

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **SIMMS CROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Widnes

LEA area: Halton

Unique reference number: 111228

Headteacher: Mrs K. Smallwood

Reporting inspector: Mrs F. D. Gander  
21265

Dates of inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> June 2002

Inspection number: 196345

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Community
School category:	Primary
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Kingsway Widnes
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Telephone number:	0151 424 5031
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J. Peck
Date of previous inspection:	14 <sup>th</sup> July 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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21265	Mrs F. Gander	Registered inspector	Physical education	Information about the school How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further? How well is the school led and managed?
13762	Mr N. Shelley	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27826	Mr A. Parsons	Team inspector	Foundation Stage	
29378	Mr K. Watson	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
2200	Mr J. Stirrup	Team inspector	English History Religious education	
21397	Mrs I. Bradbury	Team inspector	Special educational needs Music Art and design	
31963	Mr M. Padmore	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Information and communication technology Equal opportunities	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Simms Cross Primary School is an average sized school of 310 boys and girls between the ages of 3 and 11, situated in the centre of Widnes. The majority of pupils come from the inner town area, which is one of high family stress and includes a women's refuge which takes families from outside the area. As a result, during the previous year 22 percent of pupils joined or left the school at times other than the beginning or end of the school, some of them coming or going more than once. The school has nursery and 43 children attend this on a part time basis. In addition, 28 are in the reception classes. Children's levels of attainment when they enter the nursery are well below that expected for children of a similar age, especially in language development and personal and social skills. Eight of these children have been identified as having special educational needs. Not all children attend the nursery, and the attainment levels of pupils when they enter the reception class are below the nationally expected levels. Within the school there are also two special classes, one which provides assessment for younger pupils with special educational needs and one which caters for pupils between the age of 7 and 11 who have moderate learning difficulties and occasionally emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are 26 pupils in these two classes, all who have a statement of special educational need, and have been placed there by the Local Education Authority (LEA). The percentage of pupils with special educational needs in the school is very high and more than twice the national average. Forty three percent of the pupils in the main school are on the school's special educational needs register, and this rises to 53 percent when the pupils the two unit classes are included. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is also very high at 60 percent and well above the national average. The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is very low and of the five pupils who attend the school, all are English speaking.

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

This is a very effective school. The excellent leadership provided by the headteacher and senior managers has resulted in a school where there is an excellent ethos for learning. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and to each other. They are taught, and learn, in a stimulating and high quality learning environment by teachers with high expectations for behaviour and achievement. The school effectively educates pupils who have a range of difficulties, and because they know and understand the children well they help them to deal with their personal problems. The school also ensures that all pupils, including those who attend the unit classes, are fully included in all aspects of school life. The overall good teaching, with many examples of very good teaching, results in all pupils achieving well and attaining levels that reflect their overall ability. The provision of the two special need units is also very good, with pupils being very well supported and taught so they make the best possible progress. The good quality teaching and learning also extends to the nursery where the school has ensured that the children have high quality experiences which results in them making good progress. The school provides very good value for money.

### What the school does well

- The head teacher provides excellent leadership. Due to this, staff are very well supported to carry out their responsibilities and work very effectively as a team.
- The school has an excellent ethos to learning and because of this, pupils behave very well, have very good attitudes to learning, and very positive relationships to one another.
- There is a high percentage of very good and good teaching. This, along with the support given to pupils with special educational needs, results in all pupils achieving well and making good progress.
- The educational provision of the two unit classes is very good, and the school's emphasis on inclusion ensures that pupils are fully included in the life of the school.
- The very good provision for children in the nursery school ensures that they make good progress, especially in personal and social development.
- There is excellent financial management, and this results in high quality learning environment and resources. This is continually being developed and improved.

### What could be improved

- The effectiveness of the sub committees of the Governing Body through regular meetings, presentation of reports, and monitoring the developments in the school.
- The health and safety of the field used for the teaching of physical education.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection in 1997. All the key issues have been successfully achieved, and the school has continued to develop and improve beyond these. The management structure of the school has been greatly improved and all staff have clear roles and responsibilities, and actively carry these out very well. The school has updated and improved its schemes of work in all subjects and has developed assessment procedures for each subject. School policies, which were not in place at the time of the previous inspection, have been written and are being implemented by all staff. There have been improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, the introduction of national initiatives for literacy and numeracy, as well as the monitoring and evaluation of standard of attainment and progress pupils are making.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E*	E*	E	C
Mathematics	E	E	E	E
Science	E	E	E*	E

<b>Key</b>	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E



When children enter the nursery their attainment is well below that expected for children of a similar age. Some children enter reception without having attended a nursery and have very limited social experiences, poor language development, and their attainment is low. Due to the breadth of experiences given, and the good teaching while they are in the nursery and reception classes, they make good progress and achieve well, especially in social and personal development. However, the attainment levels of pupils at the end of the reception year are still below average because of the low level from which many start, and the large number of children with special educational needs.

