessons. Throughout the school, there is a close match between the quality of teaching and learning, with generally good quality teaching promoting good progress by the pupils.

The teaching of children at the Foundation Stage is of very good quality, enabling pupils to settle quickly and make rapid progress in all areas of learning. At Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, the teaching is never less than satisfactory and generally good in most lessons. The teaching during literacy and numeracy lessons is consistently effective, and is an important factor in the good progress made by pupils during their time in the school. However, there is scope for teachers to place greater emphasis on monitoring pupils' reading, at the end of Key Stage 1, and writing in work across the curriculum, to see that pupils apply and consolidate the new skills acquired during literacy lessons. Good teaching also helps pupils to make significant progress in extending their ICT skills. In many classes, the valuable and effective work of support staff and voluntary helpers has a positive impact on the progress of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a very good curriculum for children at the Foundation Stage. At both key stages, the curriculum is of good quality, and the development of literacy and numeracy skills is appropriately emphasised. National Curriculum requirements are generally met very effectively, although there are some inconsistencies in the provision of opportunities for pupils at Key Stage 2 to engage in experimental and investigative work in science. School is very successful in ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils, irrespective of gender, race, background or ability, by including and involving pupils in all aspects of the curriculum and presenting an appropriate degree of challenge.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good provision throughout the school. The work of support staff has a very positive effect on pupils' progress. Specific and measurable targets in individual education plans help to support pupils' progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good provision. Class teachers and support staff provide work which is appropriately challenging and liaise closely with parents. The school draws appropriately on external support to enhance provision when necessary.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	School makes good provision for pupils' spiritual moral, social and cultural development, through assemblies and across the curriculum. Good adult role-models and opportunities for pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities contribute significantly towards the good progress made by pupils in their personal development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	School provides a very good level of care. There are good procedures for monitoring pupils' academic and personal development. Very good educational and personal support and guidance. Good procedures for improving attendance. Very good procedures for promoting good behaviour, eliminating oppressive behaviour and promoting personal development. Good procedures for assessing pupils' progress and for using the information to inform planning. Generally good procedures for monitoring pupils' progress, although scope for some improvements in non-core subjects. Good procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare.

A very good partnership has been developed with parents, all of whom would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The dedicated and hardworking headteacher provides purposeful and perceptive leadership. The headteacher and deputy head work effectively with governing body, and are well supported by efficient and effective co-ordinators of subjects and aspects of the curriculum.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body and headteacher provide clear direction for the work of the school. Governors successfully ensure that all statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good use is made of local and national comparative information to evaluate performance and set targets for improvement in English and mathematics, which are appropriately challenging.
The strategic use of resources	Effective school development planning enables money to be spent wisely on educational priorities. All resources are managed efficiently.

The overall quality of leadership and management is good. The governors successfully apply best value principles. The school is well staffed and appropriately resourced.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children like school. • The children make good progress. • Behaviour is good. • The teaching is good. • Parents would feel comfortable in approaching the school with questions or problems. • They are well informed about their children's progress. • The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. • The school is well led and managed. • The school works closely with parents. • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. 	<p>A significant minority of parents feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside the classroom, and • the school does not provide an appropriate amount of homework.

The inspectors agree with parents' positive views about the school. They find that good use is made of homework to support pupils' learning and that the school makes good provision for extra-curricular activities. The headteacher and governing body are anxious to continue strengthening procedures and provision, and will take the views expressed by parents into account when reviewing current arrangements.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 Children enter the school with attainment levels which are generally well below those found nationally. They make good progress during their time in the school and overall standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are close to the national average. However there are some areas of weakness in English which need attention.
- 2 Baseline assessment indicates that many children enter the Foundation Stage with delayed language and poor mathematical skills. They make very good progress in the reception class. By the time they enter Key Stage 1, most of the children achieve the early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development, mathematical, knowledge and understanding of the world, and in their physical and creative development. Many children achieve the relevant goals in communication, language and literacy, although the proportion doing so is less than that expected by the time children enter Key Stage 1. In all areas of learning, the great majority at all levels of ability, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
- 3 Comparative information, based on the Year 2000 National Curriculum test results, indicates that the performance of pupils reaching the end of Key Stage 1 in reading was below the average for all schools, but well above that of pupils in schools with similar characteristics. In writing, pupils' performance was in line with the average for those in all schools, but well above the average for similar schools. The pupils' performance in mathematics was well below the average for all schools and below that of pupils in similar schools.
- 4 Comparative information for pupils reaching the end of Key Stage 2 in the Year 2000 national tests, indicates that the pupils' performance in English was above the average for all schools and very high compared with pupils in similar schools. In mathematics, their performance was in line with the average for all schools, but well above that of similar schools. The pupils' performance in science was above the average for all, and well above similar schools.
- 5 Key Stage 2 national test results for the last four years indicate a rate of improvement in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science which is above the national trend. Test results for the three years up to Year 2000 indicate that boys out-performed girls by a significant margin in the core subjects. The school is well aware of this issue and is monitoring teaching and the curriculum closely to ensure that girls are not disadvantaged in any way.
- 6 Inspection findings for the end of Key Stage 1, indicate that standards are broadly in line with those found nationally in speaking and listening, mathematics and science, but below average in reading and writing. Pupils' achievements in relation to prior attainment are good in all of these subjects apart from reading, towards the end of the key stage, where a significant number of pupils are capable of making better progress.

- 7 Inspection findings for the end of Key Stage 2, indicate that standards are in line with the average in mathematics and science, but below average in English. Writing is the main area of weakness in English. The school has recognised this and is already working hard to bring about improvements. Pupils' achievement in relation to prior attainment is generally good in the core subjects.
- 8 The small number of pupils in each year group means that standards can be affected significantly by relatively few pupils. This explains the fluctuation in standards from one year to the next, and accounts for the differences between the inspection findings and the most recent national test results. For example, some year groups, such as the current Year 6, have a particularly high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. In addition, the high proportion of pupils joining and leaving some year groups, including Year 6, at times other than the normal point of entry and departure, has a significant effect on overall standards within the year group.
- 9 In English, pupils at both key stages make steady progress and reach standards which are at least appropriate for their age in speaking and listening. In reading, the youngest pupils at all levels of attainment, make generally good progress. Some benefit greatly from the valuable support of parents in reading with their children at home. There is some loss of momentum in pupils' progress towards the end of Key Stage 1, where their personal reading development is not monitored and recorded sufficiently often. This means that a significant proportion of pupils make insufficient progress at this stage. At Key Stage 2, pupils generally make good progress. An increasing proportion read widely and demonstrate good levels of fluency and accuracy, with a small number of high attainers reading increasingly challenging novels of their own choice. However, a significant proportion of pupils fail to attain the national expectation by the time they are 11 years of age. In writing, pupils make good progress at Key Stage 1, and the majority are on course to reach the national expectation. At the end Key Stage 2, standards in writing are below average. Although a majority of pupils achieve appropriate standards for their age, the attainment of many falls short of the national expectation. Pupils produce some interesting written work, but too often sentences are not correctly structured and punctuation is not used accurately. Although the conventions of grammar, punctuation and spelling are taught through the literacy strategy, they are not applied sufficiently well in many pupils' independent writing. At both key stages, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards the reading and writing targets set in their individual education plans.
- 10 In mathematics, pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with special education needs, make good progress in developing their numeracy skills. By the age of seven, most read, write and order numbers to a hundred and beyond, and have developed a range of strategies to solve basic problems. At Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in understanding place value and show increasing accuracy in computational work. By Year 6, the pupils know how to use a developing range of mental strategies to solve problems and are able to explain their strategies to others. Most show a good knowledge of the extension of the number system, which is reflected in their use of negative numbers and their understanding of the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages.
- 11 In science, standards at the end of both key stages are close to the national expectations. Most pupils, at all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in extending their scientific knowledge and

understanding. However, the lack of emphasis placed on experimental and investigative work means that their progress in scientific enquiry is less consistent.

- 12 Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress. The school meets effectively pupils' needs in terms of gender, race, background and ability.
- 13 Standards in information and communication technology (ICT), are in line with national expectations at both key stages. The very good use made of the central suite of computers to support learning contributes greatly towards the good achievement by pupils, at all levels of ability, in relation to their prior attainment. The pupils' confident use of CD-Roms and the Internet facilities to support their studies is a strong feature in their learning.
- 14 In all other subjects, standards are at least in line with the expectations set by the National Curriculum. Pupils benefit from swimming lessons, which begin in Year 2 and are arranged for all classes at Key Stage 2. Nearly all pupils learn to swim at least 25 metres unaided before leaving the school at the end of Year 6.
- 15 Pupils at both key stages make generally good progress in extending their literacy and numeracy skills. The successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy has a very positive impact on pupils' progress at both key stages.
- 16 The governors have set appropriately challenging targets for improvements in English and mathematics for future years, which take account of the varying ability levels of different cohorts of pupils. The school is on course to achieving the targets set for 2001.
- 17 Since the last inspection, the school has made very good progress in improving standards in most subjects, and particularly the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, where significant weaknesses were identified by the last inspection. This is confirmed by comparing the results of the most recent national test with those published in the last inspection report. The proportion of pupils achieving or exceeding Level 4 by the end of Key Stage 2, has increased from 20 per cent to 92 per cent in English, from 27 per cent to 83 per cent in mathematics, and from 40 per cent to 92 per cent in science.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 18 Throughout the school, pupils show good attitudes towards the school, and this has a positive effect on their learning.
- 19 Behaviour throughout the school is good. The pupils enjoy school and are enthusiastic about all school activities. Their positive attitudes to learning, coupled with their good behaviour in lessons, contribute significantly to the standards which they achieve. They are very keen to participate in extra curricular activities, for example the homework club. Parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated very strongly that their children like school.