Pupils' performance in the national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 in English, mathematics and science over the previous two years for has been lower than the national average. In 2001 the Year 6 results in science were in the bottom five percent nationally. When compared with similar schools, the results were also lower in mathematics and science, but were average in English. There are several reasons for these apparently low results. The number of pupils with special educational needs in the school has almost doubled since the previous inspection, and the number includes those who attend the special educational needs units. In addition, a number of pupils were absent during the week of the tests which affects the results, and there are a significant number of pupils who leave or join the class prior the tests which is disruptive to their education and also affects the standards they attain. This all has a detrimental effect on the school's results. However, lesson observations and analysis of pupils' work in English, mathematics and science show that pupils in Years 2 and 6 without special educational needs attain at least the expected level for their age and confirms that the school works hard to help pupils achieve. Nevertheless, targets for pupils' attainment in English and mathematics were over-ambitious last year and did not take sufficient account of all these factors that would affect statistical results. Consequently, they were not achieved.

Overall, in other subjects of the national curriculum pupils attain levels that are nationally expected, and achieve well. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, and pupils in the special classes achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. There are no differences in the attainment of boy and girls, or between pupils of different ability or backgrounds.

## **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	These are very good. The ethos of the school revolves around pupils wanting to learn and achieving their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	This is very good. Pupils are aware they represent the school and they are proud to be part of it. This has a very positive effect on their learning and their relationships with one another.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school are very good, and especially between boys and girls, and in groups where pupils are of different ages. The personal development of pupils is very good.
Attendance	This is satisfactory and has improved but some absences result from parents taking their children on family holidays during term time. There are some pupils who arrive late for school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is good or better in three quarters of lessons and very good in a third. There is no unsatisfactory teaching, and is an improvement from the previous inspection. Teaching and learning is consistent between the infant and junior classes, and between all subjects. It is good overall in the nursery, and in the reception classes, where it is more formal. Pupils with special educational needs, including those in the unit classes are taught well, and there are examples in all areas of the school where teaching is very good. Literacy and numeracy are taught well. Teachers' planning is very good. Thought is given to the learning needs of all pupils and is firmly based on the good assessment. Teachers, in all lessons emphasise the development and use of literacy, writing and numeracy skills. Management of pupils is very good and there are high expectations for good behaviour. As a result, pupils remain on task, sustain interest in their work, display good attitudes and want to learn. The ethos of the school plays a significant part in the teaching and learning process.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	This is very good overall and literacy and numeracy are given appropriate emphasis. It is particularly enhanced by personal, social and health education. It meets the needs of all pupils, especially the children in the nursery where it gives them a wide range of experiences. However, there could be a greater emphasis on aspects of music.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is good. These pupils, including those in the two unit classes, have equal access to the full curriculum, and there is regular integration with the other classes in the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is very good. The school has a very good ethos in which all pupils are seen as individuals and are positively valued. Their personal development is given high priority within the curriculum.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a very caring school where high priority is given to the physical and emotional well being of pupils, but the condition of the school's field is a safety hazard. There are good procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment, and for monitoring pupils' academic and personal progress.
How well the school works in partnership with parents.	The school works hard to develop good relationships with parents from the time children enter the nursery, but although they are very positive about the school many do not become actively involved in its work.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership that centres on pupils achieving their best in a happy, caring, and very well organised school. Staff with management responsibilities fulfil their roles with dedication and enthusiasm, and there is an excellent commitment to improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors know the school very well and are supportive of the headteacher and all staff . However, committees do not meet regularly, present reports to the full Governing Body, or actively shape the direction of the school development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is a self-evaluating school. It acts on the information it gathers from its monitoring, and as a result, the priorities for school development and improvement are excellent. They centre on raising standards, the quality of the teaching and learning and the well-being of all who work and learn in this community.
The strategic use of resources	There is excellent financial management of the funds. All resources, including information and communication technology, are used very well. The budget is linked very well to the school's priorities for ensuring that pupils receive a quality education. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good. The school is excellent at achieving the best value.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the teaching is of good standard.</li> <li>• That the school expects pupils to work hard and do their best</li> <li>• That the school helps pupils to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• That the school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• That the school works closely with parents.</li> <li>• That behaviour is good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework given to pupils.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with all of the very positive views that parents have expressed about the school. The amount of homework set is not unusual compared to the majority of primary schools and it is consistently used to supplement class work.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. When children enter the nursery, the majority of them have attainment levels that are well below those normally expected in all areas of development, and many have identified special educational needs. During their time in the nursery and the reception classes they make good progress in all areas of development and school assessment shows that they make the greatest gains in personal and social development. However, some children have not attended a nursery, have very limited social experiences, poor language development, and their attainment is low. Because of the good progress children make in the nursery and reception classes their attainment levels when they enter Year 1 have improved, but overall because of the low level from which many start they are still below those expected for children of a similar age.