- 20 Relationships at all levels are good. A particularly strong feature of lessons is the way in which the pupils work co-operatively with a partner or as part of a small group, willing to share ideas and to support one another. In the playground, the pupils are friendly and behaviour is good. Older pupils are caring and helpful to younger pupils and mindful of their safety. For example, when playing football they keep to the area designated for that purpose and do not encroach on the areas where the younger children are playing. At the pre-inspection meeting the parents expressed their appreciation for the friendliness which exists between pupils and described the school as "One big, happy family". There are very few incidents of serious misconduct. Exclusions are rare and only imposed after all other means of improving an individual pupil's behaviour have been tried. However, there was one fixed period exclusion last year, for behaviour which the school considered to be totally unacceptable.
- 21 During lessons, the great majority of the pupils sustain good concentration and draw thoughtfully on knowledge gained in previous lessons to answer questions and contribute to class discussion. The pupils pay attention to what others are saying and are sensitive to other people's feelings, for example when someone gives the wrong answer to a question or expresses a viewpoint that is different from their own. They take care with the presentation of their written work and are proud to show visitors what they have achieved. During the inspection, on a visit to Norton Priory, the Year 6 pupils were very well behaved and keenly interested in the "Water Detective" activities which they carried out under the direction of their class teacher and the centre staff. The pupils demonstrated a mature sense of responsibility in making their observations, respecting the living creatures which they found and taking care not to damage the environment.
- 22 The pupils' behaviour in assembly is exemplary. They listen attentively and are eager to answer questions. In their movement around the school the pupils are well mannered and sensible. They are pleased to hold doors open for one another, for their teachers and for visitors. Older pupils, in particular, contribute to the school community by carrying out, efficiently and responsibly, duties such as operating the overhead projector in assembly and collecting in numbers for school lunch and orders for mid-morning snack to give to the catering staff. The whole school contributes to the wider community through their very enthusiastic support for various charities. At the beginning of every school year a representative from a chosen charity is invited into school to talk to the pupils and explain the work of the organisation and how the pupils can help to raise funds. The pupils also go out into the community to sing, for example at events organised by Age Concern. These activities serve to develop the pupils' understanding of citizenship and help to promote a sense of caring.
- 23 The pupils' record of attendance is satisfactory, although slightly below the national average. Most absence is due to illness or holidays. However, the rate of unauthorised absence is above that found nationally, mainly because some parents fail to notify the school as to the reasons for absence. There has been some improvement in punctuality since the 1997 inspection. The vast majority of the pupils arrive on time in the mornings and both morning and afternoon sessions now start promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- 24 The quality of teaching and learning is generally good and often very good. During the inspection, the teaching in 75 per cent of the lessons observed was judged to be at least good, and 31 per cent was very good or better. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Throughout the school, there is a close match between the quality of teaching and pupils' learning.
- 25 The quality of teaching for children at the Foundation Stage, in the reception class is very good. All lessons observed were of at least good quality and 50 per cent were very good. All staff have a secure understanding of how children learn and recognise the importance of play and first hand experiences. This gives children a very good start to their education and helps them to make very good progress towards the early learning goals. The effective contribution of support staff is a strong feature in all lessons and is an important factor in the very good progress made by children with special educational needs. Staff co-operate successfully to overcome the difficulties presented by having to cater for Year 1 pupils as well as reception children.
- 26 Teaching at the Foundation Stage gives high priority to promoting the children's personal and social development. This helps them to settle quickly and make very good progress in all areas of learning. The sensible adaptation of the principles set out in the numeracy and literacy strategies, to suit young children, is a very good feature in the teaching. Very good questioning skills and a high level of interaction between staff and the children help to develop children's speaking and listening skills. This enables children to contribute more confidently and take greater advantage of the range of learning opportunities provided for them. The strong emphasis placed on fostering early skills in key areas enables children to make significant progress in developing their early literacy and numeracy skills. A wide range of opportunities enables children to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world. Many show a growing independence when working at computer work stations and confidence in using the keyboard and mouse to work through relevant computer programmes. Children are very well managed and this together with good lesson organisation contributes positively towards the children's good progress in the physical and creative areas of learning. The consistent emphasis placed on extending children's literacy and numeracy skills during work in all areas of learning is a strong feature in the work. Planning of work is very thorough in meeting the needs of all children, and this helps the teaching of children with special educational needs to be of good quality.
- 27 At Key Stages 1 and 2, the quality of teaching is generally good and often of high quality. In 70 per cent of the lessons observed the teaching was judged to be good or better, and nearly 30 per cent of lessons were very good.
- 28 In English, the teaching is never less than satisfactory, and often good or very good. Over 60 per cent of lessons were good and 30 per cent very good. The National Literacy Strategy is implemented successfully, and contributes significantly towards the good progress made by pupils during their time in the school. Lessons are well planned and all of the programmes of study are covered effectively. Teaching is very well structured and organised to meet the needs of pupils at all levels of attainment. Teachers are particularly effective in supporting pupils with special educational needs, who make very good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. Pupils for whom English is a second language are well supported by class teachers, who draw effectively on external expertise when necessary. Teachers include and involve all pupils in all aspects of the work, irrespective of gender, race or background. Most teachers share learning objectives with the pupils and make sure that pupils are clear about what

it is they are expected to learn. Group targets are proving beneficial, but the school has not yet introduced targets for improvement for individual pupils. Teachers' expectations of what pupils are expected to learn are particularly high in the most successful lessons and this has a very positive effect on pupils' attainment and progress. Although assessment procedures are generally very good, there are some inconsistencies in the implementation of arrangements to monitor reading at the end of Key Stage 1, which are contributing towards a loss of momentum in the progress made by some pupils at that stage. There is also scope for teachers to place greater emphasis on monitoring pupils' writing in work across the curriculum, to see that they apply and consolidate the new skills acquired during literacy lessons.

- 29 In mathematics, the quality of teaching is generally good. Over 60 per cent of lessons observed were good and 20 per cent very good. Teachers work hard and successfully to implement the National Numeracy Strategy and this has a positive effect on pupils' progress and attainment. Introductory whole-class elements of lessons are conducted very effectively. The pupils enjoy the challenges of the brisk mental starters, and their learning is very well supported by their teachers' good knowledge and understanding of the subject. Most lessons proceed at a good pace and the content is well matched to the pupils' different needs.
- 30 Throughout the school, the teaching of science is of generally good quality. Over 80 per cent of lessons observed during the inspection were judged to be good. The good use of questioning by teachers to probe pupils' understanding and consolidate learning is a good feature. This enables most pupils to make good progress in extending their scientific knowledge and understanding. Although some teachers are highly successful in extending pupils' skills in experimental and investigative work, this is a less consistent feature in some classes.
- 31 Throughout the school, the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) is generally good and sometimes very good. At both key stages, the teaching enables pupils to gain confidence and appropriate skills, and make good progress during their time in the school. Regularly timetabled lessons, making good use of the ICT suite and providing access to good quality resources, have brought about significant improvements in teaching since the last inspection. As a result teachers are increasingly confident and secure in their own knowledge and understanding of the subject. The imaginative use of ICT to support and enhance pupils' learning in other subjects is a very good feature in the teaching.
- 32 In other subjects, the quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and often good. Tasks are generally pitched at an appropriate level to extend pupils, and opportunities are effectively taken to extend literacy and numeracy skills. The school is at an early stage in implementing new curricular requirements for some subjects. Lessons are planned appropriately, but the arrangements for monitoring the progress of individual pupils are not yet sufficiently systematic.
- 33 Throughout the curriculum, teachers make good provision for pupils at all levels of attainment and respond effectively to the differing needs of boys and girls and pupils from minority ethnic groups. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. The very effective co-operation between teachers and support staff is a strong feature which helps to promote very good progress by pupils in this category. Their work is supported by good quality individual education plans, which enable the pupils to work systematically towards the realistic and manageable targets

set for them. Throughout the school, teachers make good use of homework to support pupils' learning, particularly in English and mathematics.

- 34 The school has made very good progress in improving the quality of teaching since the last inspection. The proportion of lessons judged to be satisfactory or better has increased from 59 per cent to 100 per cent, and the proportion judged to be very good or better from eight per cent to 31 per cent. Teaching has improved in most subjects. Teachers and support staff co-operate very effectively. Their hard work and the successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, contribute positively towards better quality teaching throughout the school.

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

- 35 The school is successful in providing children under five with a very good quality curriculum, which is based appropriately on the nationally agreed programme for their learning. The work is well planned to support the children's progress towards the early learning goals for each area of the curriculum. The curriculum for pupils at Key Stage 1 and at Key Stage 2 is of good quality. In almost all respects, the curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum although in some classes the pupils have too few opportunities to engage in scientific enquiry.
- 36 Since the last inspection, the school has made great strides in producing policies and guidelines for all subjects. In addition, the recently installed computer area gives the pupils many more opportunities to develop their information and communication technology skills through varied and relevant learning experiences. The improvement in standards of literacy and numeracy since the last inspection owes much to the successful implementation of the national strategies for these areas.
- 37 The teachers give much of their own time to provide pupils with a good range of extra-curricular activities, including a homework club, all of which are well attended. In addition, regular opportunities are provided for the pupils to take part in a variety of visits in the local area and further afield. For example, Years 2 and 3 visited the outdoor education centre at Burwardsley, Cheshire and stayed overnight. In addition, Year 6 pupils are given the opportunity to experience life on a narrow boat which also includes overnight accommodation.
- 38 The pupils have many opportunities to benefit from the expertise of a range of visitors to the school. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils benefited from a visit by a local poet who worked with the pupils to help to develop their literacy skills. Such opportunities serve to enhance and enrich the statutory curriculum.
- 39 The school continues to be successful in promoting the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's commitment to Christian values and principles is very apparent and this has a very positive effect on the quality of the teaching and learning.