2. In the year 2001, the overall performance of pupils aged seven in the national assessment tests was much lower than average in English, mathematics and science, and the results were in the bottom five per cent of the schools. When compared with similar schools, the school's performance was well below average. However, the number of pupils reaching the expected level or higher had increased from the previous year, and in writing and mathematics 75 per cent of pupils reached the expected Level 2. There are fewer pupils than the national average who reached the higher level. These results fluctuate from year to year and reflect the percentage of pupils who come into the school with well below average attainment and the high number of pupils with special educational needs. Included in these results are the results of the pupils who have a statement of special educational needs, attend the special assessment and diagnostic class, and attain levels that are significantly below national expectations.

3. In 2001, the performance of pupils at the age of eleven in the national assessment tests was below the national average in English and mathematics, and well below in science where the results were in the bottom five per cent of schools. The school cannot be accurately compared with similar schools, as there is no comparison data for schools that have special unit classes in each key stage. However, when compared with schools who have a similar number of pupils entitled to free school meals, the results were well below the average in mathematics and science, but were better for English where the school's performance was in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining the nationally expected Level 4 had, from the previous year, increased in English, remained the same in mathematics and decreased in science.

4. Again the school's results were significantly affected by the inclusion of the results of the Year 6 pupils from the special classes. Seventeen per cent of pupils had a statement of educational need and were part of unit class for moderate learning difficulties. In addition, 35 per cent of pupils taking the tests were on the special educational needs register, and 12 per cent of pupils came to the school during Year 6 and had not benefited from the school's assessment and additional learning support for literacy and numeracy. Evidence shows that a significant number of pupils leave and rejoin the school more than once in their school career and this has a detrimental affect on the school's overall performance. The targets set for the school last year were too high and did not take into account the overall context of the school. The school therefore did not achieve the targets.

5. Overall, evidence from the work seen during this inspection, shows that standards are below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. This is due to the percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and do not reach the nationally expected levels. The school has analysed the results of tests, and the targets set for this subject for the next two years are challenging but realistic. In **English**, despite the good progress made in both key stages, standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 for the current group of pupils remain below average. Analysis of pupils' work indicates that overall standards have improved since the previous inspection and shows that new initiatives, such as the literacy strategy, the school's arrangements for assessment, and the targeting of pupils for additional support are effective and ensure that pupils attain their best. The presentation of work and quality of writing is of a particularly high standard.

6. In **mathematics**, evidence from lessons observed and analysis of work confirms that both infant and junior pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well. The effective and consistent approach to teaching the subject using the National Numeracy Strategy, the tracking of pupils' progress throughout the school, and the use of assessment information to provide appropriate work for pupils of different abilities are of high quality. The placing of pupils in ability sets in both infant and junior departments is having a positive effect on standards, particularly in the number of pupils attaining the above average level the end of Year 6. In **science**, analysis of pupils' work and observation of lessons show that attainment is below the national average, but all pupils including those with special educational needs make good progress. Pupils' presentation of work is good, and the school's emphasis on investigation work helps pupils to understand the scientific concepts. However, some pupils' low literacy skills and their difficulty in remembering and recalling facts, puts them at a disadvantage in test situations.

7. Standards in **information and communication technology** are below national expectations by the time pupils' reach the end of Year 2, but by Year 6 pupils reach the expected level and make good progress in all aspects. The decline from the previous inspection in the standards attained by pupils in the infant department reflects the special educational needs of pupils who have difficulties, because of their low literacy skills, in following the complex commands of computer programs. In addition, very few pupils have experience of using computers at home and are dependent on school resources to consolidate learning.

8. Pupils' levels of attainment in the other subjects of the national curriculum are generally in line with national expectations. In **art and design** in the infant classes the standards of work are above those expected nationally for pupils at the end of Year 2. By Year 6, pupils attain the nationally expected level, but their progress is limited by the reduced amount of time available for this subject on the junior timetable. All pupils achieve well in this subject and standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. In **design and technology**, standards meet national expectations and this is a good improvement since the previous inspection. This has been due to the introduction of national guidelines, which are now used by all teachers to help lesson planning in design and technology.