- 40 The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. The requirements for a daily act of collective worship are now met in full and are successful in promoting pupils' awareness of positive values and attitudes to each other and their community. The local church is a focal point for family worship once a week and is well supported by parents and carers, adding to pupils' feeling of belonging to a Christian community. Good opportunities exist for reflection, and during assemblies pupils are reminded of the importance of prayer as a way of communicating with God. A sense of spirituality is successfully fostered through the many opportunities for pupils to consider their own uniqueness and their relationship to their teachers, families and friends. Fundamental issues, such as life and death, are examined through studying the poems about war and peace. The extent of one Year 6 pupil's attempt to grapple with such issues was particularly apparent in one line of a poem, written after class discussion: "Peace is just like the wind floating by".
- 41 The school is particularly successful in developing pupils' understanding of the values and beliefs of others. For example, visits from people of the Jewish faith and visits to a synagogue develop pupils' understanding of what it means to individuals to belong to a different faith from their own, and helps them to develop a respect for other religions and cultures. Throughout the school, teachers make good use of incidental and planned opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of special moments and the wonder of their creation. This was apparent, for example, when Year 6 pupils visited Norton Priory to engage in pond dipping activities as part of their work in science. A sense of awe and wonder was expressed by pupils when they examined the contents of their nets and discovered the presence of creatures such as newts and the dragonfly nymph. This was a strong feature of the lesson and was particularly effective in developing an understanding of the wonders of nature. Successes in both academic and personal achievements are recognised and valued by all.
- 42 Good provision for moral development has been maintained since the last inspection. It is effectively supported by a good behaviour and discipline policy that contains clear aims and objectives based on the school's belief in the value of each individual and their right to respect and self esteem. The school rules are prominently displayed and have been devised through close consultation with the pupils themselves. They are all realistic and achievable and are known throughout the school as the 'Golden Rules'. The pupils are very aware of what is right and wrong and have worked with their teachers to introduce an agreed reward system which recognises good behaviour by all pupils and not just those who find it difficult to adhere to rules and regulations. Pupils are encouraged to think about the choices they have to make and the implications for themselves and others. The sensitive issues of prejudice and bullying are handled imaginatively through drama and issues such as kindness, friendship and caring are taught well through Bible stories, fables and everyday happenings in and around school.
- 43 Provision for social development is good and pupils are encouraged to become aware of their responsibilities to the school and their local community. Pupils have numerous opportunities to develop responsibility, self-confidence and independence. The organisation of lessons provides many opportunities for pupils to work with a partner or as part of a small group. Year 6 pupils work with younger pupils as 'buddies' to provide support for their reading skills and to improve behaviour in the playground. This has a positive effect on pupils' self esteem and confidence. The good relationships apparent in lessons ensure that pupils feel

comfortable, discussing sensitive issues which concern them. A sense of citizenship is developed when pupils take part in local sport and music festivals, health initiatives and 'The Crucial Crew' scheme on the role of the emergency services. Parents and pupils eagerly support fundraising events to collect money for local and world charities.

- 44 Provision for cultural development is good. Assemblies, celebrations and religious education lessons foster an awareness of other cultures and faiths. Pupils have opportunities to learn and appreciate the richness of their own and other people's culture through literature, music, art, geography and history. The school is very aware of the contribution of the chemical industry to the local economy. Local historians are invited into school to bring the local heritage alive for pupils and to stimulate their interest and pride in their town. Through religious education lessons, pupils study the major world religions and all pupils are made aware of important festivals such as Christmas, Divali, Eid and the Chinese New Year. The diversity of the different cultures represented in the school is valued as parents and staff share their different foods, dress, dance and music with the pupils.
- 45 The school is entirely successful in implementing the governors' policy for equality of opportunity. All pupils, irrespective of gender, race, ability or background, have equal access to the whole curriculum. The school's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and developing positive attitudes in its pupils is regularly reflected in its work. During a personal and social education lesson in Year 6, for example, the pupils explored the meaning of the word "prejudice". They drew on examples from their everyday lives to consider how it was easy to hold unhelpful pre-conceived views about people. Good use was made of extracts from Floella Benjamin's book, "Coming to England" to illustrate the negative effect of prejudice. Throughout the school, teachers take opportunities well to raise pupils' awareness. This often occurs through the use of carefully chosen literacy texts and through work in other subjects such as art and music.
- 46 Teachers take care to involve all pupils through well focused questions and a high level of interaction during group activities. The school works hard to support pupils at all levels of attainment by pitching the work at an appropriate level to challenge and extend them. A high proportion of pupils join the school at times other than the reception stage. Their progress is monitored closely to avoid any disadvantage. Good provision is made for pupils for whom English is an additional language. Class teachers ensure that their needs are met, and when necessary, the school enlists relevant external support and expertise from the local authority. The effectiveness of this process was illustrated relatively recently. The school's monitoring revealed that a pupil who had previously made sufficient progress to work without external support was again experiencing some difficulty. The local authority was contacted and external support for the child reinstated. Close attention is given to information generated by monitoring pupils' performance, in order to identify any variation in the performance of pupils in terms of gender, race or background. The school is aware that the performance of boys at the end of Key Stage 2 has been significantly better than that of the girls. It is therefore monitoring provision closely to ensure that girls are not disadvantaged in any way.

- 47 The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Arrangements comply fully with the Code of Practice. Very good procedures are well established for the early identification of pupils who need additional support. Good quality individual education plans are completed for all pupils who need them. The targets set are realistic and measurable and the progress made by the pupils against their targets is reviewed at regular intervals. The school encourages parents to become involved, but has yet to adopt a policy which enables parents to keep a copy of their child's plan in order to provide additional support at home. Pupils with special educational needs receive good quality support from their teachers and classroom assistants which enables them to take a full part in lessons. Those pupils who take part in the Reading Recovery Project receive very good quality support from experienced specialist staff. This provision is of a high calibre and underpins the very good progress which these pupils make. Statements of special educational needs are precise and detailed and contain important recommendations. These are acted upon accordingly so that the pupils receive the correct level of provision.
- 48 The very effective co-ordination of special educational needs provision is a strong feature in the school. Careful attention is given to regular assessments and each pupil's progress is monitored carefully. The results are used effectively to plan future work.
- 49 In all classes, the pupils' personal and social development is promoted very well. An effective health education programme is taught throughout the school. This gives appropriate attention to sex education and drug misuse. The pupils are taught essential facts and provided with the necessary skills and knowledge to enable them to make informed choices, now and in the future.
- 50 The pupils' learning is also supported effectively through good links with the local community. The school's road safety officer talks regularly to the pupils about their own personal safety. In addition, the school encourages personnel from the 'Crucial Crew' scheme to inform the pupils of the role of the local emergency services.
- 51 Strong links are well established with the two local secondary schools to which most of the Year 6 pupils transfer. A smooth system is in place for the transfer of relevant records and attainment data. Good induction procedures help the pupils to feel confident about moving schools.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 52 Very good levels of care, support and guidance for pupils have been successfully maintained since the last inspection in 1997. Arrangements for child protection are good, adhering to guidelines provided by the Local Education Authority. The designated teacher ensures that staff have a good awareness of procedures and are kept up to date with changes in statutory requirements. The health and safety of the pupils are given high priority. Pupils are carefully supervised throughout the school day, inside school and during outdoor play. Since the 1997 inspection the level of supervision during the lunch hour has been improved and the pupils are now properly looked after while playing in astro-turf play area. Accident recording procedures are appropriate and parents are informed by letter or telephone if a pupil receives a bump to the head or any other injury of a serious nature.

- 53 Induction arrangements for children under five are very good. There are strong links with the pre-school group which is based in the school and this helps the children settle into the Reception class quickly and happily. Throughout their time in the school the pupils' attendance is monitored closely, with good support from the educational welfare service. Procedures for promoting regular attendance and punctuality are good and any unexplained absence is followed up promptly, wherever possible on the first day of absence. The pupils enjoy school and their record of attendance is satisfactory.
- 54 Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are generally good and particularly good in English, mathematics and science. A carefully planned programme of statutory and non-statutory tests is set throughout the school. The results are carefully analysed and used effectively to set challenging targets for improvements. The arrangements to track pupils progress in English and mathematics as they move through the year groups help the school to extend fully pupils at all levels of ability. The arrangements also contribute towards the assessment information used to inform future planning and teaching, and ensure that pupils are set appropriate work in these subjects.
- 55 The monitoring and supporting of pupils' academic progress are carried out effectively in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, but are not so well developed in information and communication technology and subjects where new curricular requirements were introduced at the beginning of the current academic year.
- 56 The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are of a high order. School policy is regularly revised and updated to meet the needs of all its pupils, including those who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Rules are few in number but well thought out and designed to encourage good manners and respect for other peoples' feelings and safety. The school rules are displayed prominently in many areas of the school, useful reminders of what constitutes acceptable behaviour. The pupils themselves are involved in determining the rewards for good behaviour. This is one of the school's major strengths as it fosters self discipline and a sense of fair play. The school's policy on bullying is documented clearly. Relationships throughout the school are good and there are very few incidents of bullying or other serious misbehaviour. The importance of caring for one another is emphasised in all aspects of school life. The teaching and non-teaching staff provide very good role models for the pupils and the school is a friendly, happy place in which to learn. All the pupils, irrespective of race, gender, ability or background, have equal access to the whole curriculum.
- 57 Procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development are good. Through the planned curriculum, assemblies, links with the church and the daily life of the school the pupils are learning what it means to be a good friend and a good citizen. The programme of study for personal, social and health education systematically covers the principles of a healthy lifestyle, the need to care for the natural world and the importance of respecting other peoples' views and beliefs. During the inspection, in a Year 5 and 6 lesson, the pupils were considering prejudice, what it means and how it can make people unhappy. They worked co-operatively, in pairs, writing short plays, to be performed at a later date in front of the class or possibly the whole school, about fictitious victims of prejudice or discrimination. Pupils from Year 2 upwards have the opportunity to take part in annual residential visits, in some cases with pupils from other schools. These visits give an added dimension to the pupils' personal and social development, helping