9. Standards in **history** have improved since the previous inspection, and are above national expectations in Year 2. This continues into the junior classes, especially in Years 3 and 4, but again pressures on the timetable reduce the amount of time available for the subject for older pupils so that standards fall slightly but meet national expectations. This is also the case in **music**, and although pupils perform well they do not record their work or produce written evidence of their compositions or appreciation of a range of different music. In **geography**, the majority of pupils achieve the expected standard in Years 2 and 6. Analysis of their work shows that they make satisfactory progress in the subject. In religious education, standards of work are in line with expectations throughout the school, and taking

into account the low attainment on entry, this represents good progress. The previous inspection found that standards in this subject were above average by the end of Year 2, but there is no evidence that standards have declined, and the evidence suggests that the curriculum has been expanded and enriched in the last few years. The good support given to pupils with special educational needs enable them to make the same progress as other pupils.

10. Overall, pupils' attainment in **physical education** in Years 2 and 6 is in line with that expected for pupils of similar ages. They make satisfactory progress throughout the school, and some make good progress and successfully represent the school in local sporting competitions, especially in rugby and athletics. The school has recently gained the 'Sportsmark' Award for its achievements in this area. The standards achieved in this subject have been maintained since the previous inspection.

11. Pupils with **special educational needs** make good progress and achieve well in relation to their previous learning. This has been maintained since the previous inspection. The pupils are meeting the targets set in their individual education plans (IEPs) well. The support given to individuals and small groups of pupils who are withdrawn from class has a positive effect on their learning. Individual education plans are reviewed twice a year. However, if a pupil meets their targets prior to this, new objectives are set, which ensures that they continue to make progress. The timetable for withdrawing pupils for specific teaching ensures that they do not miss the same lesson each time and are included in all aspects of school life. A learning support computer program, designed to help the pupils make progress in English and mathematics, is effectively used, and the pupils record their own results and are able to talk to visitors about how well they are doing. This has a positive effect on their progress and their self-esteem. The achievement of pupils in the special educational needs unit classes in relation to their prior attainment is good. They make good progress in both the units against the targets in their individual education plans, as they did at the time of the previous inspection. Some of the pupils make very good progress and go into their local schools when no longer needing a statement of special educational need.

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

12. The attitudes and behaviour of the children in the nursery and reception classes are very good. From the very start of their time in school, they begin to make decisions for themselves, and respect one another. This is due to the examples set by staff and the encouragement they are given. They begin to manage their own time and make choices, by being gently organised by staff to the best use of time. Because the nursery environment is superbly organised, with a place for everything marked out with colourful templates, the children quickly understand and learn to put things back as they find them. Children are therefore encouraged to be tidy, understand the routines of school, and expected to know where things are kept in this stimulating and well-ordered environment. This attention to detail continues in reception and then on through the entire school.

13. Pupils in the rest of the school have very positive attitudes, and are very enthusiastic about their school. This has been maintained from the previous inspection. Pupils are proud of it and enjoy all of the experiences offered to them. They are very pleased when given responsibilities and particularly like extra curricular activities, but would like a wider range to choose from. They value their teachers, and participate willingly and confidently in lessons and the other activities of the school. For example, during the inspection they thoroughly enjoyed a visit by an environmentalist, joined in enthusiastically and quickly understood and agreed with the reasons behind recycling materials. Pupils are very positive about learning and do their best to produce good quality work.

14. Pupils' behaviour and personal development are very good, and in lessons it is almost always good or very good. Pupils listen very well, respect and co-operate with their teachers and helpers. They develop good manners, are polite and considerate towards others. They can be trusted to work on their own or with others without continuous supervision. At times, a few pupils, and usually those who have special education needs related to behavioural difficulties, are unable to sustain self-discipline. The majority of incidents occur outside lessons, but serious, persistent bullying does not occur. There have been no exclusions during the current school year.

15. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff are very good. They co-operate amicably and show great regard for the views and achievements of their peers. They are tolerant and will often help or support others without being asked. They come to realise the effects of their actions on others through their discussions, for example, in 'Circle Time', and as a result of the advice and guidance from their teachers at appropriate times. Through religious education pupils learn to respect the faiths and lifestyles of other peoples; for example, in a class assembly observed during the week of the inspection, pupils discussed peace symbols that are used around the world and reflected on what peace means.

16. Pupils develop the use of initiative from an early age. They learn to plan their time and activities and take responsibility for many of the routine tasks in classrooms. They make decisions about how to present work, whom to work with and what kind of research to carry out and the extent of the research. In social situations they devise ways of raising money for charities. They take some responsibility for their own community, for example, through the school council, and by being librarians or prefects. It is a cause for great pride when parents are invited to witness the appointment of a prefect in an assembly. Overall, pupils make very good progress in becoming mature and responsible, and this has improved since the previous inspection.

17. Attendance overall is a little below the average for primary schools but compares very well with other similar schools in the area. The attendance of the majority of pupils is satisfactory or better, and many pupils have an excellent record. The dip in the attendance rates is due to parents condoning absence and a significant amount is because they choose to take family holidays during term time. A considerable number of pupils frequently arrive late for the start of school. Although the school would prefer pupils to come to school even if they are late rather than not come at all, the pupils involved miss assemblies or parts of lessons. This disrupts lessons and teachers have to help pupils catch up, and this adversely affects the progress of all.

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

18. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, and there are examples of very good teaching in all subjects. On the week of the inspection it was at least satisfactory in all lessons observed, good or better in three quarters, and very good in a third of lessons. This is an improvement from the previous inspection when there were fewer examples of good or very good teaching. Teachers' planning is very good. It is very detailed and all a great deal of thought is given to the different learning needs and their achievement. These needs are firmly based on the good assessment that teachers carry out. Teachers also ensure that in all lessons, such as in design and technology and history, they are emphasising the development and use of literacy, writing and numeracy skills, so that all pupils can reinforce their learning of basic skills. Teachers manage the behaviour of all pupils very well and have high expectations for good behaviour. As a result, all pupils remain on task, sustain interest in their work, display good attitudes and want to learn.

19. Teaching is good overall in the Foundation Stage. In the nursery, teaching is split evenly between good and very good but in reception it is generally good with some examples of satisfactory as well as very good teaching. All the teachers have a very clear understanding of the needs of children and some children who show above average attainment join the reception classes for lessons. When teaching is good and very good, teachers plan a wide range of activities every day and use a chart of the different resources available to ensure that the pupils use them all over a period of time. In the nursery the staff work to ensure that children are encouraged to attempt new things, such as making their own snacks, or trying foods with different and new tastes. They also ensure that they use their presence to draw them into activities so that no child wastes time. Pupils with special educational needs have their needs addressed well, through the setting of targets and the good use of support staff.

20. In reception, the teaching style is more formal because of the present mixture of reception and year one pupils. Teachers' planning takes this mixed age group into account and a variety of activities are always on offer for those pupils who are unable to sustain full attention for an entire numeracy or literacy lesson. Incidental learning about the discipline of extended listening and concentrating is good in these classes. All the members of staff have a warm and encouraging manner with the children and they take every opportunity to praise individuals who sit nicely or who work hard. All pupils have good models to copy. There is pace and purpose to all lessons and time is well used but in satisfactory lessons there is sometimes a slight mismatch between the planning and delivery of lessons.

21. The quality of teaching and learning is consistent between the infant and junior classes, and is good in all subjects. Literacy and numeracy are taught very well, and the creation of smaller groups for pupils with greatest difficulties, is particularly beneficial to teachers who are able to match the activities and learning objectives to particular groups of pupils' needs. As a result, all pupils make good progress in these subjects. In all lessons, teachers start by sharing the learning objectives of the lesson with pupils so that they understand what they will learn and all lessons finish with a session where the teacher assesses their learning by asking relevant questions. Where teaching is very good, teachers demonstrate an enthusiasm for the work and give pupils a wide range of opportunities and activities. For example, in English, all pupils are expected to read, write, gather information, and discuss their work and findings with the rest of the class. Teachers set timed targets to ensure that all pupils stay on task, work quickly and do not become bored or restless. This provides a learning environment where all pupils work hard and willingly to achieve the learning objectives.

22. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good and has been maintained from the previous inspection. The grouping of pupils by ability for the teaching of English and mathematics is particularly beneficial for pupils as they are able to learn at the appropriate level, but although they have group targets, the targets set in their individual educational plans and to address their special educational needs are not always available to different teachers, and are therefore not used in teaching. However, the practice of teachers planning together for year groups, changing objectives to meet individual needs and making good use of assessment has a beneficial effect on the progress pupils make. Lesson plans clearly detail the work for these pupils within the classes, and all staff know and understand pupils' difficulties very well.



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

23. The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception is very good. It has continued to be developed and refined since the previous inspection and covers a wide range of topics and activities, and provides very good opportunities for personal development. These are carefully planned and matched against the available resources so that, whilst play with small toys may feature across the planning for a week, every day the selection of toys is different. Children's abilities and needs are carefully assessed on entry into the school and clear records are kept of their work and progress all through the nursery and reception using the national guidance for the foundation stage curriculum. These records are colour coded to show when children master different skills and cross-referenced against other recording systems so that overall progress towards attaining all the early learning goals can be assessed, analysed and targets set.

24. In both the infant and the junior departments, the curriculum is very good, fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. It is also well balanced in that it gives all pupils very good learning opportunities in every subject to help foster their academic and personal development. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. All subjects now have detailed schemes of work that promote continuity of knowledge, skills and understanding, and teachers' plans now provide appropriate detail about how pupils of different abilities are catered for. The pupils with special educational needs, including those in the two units, have access to the same quality full curriculum as pupils in the rest of the school. The requirements of the pupils' individual statements are met well.