them to gain independence, learn new skills and build good relationships with one another and with their teachers.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 58 The school has successfully built upon the strengths identified in the 1997 inspection report and now works very effectively in partnership with parents and carers.
- 59 Parents and carers have very positive views about the school and appreciate the attitudes and values that it promotes. The consultation exercise, prior to the inspection, revealed that they feel comfortable in approaching the school with problems or questions concerning their children. They consider the school to be well led and managed and are of the view that teaching is good. They are in total agreement that their children like school, are making good progress and are helped to become mature and responsible. They feel, very strongly, that behaviour is good and that their children are expected to work hard and achieve of their best. Parents and carers consider the school works closely with them and keeps them well informed in relation to their children's progress. The inspection findings support all these positive views.
- 60 A significant minority of the parents and carers are of the opinion that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside the classroom. The inspectors found extra curricular provision to be good. In addition to the after-school clubs, which were praised by parents at the pre-inspection meeting, pupils undertake a wide range of educational visits, including residential visits for pupils from Year 2 upwards.
- 61 Some parents and carers are dissatisfied with the amount of work their children are expected to do at home. Inspection findings indicate that teachers make good use of homework and that parental support in the home is having a positive impact on the pupils' attainment and progress. Since the 1997 inspection the school has made good improvement to this aspect of its provision. There is now greater consistency in the use of homework and parents are kept fully informed, through the prospectus, as to the amount of homework that is set and the benefits to be gained from it.
- 62 The quality of the information provided for parents and carers, by the school, is very good. Through the prospectus, the governing body's annual report and regular correspondence the parents and carers are kept well informed in relation to school procedures and events. Arrangements for meeting parents are very good. A formal parents' evening is held every term and the school's 'open door' policy enables parents and carers to come into school at any time should they have any concerns about their children's education or any family problems about which they need advice or support. Pupils' annual written reports are very helpful and informative. They provide detailed information about pupils' attainment and progress. This aspect of reporting to parents has shown good improvement since the 1997 inspection. A very good feature of the school is that parents and carers have access to resources which help them to support their children in preparing for the statutory National Curriculum tests which are administered at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

- 63 A small number of parents and governors help regularly inside school. Since the 1997 inspection the school has implemented a formal policy on voluntary support to maximise the impact the work of volunteers has on the quality of teaching and learning. Parents and carers continue to help with taking pupils to the swimming baths and with educational visits to places of interest in the locality and further afield. Parents and carers support the religious life of the school by attending the weekly family assemblies which are held in the parish church. A group of parents provide breakfast for those parents and carers who do attend, to be enjoyed while waiting for the pupils to assemble in church at the beginning of the school day.
- 64 The school arranges numerous courses for parents and carers, in conjunction with Halton College. These have included courses on family literacy, family numeracy and writing. A course in ICT is currently proving popular with parents, carers and members of the local community. These courses, which often involve working alongside pupils in lessons, give parents and carers the confidence and skill to support their children's learning and help them acquire the maximum benefit from their education.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 65 The overall quality of leadership and management is good. The dedicated, hardworking headteacher provides purposeful and perceptive leadership and co-operates effectively with the governing body to provide clear educational direction for the work of the school. They are well supported by the deputy headteacher and members of staff. Significant improvements in the quality of leadership and management have been important factors in the good progress made by the school in addressing the serious weaknesses identified by the last inspection. The school benefits greatly from constructive and systematic support by the Local Education Authority. It is now well placed to continue improving by building on current strengths and addressing the areas for improvement identified in this report.
- 66 The governing body's increasingly purposeful involvement in the work of the school has helped to achieve recent improvements. Appropriate governing body committees have been established, and they work effectively to ensure that all statutory requirements are met. Governors are proud of their school, and make a strong contribution towards the positive ethos for learning which currently exists. The school's mission statement and main aims are communicated effectively to parents through the prospectus. The school sets out to educate pupils intellectually, spiritually, morally and socially within an ethos which is firmly based on Christian principles. These aims are consistently reflected in all of the school's work.
- 67 Good work by curriculum co-ordinators contributes strongly towards the good quality of teaching and provision which now exists. Co-ordinators play an important part in producing and updating subject policies and schemes of work which provide effective guidance for teachers. Good leadership provided by the co-ordinators for English and mathematics has been an important factor in the successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy throughout the school. Co-ordinators for subjects where new curricular requirements were introduced at the beginning of this academic year recognise that more work needs to be done to strengthen the arrangements for monitoring pupils' progress in these subjects.

- 68 The school makes good provision for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, those from different cultural backgrounds, and pupils for whom English is an additional language. The governing body ensures that the requirements of the Code of Practice for special educational needs are successfully addressed and that the school provides equality of access and opportunity for all of its pupils. These policies are implemented consistently by class teachers, who ensure that all pupils are included and involved in all aspects of formal and extra-curricular activities. The school recognises that in recent years the performance of boys at Key Stage 2 has been significantly better than that of the girls. It is monitoring all aspects of provision closely to ensure that girls are not disadvantaged in any way.
- 69 Since the last inspection, good improvements have been achieved in the arrangements for monitoring teaching and the curriculum in the national priority areas of English and mathematics. The headteacher visits classrooms to observe and evaluate teaching and the quality of curricular provision. Criteria for evaluation are shared with class teachers and feedback is provided following the lesson observations.
- 70 Well-conceived school development planning procedures enable the school to move steadily toward the targets identified. Subject action plans are appropriately incorporated and the views of staff, governors and parents are taken into consideration when completing the plan. Targets for improvements are listed clearly, although not in order of priority. Appropriate information is provided about action to be taken to support their implementation. This includes deadlines for meeting targets, persons responsible, and criteria for evaluating the success of the various initiatives. The effective use of the school plan to inform spending ensures that money is used appropriately to address relevant educational priorities. All funding available to the school is used very effectively. Grants for specific purposes are used appropriately, and good use is made of the element within the school's budget for making provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- 71 Requirements for staff appraisal are met appropriately. The implementation of all requirements of performance management is well in hand, including the introduction of personal targets for each member of staff. The school places strong emphasis on staff development. Teachers, support staff, governors and voluntary helpers are given opportunities to attend relevant in-service training, and the school has initiated a number of courses for parents. There are appropriate procedures for supporting the induction of newly qualified teachers and staff who are new to the school.
- 72 The governors' finance committee, headteacher and highly efficient school administration co-operate very effectively to monitor spending and ensure efficient financial control. Administrative staff are appropriately trained and make very good use of information technology to support financial management. All of the recommendations made by the most recent audit of finance by the local education authority have been addressed and implemented successfully.
- 73 The increasing attention given to monitoring school performance is a good feature in the work of the governing body. The headteacher provides comprehensive information to enable governors and senior management to compare the school's performance with similar schools as well as with the national picture. Governors demonstrate a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

- 74 The governing body also seeks to secure best quality and value when purchasing resources and arranging for work to be completed. Recent improvements to the accommodation, initiated by the headteacher and governors, provide good illustrations of the application of best value principles. The quality of provision was improved and good value for money was secured.
- 75 The strategic management of all resources is good. The school has sufficient suitably qualified and experienced teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum for pupils at all stages of their education; they are deployed effectively. The school is resourced appropriately for all subjects, although there is scope for improving the range and quality of books in library areas. Very good use is made of the range of facilities provided by the accommodation and school grounds. Considerable improvements have been made to the accommodation since the last inspection. Classrooms are appropriately spacious, and the central computer suite provides a valuable additional facility. These improvements contribute to much better working conditions for pupils and staff.
- 76 Standards of cleaning and caretaking are high, and the quality of the internal environment is enhanced by attractive displays of pupils' work which are of a good standard. They are used effectively to celebrate pupils' achievements, support their learning, and promote enquiry.
- 77 Very good progress has been achieved since the last inspection. In addition to improvements made to the accommodation, co-ordinators now play a more purposeful part in over-seeing their subjects and identifying priorities for development. Senior management monitor teaching and the curriculum more effectively, and the headteacher and governing body now take effective steps to monitor the school's performance and seek out areas of weakness.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

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

- i) improve standards in reading at Key Stage 1 by:
 - creating more regular opportunities for older Key Stage 1 pupils to practise their personal reading, and to be heard reading by teaching or support staff;
 - monitoring the progress made by pupils in their personal reading regularly and systematically.
(paragraph reference: 6, 9, 28, 93, 95)
- ii) improve the quality of writing across the curriculum by:
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to write independently and at length;
 - monitoring closely to ensure that pupils apply and consolidate new writing skills, acquired during literacy lessons, in their written work across the curriculum;
 - building on the steps taken to introduce targets for groups of pupils, by identifying targets for individual pupils to improve weaknesses in their writing.
(paragraph reference: 7, 28, 97, 99)