25. The re-grouping of pupils for English and mathematics supports their progress during the literacy and numeracy lessons. These two areas are given appropriate emphasis in the curriculum, and the strategies for both are consistently applied and well taught throughout the school. The system of setting for ability, and the way in which teachers plan for different groups help to ensure that all pupils, including the more able, are given appropriately challenging work. Literacy is well promoted through other subjects such as history, geography and religious education and the high standard of display work provides an inspiration for all. Mathematics displays often feature 'hands on' activities, such as matching shapes to the correct name, and younger pupils are encouraged to count out the correct number of pencils or scissors when replacing them at the end of a lesson. However, there is scope for some opportunities to promote numeracy to be more specifically identified in other subjects. For instance, the use of data handling in information and communication technology is underdeveloped.

26. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. The school has developed a carefully structured programme of 'Circle Time' where pupils are encouraged to share their feelings and experiences with each other. There is also a sound program for health and sex education and attention to drug misuse. The recently developed school council is very popular with the pupils, and makes a good contribution to citizenship as pupils go through the process of voting using such things as ballot boxes and voting booths. Letters from the successful candidates thanking other pupils for voting for them and outlining their 'policies', show that the process is making a real contribution to personal development and social awareness.

27. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities that are mainly in the area of sports. Plans are in hand to increase the variety of activities offered when government funding comes on line. The school makes good use of outside help, such as visiting drama groups, music groups, authors, artists and poets. Trips out of school are not as frequent,

although good use is made of the local church and an environmental centre. Year 2 pupils have the opportunity to go on a residential visit to an adventure centre each year, which is linked to the curriculum. Pupils are regularly encouraged to help raise money for charity, such as Water Aid, and at Christmas the pupils sing carols for the elderly residents of a local home.

28. Links with local schools are sound. Strong links exist with other local primaries, particularly through sporting fixtures and there are well-established links with local secondary schools. Pupils are given the opportunity to visit the secondary school of their choice, and teachers from those schools come to talk about life in the new school and to answer pupils' questions.

29. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, and has improved since the previous inspection. The school has a very good ethos in which all pupils are seen as individuals and are positively valued. The school provides a secure, calm and orderly environment in which good learning can take place. Many of the displays and quiet areas around school provide the opportunity for quiet reflection.

30. Pupils' spiritual development is very good, and well planned for though in the main it takes place through religious education and assemblies. Pupils are given the opportunity to explore a number of world religions and come to understanding of the values and beliefs of religions other than their own. The school fulfils all requirements for a daily act of collective worship and provides pupils with the chance to reflect on a number of spiritual issues. This was observed in a very good lesson, presented to pupils in Years 1 and 2 at the beginning of the school day, when some pupils re-enacted the story of Noah's Ark in story, mime and song. Pupils listened with real interest to the re-telling of the story with a real spiritual dimension pervading the whole performance.

31. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. A strong sense of morality underpins the aims of the school, with pupils having a clear sense of right and wrong. Pupils are well aware of the responsibility they have for their own actions, and show a concern for the well being of others. This is reflected in their local and national fund-raising for those less fortunate than themselves. It can also be seen in the 'Golden Rules' on display in each classroom, and the 'sun and clouds' and 'rockets' rewards and sanctions scheme used in classes. Pupils are very aware of the meaning and consequences of moving from the sun display to the cloud display, and do everything they can to avoid this. This makes a very positive contribution to pupils' positive attitudes towards their work and their very good behaviour in class. With its use of 'Golden Time' as a reward for good work, behaviour and attitudes, the school focuses on the rewarding of positive behaviour rather than the penalising of bad.

32. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. Pupils develop good social skills as they move through the school. All members of the school, including both teaching and non-teaching staff, provide very good role models for pupils. Pupils recognise the very high expectations made of them in terms of their behaviour and respond in a positive manner. Pupils move around the school in an orderly manner, display good etiquette at lunchtimes, respect their school environment and are extremely courteous to visitors. Very good relationships exist between pupils and between teachers and pupils. Although the school is in the process of introducing citizenship within 'Circle Time', pupils are already putting these skills into practice. A good example of this occurred during the selection of class representatives for the school council, with a simulated election taking place on the day of the most recent local elections. Pupils value the school council a great deal and feel that they are making a positive contribution to the organisation of the school.