In addition to the key issues, the following recommendation arising from areas of relative weakness should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- achieve greater consistency in the provision of opportunities for pupils at Key Stage 2 to engage in activities which extend their skills in scientific enquiry.
(paragraph reference: 11, 30, 115)

Note: Initiatives to raise standards in literacy further are included in the current school development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	32
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	31	44	25	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	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	-	117
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	55

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	-	48

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.3
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	9	15	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	8	7
	Girls	12	14	13
	Total	19	22	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (95)	92 (95)	83 (90)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	7	8
	Girls	12	13	12
	Total	20	20	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (95)	83 (90)	83 (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	3	9	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	2	3	3
	Girls	8	6	8
	Total	10	9	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (33)	75 (40)	92 (33)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	3	3
	Girls	8	7	8
	Total	11	10	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (33)	83 (40)	92 (47)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	104
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	1	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.5
Average class size	23.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	54

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	-
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	-

Total number of education support staff	-
Total aggregate hours worked per week	-

Number of pupils per FTE adult	-
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/00
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	£
Total income	295,116
Total expenditure	279,652
Expenditure per pupil	2,220
Balance brought forward from previous year	(4158)
Balance carried forward to next year	11,306

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	80
Number of questionnaires returned	18

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	28	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	39	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	67	33	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	33	22	0	0
The teaching is good.	78	22	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	67	33	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	89	11	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	89	11	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	72	17	11	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	72	28	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	39	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	39	17	0	0

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

- 79 Children enter the reception class with levels of attainment which are generally well below those expected for their age. They benefit from very good teaching at the Foundation Stage and make very good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of the curriculum. By the time children enter Key Stage 1, the great majority achieve most of the early learning goals in mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development and in their personal, social and emotional development. Although many children achieve the appropriate learning goals in communication, language and literacy, the proportion doing so is less than that expected by the time children enter Key Stage 1.

Personal, social and emotional development

- 80 The staff make good provision for children's personal, social and emotional development, enabling them to make significant progress during their time at the Foundation Stage. Strong emphasis is placed on helping children to develop an understanding of appropriate behaviour and of what is right and wrong. Children enjoy coming to school, and quickly learn to respond well to rules and routines that support acceptable ways of behaving. They learn to work co-operatively in role-play or when working at the computer. They share equipment sensibly, negotiate roles and explore new ideas. During more formal teaching, children show a high level of interest in their work and are well motivated. This is evident during the whole class introduction to literacy and numeracy lessons, when children respond enthusiastically to their teacher's questions and are keen to share their own ideas. During these lessons, most show an increasing ability to concentrate, maintain attention and sit quietly when required. Careful guidance by staff in enabling children to become aware of and respect the differences which exists between them, in terms of gender, culture and beliefs.

Communication, language and literacy

- 81 A wide range of learning activities and experiences are provided to develop children's communication, language and literacy skills. The principles of the National Literacy Strategy are adapted effectively to meet the needs of young children, and the success of this approach is an important factor in the very good progress made by children during this stage of their education. Whole-class introductions to various topics are conducted very effectively, capturing the interest of the children and encouraging them to contribute by answering questions and sharing their own ideas. Imaginative strategies to allow children to participate during whole-class sessions add considerably to the quality of their learning, helping their progress in speaking and listening and their grasp of phonics. For example, following the introduction to one lesson, using a picture of a fish with blanks to be filled in to label key features, the pupils used their individual whiteboards to write down the sounds which end a word, such as "ail" in "tail", and "in" in "fin". This type of work is helping the children to see patterns in the sounds they use, and is helping their progress in reading and writing. Good co-operation between the teacher and support staff contributes greatly towards the very good progress made by children with special educational needs. Good provision is also made for children for whom English is an additional language, by involving and challenging them through careful questioning and monitoring their progress carefully. This enables them to develop confidence and make very good progress in all aspects of English. Good strategies are used to ensure that higher attaining children are extended appropriately. For example, at the end of a whole-class literacy lesson, children were asked to search for information

about particular topics in time for the next day's lesson. Some higher attainers had been particularly successful in finding information relating to the previous day's tasks and were able to read from their notes to share the information with the whole class. Children's language skills benefit considerably from work in other areas of learning such as role play, and work relating to developing their knowledge and understanding of the world, as well as the learning of new language during physical and creative activities. This enables them to develop confidence in using spoken language to share ideas and negotiate with others. Although a significant number of lower attaining children have yet to achieve some of the early learning goals in this area of learning, all children, at all levels of ability make good progress. Many show a good understanding of phonics and can name sounds in the words they use frequently. They are beginning to write confidently for various purposes, such as a message in a greetings card, and are well prepared for the next stage of learning.

Mathematical development

- 82 The school is very successful in promoting the children mathematical skills, enabling most of them to achieve the early learning goals by the time they enter Key Stage 1. Their progress is supported very effectively by a variety of well thought out formal and informal activities. These provide the children with good opportunities to compare, match, sort, order, sequence and count. They acquire an increasingly good understanding of the passage of time, and explore number, pattern, shape and measurement as part of their work in the creative as well as the mathematical area of learning. As in literacy, the imaginative adaptation of the principles of the National Numeracy Strategy to suit young children is proving very successful. Very well conducted whole-class sessions are helping all children to recognise and become confident in using numbers up to 10, and some to count well beyond. The provision of regular opportunities for children to develop mathematical ideas and methods to solve simple problems is a particularly good feature in the teaching, and some children show skills above those expected for their age in reaching correct answers. Very good questioning skills help children to develop confidence in using language correctly by making correct use of terms such as "more", "less", "greater" and "smaller" in their answers. Role-play activities in the shop, cafe and estate agents help children to consolidate their learning by applying new skills in their play. They are well supported in these activities by purposeful interaction with teaching and support staff.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 83 Children make good progress in extending their knowledge and understanding of the world and attain the early learning goals by the time they enter Key Stage 1. Staff encourage them to talk about their discoveries and experiences, to ask questions and to explore a range of different materials. This was evident when children considered how the sense of hearing was used for many different purposes. They were able to give examples of how different sounds, such as alarms, can give a warning of danger and that hearing can allow people to listen to information and enjoy music. Good opportunities are provided for children to use the computer. They develop confidence in using the mouse and become increasingly familiar with the keyboard. In addition, the use of a robotic toy helps them to develop an early awareness of how information technology can be used to control devices. Work under the theme of

"Ourselves" enables children to develop a good awareness of where they live, of events in their families' lives and how things change over time. Opportunities are carefully planned to develop children's awareness of other countries and cultures and this is reflected in interesting displays in the classroom.

Physical development

- 84 Good provision is made for children's physical development. They learn about the importance of exercise and healthy eating to creating a healthy body. Numerous opportunities are provided to enable them gain confidence in handling pencils, crayons, modelling tools, construction toys and malleable materials. Most children do all of this with confidence, although a minority have difficulty in handling scissors. Structured physical education lessons promote good control and co-ordination. Some children demonstrated particularly good skills in throwing accurately and for distance, during an outdoor games lesson. Most reach the early learning goals by the time they enter Key Stage 1.

Creative development

- 85 Children make good progress in developing creative skills, and benefit from a range of well planned experiences in art, music, imaginative play and story. Children find out about colour mixing and how colours create different moods and effects. They enjoy opportunities to develop their imagination as they become characters in the "estate agents", "cafe" and "shop". Good teaching enables children to increase their appreciation of music. This was evident during a lesson on the different sounds which can be created by various instruments. The lesson was well planned and resourced, and all of the children were very interested and keen to participate. They were able to identify patterns in sounds and to distinguish between long and short sounds. In categorising instruments according to the sounds they made, children knew that an instrument which was capable of making both long and short sounds should be placed in the intersection of the two hoops used for recording their findings.
- 86 The quality of teaching at the Foundation Stage is very good. All of the lessons observed were at least good and half of them were of high quality. Teaching is particularly effective in promoting children's literacy and numeracy skills in all areas of learning. Work is carefully planned and assessed and very good class management helps to promote good relationships between children and create a purposeful and supportive ethos for learning. The valuable contribution of support staff is a significant factor in the very good progress made by children during their time at the Foundation Stage. Since the last inspection, the school has built successfully on the good picture apparent at that time and new curricular requirements have been successfully implemented.

ENGLISH

- 87 Standards in English have improved significantly since the last inspection. However, the small numbers of pupils in year groups contributes towards significant fluctuations in the performance of pupils from one year to the next.
- 88 Results in the Year 2000 national tests showed that standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were above the national average and very high in relation to pupils in similar schools. National Curriculum test results for Key Stage 1 showed that standards were below average in reading, but above average in writing.

- 89 Key Stage 2 national test results for the last four years indicate that boys outperform the girls by a significant margin. The school is aware of this and is monitoring closely. There was no evidence of disadvantage to either gender during the inspection.
- 90 The inspection findings for Key Stage 2 indicate that although a majority of pupils aged 11 attain appropriate standards for their age in English, overall standards are below the national expectation. Pupils at all levels of attainment make good progress in speaking and listening and reading. In writing, progress is satisfactory, but there is scope for improving the quality of pupils' written work across the curriculum. The small number of pupils in each year group means that standards can be affected significantly by relatively few pupils. The current Year 6, for example, has a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and a significant number of pupils who joined the school fairly recently. Standards in Year 6 are not typical of those in the remainder of Key Stage 2, which are much closer to the most recent national test results.
- 91 The inspection findings for Key Stage 1 indicate that standards in speaking and listening are in line with the national expectation. In reading and writing, although a majority of pupils in Year 2 attain appropriate standards for their age, standards are below the national expectation. Pupils, at all levels of attainment, make good progress in speaking and listening and writing. Pupils in Year 1 make good progress in reading, but there is a loss of momentum in Year 2, where a significant proportion of pupils are capable of making better progress.
- 92 Pupils at both key stages make good progress in improving their speaking and listening skills. Role-play, drama and discussion encourage pupils to develop confidence and a richer use of language. Pupils are attentive listeners in class and around the school. They listen carefully to teachers' instructions on how to carry out their tasks and how to improve their work. This was illustrated well when pupils in Year 3 were involved in an interesting debate on whether 'Pokeman cards' should be allowed in school. Pupils were able to argue their case in front of the class using persuasive vocabulary effectively. However, in a minority of lessons there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to enter into discussions to explain their views on various issues. Teachers are very aware of vocabulary needed in each subject when introducing a new topic and ensure that pupils understand the vocabulary being used. In class discussions, pupils have opportunities to express their ideas and opinions and offer answers, confident that they will be listened to and valued.
- 93 By the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2, they have made generally good progress in their reading. However, there is some loss of momentum in their progress at Key Stage 1. Phonics and word families are taught well, enabling pupils to establish a good foundation for reading. Younger pupils, at Key Stage 1, benefit from regular opportunities to read to adults and this helps them to make good progress in acquiring confidence in their reading. However, there are fewer opportunities for older Key Stage 1 pupils to practise their reading or to be heard by adults. In addition, their personal reading development is not monitored and recorded sufficiently closely. This means that a significant number of pupils make insufficient progress at this stage in their development. Lower attaining pupils need

considerable help to read unfamiliar words. Some higher attaining pupils in Year 2 read aloud with confidence and good expression although their understanding of more complex words and phrases limits their understanding of text. They are helped by their teachers to become aware of authors and illustrators and to identify main characters and events in the stories they read.

- 94 At Key Stage 2, most pupils make good progress in reading and standards are moving close to those expected nationally. Books are well matched to pupils' attainment and interest levels. In Year 3, pupils are encouraged to be critical readers as they review 'real cool' books and recommend them to their classmates. Higher and average attaining pupils are becoming fluent readers of a wide range of texts, understanding plot, setting and characterisation. They show an understanding of different writers' styles and accounts and are able to make deductions and inferences from their reading. Enid Blyton, J K Rowling and Roald Dahl are favourite authors and pupils are confident in explaining why they prefer one book to another. Lower attaining pupils use a variety of strategies effectively to help them recognise unfamiliar words, such as letter patterns and sounds, context and pictures.
- 95 Teachers are very aware of the need to encourage pupils to read for a wide variety of purposes. As well as reading for enjoyment, pupils are encouraged to read instructions, such as how to operate the computer and Internet, or to read instructions on how to make a puppet. Books for topics are of a good quality and are usually well displayed to encourage pupils to use them to further their knowledge and understanding of a particular topic such as work on the Jewish religion. Shared reading sessions, during the literacy hour, are used effectively to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses in order to move their learning on. Reading for enjoyment is given a particularly high priority, and pupils are encouraged to choose freely from a range of fiction and non-fiction books. Older pupils develop good independent research skills as they use dictionaries, glossaries, thesauri, encyclopaedias, CD-Roms and the Internet to extend their learning. However, the location of the school library limits its use, and many books are out of date and of a poor quality. Some pupils take books home regularly and parents hear their children read, which has a considerable impact on their progress.
- 96 Pupils at both key stages make at least satisfactory progress in writing. By the age of seven the majority of pupils are spelling common words correctly and making good attempts to spell more complex words. Pupils use full stops and question marks with increasing accuracy and higher attaining pupils use adjectives and simple connectives to add interest to their writing. Handwriting is almost always neat and well formed, although most pupils are still not joining their letters.
- 97 At Key Stage 2 considerable emphasis is placed on developing pupils' basic writing skills for a wide range of purposes. During literacy lessons, considerable emphasis is placed on spellings, punctuation, grammar and appropriate layout. However, this is less apparent in pupils' writing during work in other subjects and this contributes towards poorer quality in the written work produced across the curriculum. Pupils are given very good strategies to write for a wide range of purposes, such as reports, letters, biographies and instructional and persuasive writing. They engage in a range of challenging tasks, such as those to develop their understanding of complex spellings and the use of connectives, imperatives and conjunctive clauses. Pupils have opportunities to use these skills in other subjects, for example, to record their investigations into the habitats of animals in science lessons or writing poems in religious education. Year 6 pupils have written their letters to Victorian Members

of Parliament, recounting the working conditions of a Victorian child. The work of higher attaining pupils shows a good use of vocabulary, grammar and structure as well as a sensitive understanding of the horrors of poverty and cruelty. Although pupils' work is often interesting, they do not analyse their work sufficiently to ensure that sentences are correctly structured or punctuation is used accurately and effectively. The conventions of grammar, punctuation and spelling are taught through the literacy strategy, but these skills are not transferred sufficiently well to pupils' independent writing and their written work across the curriculum. Simple punctuation is often missing and commas, apostrophes, speech marks, question marks and exclamation marks are not used to a satisfactory standard.

- 98 Pupils show very favourable attitudes to learning and relate positively to each other and their teachers. Most pupils are eager to learn, stay on task and show good levels of independence and concentration. This makes a considerable contribution to their rate of progress and the standards of achievement. Opportunities to work collaboratively to develop personal skills are well used.
- 99 Teaching at both key stages has improved since the last inspection and is now of a good standard. Over 60 per cent of lessons observed were good and 30 per cent very good. Lessons are usually well planned and all the programmes of study are effectively covered. All teachers are confidently implementing the 'Literacy Hour', and additional literacy and the use of booster classes is having a positive effect on achievement. Teaching is well structured and planned to meet the needs of pupils of all attainment levels. Most teachers share learning objectives with the pupils and ensure that pupils are very clear about what it is they are expected to learn. Although group targets provide a focus for learning, teachers do not consistently remind pupils of them in order to move learning on and improve standards of work. The use of individual targets as a way of further improving pupils' work has not yet been introduced. Plenary sessions effectively check that pupils have understood the lesson and are ready to move on to the next stage of learning. Teachers use praise, comments and questions effectively to check understanding and extend thinking. When teaching is of a high quality, expectations are particularly high and the teachers' enthusiasm, explanations and knowledge have a very positive effect on pupils' attainment and progress. For example, in a Year 5 and 6 class, the imaginative use of calypso music set the scene for the introduction of a thoughtful text by a West Indian author. Challenging questions gained pupils' interest and involved them in developing understanding of prejudice and an appreciation of an autobiographical text. Pupils confidently offer answers to teachers' questions, knowing that even if their answers are incorrect the teacher will help them to discover for themselves the right answer. Relationships are good and teachers have high expectations of their pupils' behaviour. Teachers use a range of appropriate and high quality resources to support the teaching of literacy. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and tasks are always well matched for pupils' individual needs.
- 100 Assessment and record keeping procedures are generally good. National Curriculum tests and other school tests are used very effectively to identify areas for school development. Teachers mark work on a regular basis and there are some very good examples of how comments help pupils to improve their work. However, there are some inconsistencies in the implementation of procedures to monitor reading at the end of Key Stage 1, which are contributing towards a loss of momentum in pupils' progress at that stage. Homework is set regularly and used

effectively to extend work done in lessons and to check that pupils have fully understood new learning.

- 101 The curriculum meets statutory requirements. The curriculum leader is highly motivated, enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the subject. Monitoring of lessons and planning has had a very positive impact on the quality of the teaching and learning. National test results and teacher assessments are carefully scrutinised to track pupils' progress and improve standards. Since the last inspection, the school has made very good progress in improving standards and this is reflected in much better national test results.

MATHEMATICS

- 102 The standards achieved by pupils aged seven and 11 are broadly in line with national expectations. The great majority of the pupils, at all levels of attainment, make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards targets set in their individual education plans. Standards at Key Stage 1 are better than the most recent national test results. This is due to the continuing positive impact of the National Numeracy Strategy. At Key Stage 2, standards reflect the most recent national tests, which showed the pupils' performance to be in line with the national average, but well above the performance of those in similar schools. National test results for the last four years indicate that the performance of boys has been significantly better than that of the girls. The school has identified this as an issue for careful monitoring although the inspection finds no evidence of disadvantage to either gender.
- 103 By age seven, most pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of basic number work. They read, write and order numbers to 100 and beyond. The teaching gives careful attention to mental work and this assists the pupils to develop a range of strategies to solve basic problems. However, at times, some of this work in the mixed age class for Years 1 and 2 does not provide sufficient challenge for the older pupils. Some of the pupils have a developing understanding of basic place value and know that the position of a digit signifies its value. They use this concept well in ordering numbers in various sequences. The pupils generally make good progress in their calculations, selecting and using appropriate addition or subtraction processes. This was evident, for example, during graph work where they produced a graph based on their observations of the colours of passing cars. They were able to interpret the graph and to use their skills to answer various questions involving addition and subtraction processes.
- 104 At Key Stage 2, the teaching demonstrates good quality planning, so that the work has variety and builds successfully upon the pupils' previous learning. Pupils make good progress in understanding place value and show increasing accuracy in computation work using the four rules. By Year 6, the pupils know how to use a developing range of mental strategies to solve related problems. The teaching is effective because time is given for the pupils to explain the strategies they use. Their explanations are then used by their teachers to consolidate the learning and to reinforce good practice. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils have a good grasp and knowledge of the extension of the number system. This is reflected in their work using negative numbers and in their knowledge and understanding of the relationship of fractions, decimals and percentages.