33. The planned provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The majority of pupils share a common culture, but the school provides good opportunities through other subjects for pupils to understand how other countries and cultures differ. For example, in geography pupils explore their local environment as well as looking at a number of countries and cultures around the world. In history, pupils come to an understanding of the changing nature of English society, as well as considering other societies and cultures in the past. In art and music, pupils develop an understanding of the contribution of artists and musicians to world culture though there is a limited opportunity for pupils to consider art and music from other cultures and traditions. Although pupils are occasionally given the chance to explore poetry and stories from other cultures and countries in English this remains an area for development.

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

34. The formal arrangements for pupils' welfare and health are satisfactory overall, and child protection procedures are in place and understood by all. Since the previous inspection good improvements have been made to child protection procedures and opportunities for pupils' personal development. Parents are very pleased with the quality of care that the school provides and report that they are always contacted promptly about significant concerns. The school promotes awareness of safety but some of the more formal procedures, such as risk assessments are not formally carried out. Although the staff and governors are fully aware of the health and safety issues surrounding the field, and have spent a great deal of time trying to control the vandalism to it, a formal risk assessment has not been carried out on it. The school makes good use of the services of specialist educational and health agencies to support the needs of pupils.

35. Attendance is closely monitored and the measures introduced two years ago to improve it have been successful. The school provides a daily breakfast club, which is well attended by pupils and parents, and also has the effect of encouraging attendance and early arrival at school. However, there are a minority of parents who regularly send their children to school late. The school does not encourage pupils or parents about punctuality as conscientiously as it does about attendance.

36. The school promotes good behaviour very well through its ethos, expectations and its overall good teaching. Activities are stimulating and as a result pupils are fully engaged in their learning and thoroughly enjoy it. All teachers sustain a calm yet purposeful environment in their classrooms and consistently apply positive encouragement, praise and correction that almost always attract a high level of participation and co-operation from the pupils. School and class rules are prominently displayed and teachers sensitively reinforce them. Good behaviour is recognised and celebrated in class and in weekly assemblies. Pupils understand how they have misbehaved, the effects of their actions and how they might improve. Targets and monitoring are put in place, and the co-operation of parents is sought when appropriate. The programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education, 'Circle Time' and assemblies help pupils to understand the value and benefits of good behaviour. Most pupils are confident to report any instances of bullying that might occur, and make use of the 'Worry Box' that is available to them.

37. The school makes very good provision for helping pupils to become mature and responsible. They are expected to work conscientiously when not being immediately supervised. They are encouraged to help each other, listen to their peers and respect their contributions. They are expected to carry out research independently and to take pride in producing work that is the result of their best effort. They are given special roles such as play leader, school councillor, sports councillor, librarian, road safety officer, prefect or golden prefect. Pupils have opportunities for debate, paired and teamwork.

38. The school has successfully addressed the key issue in the previous inspection report concerning the lack of rigour in assessment procedures. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are good. The quality of the documentation to monitor and support pupils' progress is good and is used consistently throughout the school. A comprehensive assessment booklet records progress in English, mathematics, science, and information communication technology. It is well laid out and it is easy to track what the pupils have learned. The head and her deputy regularly monitor these booklets and teachers' planning. The school uses a range of assessments, including end of year tests, to set targets for the coming year and to predict what the pupils should achieve. These targets are reset appropriately if the pupils meet the targets ensuring they make continuous progress. Very good use is made of new technology to track and predict pupils' progress and to gain information for grouping the pupils appropriately.

39. Teachers make good use of assessment to inform their planning. The results of the assessments identify the work for pupils of different abilities, groups or individual targets in lesson planning well. Although all pupils have individual learning targets, in a small number of groups these are not always available to the pupils on a daily basis to remind them of their learning objectives, particularly in English and mathematics. A comprehensive marking policy guides the teachers but there is no indication in the pupils' books of how corrections or comments are followed up with the pupils and this is an area for development.

40. The school uses good procedures for identifying pupils who have special educational needs. Teachers assess pupils' progress well. The Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs is fully implemented and used well to structure the support given to the pupils. The school is well prepared for the introduction of the new Code of Practice in September 2002. Where additional help and support is needed the school effectively works with outside agencies. All individual education plans are regularly reviewed and these are used alongside the overall assessments made of pupils' progress to inform future planning.

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

41. Parents hold the school in high regard and are very pleased with the quality of education provided. The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents. These are similar to the findings of the previous report.

42. Parents are right to express a high level of confidence in the school. Those parents who completed questionnaires unanimously agree that teaching is good and that teachers have high expectations of pupils. Parents strongly endorse many aspects of the school's provision. A minority is unhappy about the amount of homework set but inspectors judge that the homework set is mostly appropriate and constructively supports pupils' learning. The school has produced a very good, informative booklet about special educational needs, what this means, and how the school can help their children. Parents are informed on a regular basis about their children's progress towards their individual targets. Annual reviews of statements of educational needs are appropriately organised and involve the parents.