- 105 In all classes, the pupils benefit from a range of well planned activities and experiences which support effectively their work related to shape, space and measures. In such work, the teachers require the pupils to use precise mathematical language. As a result, the pupils develop a good knowledge of the associated terminology, which they use effectively when describing the properties of three and two dimensional shapes. Many of the older pupils understand how to use confidently, a range of measures, They are proficient when reading calibrated scales in work related to temperature or when measuring liquids in millilitres. Many of the older pupils understand how to calculate perimeters and area using accurately simple formulae. By Year 6, the pupils demonstrate their developing skills in solving problems in practical situations. They organise their work carefully, present their results clearly and explain precisely the strategies they use.
- 106 At both key stages, the teaching provides the pupils with appropriate challenges and is based firmly on the programmes of study. The older pupils are introduced to handling data. They generally make good progress in collecting information, recording their results and interpreting their findings. By Year 6, the pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the use of measures of average, and use appropriately terms such as mode, median, mean and range in relevant problem solving contexts.
- 107 The pupils have many opportunities to practise and consolidate their mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum. For example, Year 2 pupils, in geography, constructed a clear graph based on the number of shops, leisure facilities and businesses in the local area. They then used this information to make various calculations in answer to related questions. Year 6 pupils demonstrated their knowledge of measures in work involving taking measurements when investigating what affects the size of a shadow. They also used measures when making bread from a recipe. On another occasion they made accurate measurements reading thermometers.
- 108 Throughout the school, good use is made of information and communication technology to support the pupils' work in mathematics. For example, some of the Year 6 pupils made effective use of a computer programme to reinforce their understanding of tessellations. They were able to use their knowledge of rotational symmetry to achieve the desired outcome.
- 109 Staff work hard and successfully to implement the National Numeracy Strategy. Lessons are well planned in numeracy and based appropriately on the suggested format. Pupils particularly enjoy the challenges of the brisk mental start to lessons and their learning is supported effectively by their teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject. The quality of the teaching is at least satisfactory and frequently good. Most lessons proceed at a good pace and the content is well matched to the pupils' different needs. Questioning is a strong feature in lessons and is used effectively to probe pupils' thinking and consolidate their learning. Although the final plenary part of lessons is used effectively to consolidate the pupils' learning and sometimes to correct misconceptions, its use to extend the pupils' thinking does not always receive sufficient attention.
- 110 Standards in mathematics have improved considerably since the last full inspection in 1997. This is mainly due to very good improvements in the quality of teaching. The subject is well co-ordinated and careful attention is given to analysing test results in order to raise standards even further. The organisation of the curriculum

enables all pupils to have equal access to the subject. Mathematics makes an important contribution to the aims of the school. The subject is well resourced and allocated an appropriate amount of time. The pupils clearly enjoy the challenges set and respond enthusiastically in lessons. The content of the work is interesting and meets fully the requirements of the National Curriculum.

SCIENCE

- 111 Standards at the end of both key stages are broadly in line with those found nationally. National test results for Year 2000 indicate that the pupils' performance was above the national average and well above that of pupils in similar schools. Throughout the school, pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. The school is taking appropriate steps to monitor standards in terms of gender in view of the significant variation in the performance of boys and girls in recent years. There was no evidence of any disadvantage to pupils, in terms of gender, during the inspection.
- 112 Younger pupils make good progress in extending their scientific knowledge, understanding and skills. They show good knowledge of the main parts of the human body and appreciate the importance of healthy eating. They identify similarities and differences between a range of materials, and show an increasing knowledge and understanding of physical phenomena. In Year 1, for example, pupils were able to give good examples of how different sounds could signal danger. Pupils in Year 2, in early work on forces, drew appropriate conclusions about the slope of a ramp and its effect on the speed of a toy vehicle. By the end of the key stage, most pupils are able to describe their observations clearly, using appropriate scientific knowledge, and record their findings appropriately.
- 113 Older pupils cover a wide range of topics, which helps them to increase their knowledge and understanding significantly. They show a good knowledge of the conditions which plants and creatures need to survive, and of how diet can affect the health of humans. The ability of some high attaining pupils to use scientific terminology such as "photosynthesis" appropriately is a strong feature which indicates the emphasis placed by the school on searching for and retrieving information, using CD-Roms and the Internet as well as reference books. In some lessons, pupils make good progress in extending their scientific skills through experimental and investigative work. In Year 3, for example, pupils carried out tests to see what snails prefer to eat. In Year 5, they added various everyday substances to water to see whether they dissolved or remained the same. In both instances, pupils drew on their growing scientific knowledge to make predictions, before setting up fair tests, drawing conclusions and recording their findings in an appropriate manner. However, scrutiny of work produced by pupils during the year indicates that too few opportunities are created for pupils in some classes to extend their skills in scientific enquiry.
- 114 At both key stages, pupils benefit greatly from educational visits and field trips. This was evident when Year 6 pupils visited the nearby Norton Priory Centre to engage in pond dipping activities. They responded with awe and wonder when they found a rich variety of creatures in their nets, including the great diving beetle, dragonfly nymph and newt. The creatures were examined closely, using appropriate equipment, to confirm identification, before being returned carefully to the pond. The school regularly visits the Catalyst Museum in Widnes to explore the science and technology behind the chemical industry and its impact on people.

- 115 The teaching of science is good. In 80 per cent of lessons the teaching was good or better and all teaching was at least satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and appropriately based on National Curriculum requirements. The use of questioning to probe and extend pupils' understanding is a strong feature which helps to capture pupils' interest and extend their knowledge and understanding. Good class management helps to promote positive relationships within classrooms and contributes towards good standards of behaviour. Assessment procedures are well established and information is used effectively to inform the next stage of teaching and learning. Teachers are secure in their knowledge and understanding, and this enables them to challenge pupils appropriately and help them to make good progress in extending their scientific knowledge. In the best lessons, practical work is well organised and pupils are helped to develop good skills in scientific enquiry. However, there is some inconsistency in the emphasis placed on this aspect of science at Key Stage 2 which requires attention. Overall, however, teachers provide a challenging curriculum and make good provision for all pupils irrespective of gender, race or background. Good support is provided for pupils with special educational needs, helping them to make good progress in relation to their prior learning.
- 116 The quality of teaching in science has improved considerably since the last inspection when some lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. The proportion of pupils achieving or exceeding Level 4 by the end of Key Stage 2 has increased from 40 per cent, at the time of the last inspection, to 92 per cent in the most recent national tests.

ART AND DESIGN, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY and MUSIC

- 117 Standards in both art and design and design and technology are broadly in line with national expectations. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Most of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory and often good progress during their time in the school. In music, the school's time-tabling arrangements and the timing of the inspection meant that it was only possible to observe one lesson. However, examination of long and medium-term plans indicates that the programme of work meets National Curriculum requirements and pupils work at appropriate levels for their age.
- 118 In art and design, the younger pupils make good progress in using a range of media. For example, Year 1 pupils produced some well-formed paper sculptures when working on an 'Under the Sea' topic. Year 2 pupils designed and made Torah scrolls as part of their study of aspects of Judaism. Their designs were striking and well proportioned. Older pupils gain increasing knowledge of the work of artists from our own and other cultures. Year 3 pupils, for example, created exciting designs using strong lines when producing work in the style of Kandinsky. Seurat's work influenced some very well designed pointillism pictures, where the pupils used subtle colour mixing to good effect. Good teaching of block printing techniques enable some of the older pupils to create imaginative designs using a variety of tactile materials. The pupils know how to select the most suitable materials from a range of resources and to arrange them imaginatively as they build up effectively their blocks for printing.

- 119 In design and technology, pupils make satisfactory progress in selecting appropriate tools and techniques to join and combine materials and components in a variety of ways. For example, Year 2 pupils produced good quality designs before constructing four wheeled vehicles which moved relatively smoothly. The pupils paid much attention to the axles, so that the wheels moved quite freely while retaining their intended positions. The oldest pupils know how to produce well-organised plans which take account of the need to produce reliable products of good quality. For example, some of the Year 6 pupils designed and made sandals of good quality. They paid particular attention to functional use, reflecting on their designs so that the finished product was safe and fit for the purpose intended.
- 120 In music, older pupils recognise that music is created from a variety of stimuli. This was apparent, for example, when pupils listened to some of the work of Beethoven. They were able to add their own interpretation, responding to the different moods and feelings which the music evoked. They showed growing skills in comparing and evaluating the different styles of the music played. At both key stages, the content of the work in music is enhanced by the arrangements for various musical groups to perform in the school. For example, recent visitors have included a samba band and the group "Key Strings", who performed for the whole school. Pupils also benefit from opportunities to perform at various community events, especially at Christmas.
- 121 The teaching in all of the lessons observed, in all three subjects, was at least satisfactory. The teaching of art and design is of a good quality, providing valuable opportunities for pupils to use a variety of media, and making imaginative use of the work of great artists to stimulate interest and improve the quality of pupils' work. In design and technology, effective curricular and lesson planning, based on the new national guidance, enables the pupils to benefit from work which builds progressively on their earlier acquired skills. In the one lesson observed in music, pupils were introduced to good quality music, and this extended their awareness of the work of great composers. In all of the lessons observed, good class management was a strong feature, promoting good behaviour by the pupils. Teachers and support staff co-operate very effectively to make good provision for pupils with special educational needs, and care is taken to enable all of the pupils, irrespective of gender, race, background or ability, to be involved and supported effectively.

HISTORY and GEOGRAPHY

- 122 Due to the school's timetabling arrangements and the timing of the inspection, only a limited number of history and geography lessons were seen. Judgements are based on a scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with teachers and pupils as well as the lessons observed. Standards in both subjects and at both key stages are broadly in line with those expected for pupils' ages. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make appropriate progress in relation to their prior levels of learning.
- 123 In history, by the age of seven, the pupils show a good understanding of the distinction between the past and present when they examine toys, household objects and homes throughout the ages. Visits and games are used effectively to help pupils make comparisons with their own lives and those of children in the past. In their studies of different homes, the pupils in Year 2 were able to recognise some

of the differences in household objects using different sources of information about the past, including photographs, CD-Roms and real objects.

- 124 By the age of eleven, the pupils have widened their historical knowledge to develop an understanding of the more distant past. Through their study of topics on the Anglo Saxons, Romans and Tudors, the pupils gain a sound range of factual knowledge. Older pupils have a secure understanding of chronology and name accurately significant events and people from the past. They discuss the Anglo Saxons, Vikings, Tudors and Victorians confidently and can name the different kings and queens and characters such as Boudicca, Florence Nightingale and Dr Barnado.
- 125 Pupils are successfully encouraged to think as historians as they use a range of sources to find out about recent and past events. Year 3 pupils' skills of enquiry were developed well as they studied photographs of archaeological finds at the Anglo Saxon burial site at Sutton Hoo. They were encouraged to use their observations to make deductions about the person whose grave it might have been. Year 6 pupils make effective use of eyewitness accounts to find out more about post war Britain, and are beginning to realise that there can be different accounts and views of the same historical events.
- 126 In geography, by the age of seven, the pupils know that maps and plans represent a locality. They plot their journey to school, identifying features along the way, such as shops, businesses and leisure facilities. A study of 'The Isle of Struay' provides them with good opportunities to compare their own riverside town with an island location. 'Barnaby Bear' provides pupils with a knowledge of different destinations near and far as he accompanies them and their teachers to Mediterranean Islands, Amsterdam and Bangkok. This work helps pupils to develop appropriate geographical language related to the topics they study.
- 127 By the age of eleven, the pupils have acquired a sound geographical base about near to home and far away. They can name some countries of the world identifying mountain ranges and capital cities. In their studies of the local area, Year 3 pupils have a sound understanding of the human and physical features of their surroundings. An in-depth study of Runcorn Hill helped pupils to make considerable progress in acquiring geographical skills, as they looked at the changes over the last two hundred years, using evidence from a wide range of geographical sources, maps, aerial photographs and the different building materials. In Year 6, the pupils develop good geographical skills and vocabulary as they trace the path of a river, identifying the effects of water on the landscape and peoples lives and being introduced to 'source', 'meander', 'confluence' and 'erosion'.
- 128 In both subjects, pupils are consolidating their study skills through field trips and the use of maps, atlases, CD-Roms and the Internet.
- 129 The quality of teaching in both history and geography is good. Teachers use effective strategies for managing lessons and organising pupils. Very good use is made of educational visits to places of interest such as Formby Beach, Norton Priory Museum, Wigan Pier and the local power station. Teachers' planning and pupils' work indicates that teachers have a very good understanding of the subjects. The teaching is enthusiastic and the very effective use of a wide range of resources brings the subjects alive for pupils and has a positive effect on the quality of learning.

- 130 Class management is consistently good, promoting positive attitudes by pupils to history. They particularly enjoy lessons which challenge them to think and consider how people lived in past times. They are keen to explore new ideas and exchange these with each other when working in small groups or pairs.
- 131 History and geography are effectively co-ordinated and make an important contribution to the aims of the school. The schemes in place effectively ensure that there is progress and continuity across the school, taking into account the needs of the different age groups within each class. This helps teachers to provide pupils with good opportunities to extend their historical knowledge and understanding.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 132 Standards at the end of both key stages are in line with the national expectations, and the great majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress during their time in the school. The planned use of ICT to support work in other subjects, particularly English and mathematics, is an increasingly strong feature in the pupils' learning. The programme of work meets fully the requirements of the National Curriculum and makes good provision for all pupils.
- 133 Regular use of the suite of computers, located in the centre of the teaching area, for Key Stages 1 and 2 enables pupils to acquire confidence in using the computer to support their studies in many subjects. They benefit from learning activities which are meaningful and purposeful and from opportunities to enjoy regular access to a computer.
- 134 Pupils make particularly good progress in extending their skills in communicating information. They make rapid progress in learning how to use a wide range of facilities to produce, amend and enhance text. Younger pupils develop confidence and good skills in using the keyboard to enter simple text. They are able to space their work appropriately and make effective use of the delete button when necessary. By the end of Key Stage 1, they are able to enter, save and retrieve their work, and to print out completed pages with little assistance from their teachers. At Key Stage 2, pupils build effectively on this good start. They correct their spelling and adjust the style and size of print. As they progress, they show a good level of competence in using ICT to organise and present their work in the best way for a particular purpose, often incorporating illustrations to complement the text. Older pupils reorganise aspects of their work, for example by shifting text about, using cut and paste techniques. They show an increasing awareness of audience, and are able to structure, refine and present their work in ways which are suitable for specific purposes.
- 135 Pupils make very good progress in developing their skills in handling information. Younger pupils begin to use ICT effectively to present the results of class surveys, using pictograms and block graphs. As they progress, pupils extend these skills and use them effectively to support work in subjects such as mathematics and science. This was evident in Year 1/2 for example, where pupils searched for and accessed CD-Rom information to support their studies in science, and in Year 3, where pupils engaged in tasks to add information to a file in the computer data-base. Pupils

appreciated the importance of storing information in an organised, accurate way to allow easy retrieval. By the end of the key stage, most pupils select the information they need for different purposes. They retrieve it from relevant sources, using the Internet and CD-Rom facilities, before checking its accuracy and presenting it in a suitable way.

- 136 Pupils make good progress in extending their knowledge and understanding of control technology. Pupils at Key Stage 1 enter a set of instructions to programme a roamer robotic toy to travel various distances and change direction. Using the same principles, older pupils, using the Logo programme, enter a sequence of commands to programme a screen image to draw geometrical shapes.
- 137 Throughout the school, work in ICT has a very positive impact on pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Regular access to the central block of computers is enabling this to become a consistent feature in pupils' learning.
- 138 Teaching is generally good and sometimes very good. Work is well planned, with clear objectives, and pitched at an appropriate level. Pupils respond with enthusiasm and work productively. Class teachers and support staff co-operate very effectively and provide a perceptive level of intervention in pupils' learning. This allows scope for pupils to learn through trial and error, but ensures that help is provided before the momentum of learning is lost. Very good use is made of the computer suite, to introduce new concepts and allow pairs or groups of pupils to work for a sustained period. Teachers achieve a good balance between whole class explanation and creating time for pupils to work on their tasks. Class management is nearly always good, promoting very good relationships and high standards of behaviour. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs which is reflected in their progress. Appropriate care is taken to involve and extend boys and girls equally, and to meet the needs of pupils of different racial backgrounds including those who speak English as an additional language.
- 139 Good progress has been made since the last inspection, when no direct teaching of ICT was observed and standards at Key Stage 1 were judged to be below the national expectation. Considerable improvements in resources, the development of the computer suite, much more purposeful teaching and more effective subject co-ordination are important factors in the progress achieved.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 140 Standards achieved by pupils aged 7 and 11 are generally in line with the national expectations and consistent with standards apparent at the time of the last inspection. Throughout the school, pupils at all levels of attainment make good progress in relation to prior attainment.
- 141 In games, pupils develop their skills through practice and learn to apply them in small sided competitive games. Younger pupils show good skills in throwing or propelling various objects, over good distances and maintaining direction. Older pupils demonstrate good skills in striking a ball with a racquet as they build up to playing short-tennis matches. Opportunities to engage in extra-curricular activities enable many of the older pupils to enhance their skills. Boys and girls attend after school clubs for netball, soccer and rounders. School teams compete in leagues and tournaments against other local schools in soccer and netball. The school also benefits through participation in the TOPS initiative which provides additional games equipment to extend the range of opportunities for pupils.

- 142 Dance and gymnastics are taught at both key stages although it was not possible to observe any lessons due to the timing of the inspection and the school's timetabling arrangements. The skills of older pupils are enhanced through membership of an extra-curricular gymnastics club. Cricket and athletics are taught in classes at Key Stage 2 during the summer term. Athletics training is arranged after school during the summer and the school enters the local primary schools' competition in cross-country. Pupils have the opportunity to engage in outdoor and adventurous activities during the annual residential visit to the Burwardsley Centre. The school provides swimming lessons for pupils from Year 2 to Year 6. Nearly all pupils are able to swim at least 25 metres unaided before leaving the school at the end of Year 6.
- 143 The quality of teaching is generally good. Lesson planning and organisation generally achieves a good balance between teacher direction or demonstration and activities which present an appropriate challenge to the pupils. Class management is generally good, promoting good behaviour, and enabling pupils to develop positive attitudes towards the subject. Pupils respond enthusiastically in all aspects of physical education. They change into appropriate dress and move to and from the hall or outdoor area without fuss. They take a pride in their performance and listen carefully to advice as to how they might improve. Teaching makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs and ensures that all pupils, irrespective of gender, race or background, are appropriately included and involved in all aspects of the programme of work. The subject is effectively co-ordinated, and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.