43. The school provides generally good information for parents. It includes a handbook for new parents, regular newsletters, advice about attendance, and notification about special events. However, the governors' annual report for parents does not adequately describe how the school provides for pupils who have special education needs. The prospectus is clearly and attractively presented. Annual school reports describe comprehensively what pupils know, understand and can do and add helpful targets for improvement. National Curriculum test results are given in reports for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 but in other years, the reports

do not tell parents how pupils attain with relation to expectations for their age. The school seeks the views of parents from time to time, for example by the use of questionnaires.

44. The involvement of parents in the life of the school is limited. The school actively promotes the support and involvement of parents but many are not comfortable with being in school. Literacy courses have been arranged for parents that, until recently, have been well attended. A small number of parents accompany pupils on out of school trips, some help by making costumes for dramatic productions and there is generally good support for class assemblies and the breakfast club. Otherwise, the school does not succeed in involving many parents in the work of the school, other than as governors, either on a regular or occasional basis or more formally such as through a parents' association.

45. Parents' attendance at the consultation evenings is low compared to that found in primary schools, but most parents co-operate well with the school when there is a particular need. The school has tried hard to engage the support of parents in order to improve attendance and punctual arrival for the start of the school day, but has not received the response that it deserves from a significant minority of parents. The school says that it is considering starting a homework club because some pupils are not able to complete it at home.

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

46. The quality of leadership and management has continued to strengthen since the previous inspection with the professional development of the deputy headteacher and other members of the senior management team in areas, such as the teaching of literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology and special educational needs. This has resulted in them becoming a very effective school management team. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. This centres on high expectations for pupils and staff to achieve their very best in a high quality learning environment, which is also happy and caring. This is reflected in the value that the headteacher puts, not only on providing teachers with the skills, knowledge and resources to teach effectively, but also on creating a school where pupils are surrounded by high quality resources, and outstanding displays that reflect the beauty of shape and colour.

47. The aims of the school are excellently reflected in the work of the school. The school sees itself as an 'oasis' for pupils, but visitors to the school during the week of the inspection felt that the school was, for some children with difficulties in their lives, a 'life-raft'. All people learning and working in the school are treated equally and fairly, with boys and girls getting on well together, as do pupils of different abilities and backgrounds. The school is particularly successful in translating its inclusion policy into practice, especially for those pupils who attend the special needs unit classes. They are integrated into all aspects of the school and the classes are not seen to be different than any other class in the school.

48. This is a self-evaluating school that takes excellent action on the information it gathers from its monitoring of teaching, pupils' attainment and progress, and the implementation of national initiatives. As a result, the priorities for school development and improvement are excellent. They centre on raising standards, the quality of the teaching and learning and the well-being of all who work and learn in this community. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses extremely well, in terms of the standards achieved by the pupils, including different groups of pupils, and the effect that different groups of pupils have on the school's performance. For example, the school has tracked the pattern of pupil mobility in the school and has identified how many pupils are admitted to the school more than once during their school career. The school, through its very good system of tracking pupils' attainment levels, can accurately identify any pupil who is experiencing difficulties and is in need of additional

support from the special needs department, or who would benefit from different setting arrangements. This results in the learning objectives of lessons and the work being very appropriate to the differing abilities of the pupils. The headteacher knows every aspect of her school extremely well and has a clear strategic vision.

49. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are shared, and the two co-ordinators work very well together. They share a common background and approach to early years education. Planning in the nursery links very well into planning in reception and ensures that all pupils receive the same curriculum and experience a range of teaching styles whatever their groupings or the time of day they attend. Teachers work hard in reception to ensure that not only do all pupils in different groupings receive the same programme but that they also work with all the different members of staff so that they can benefit from a range of different teaching styles. Teachers and support staff work extremely well together in the nursery to ensure that all children are extended during the course of a session and the staff have an excellent understanding of what they need to do to get the best out of them. Children with special educational needs usually start in the nursery without any recognition of those needs but the staff are very quick to take positive action to meet those needs in the context of normal nursery activities. This careful and reflective approach sets the tone for a great deal of later work in the school.

50. The leadership of special educational needs is good and the co-ordinator has a good knowledge and understanding of the pupils. She works with groups of teachers when they are planning which is a good support to the class teachers. The special needs register is well organised. Pupils move up and down the stages of the register appropriately and some move off the register when they have made sufficiently good progress. The policy for this area of the school's work gives very practical and useful guidance to all staff. The support given to individual and small groups of pupils on a regular basis is well organised and has a very positive effect on their progress. The school identifies pupils at an early stage if they are experiencing difficulties. There is good communication between the staff and the governor with responsibility for pupils with special educational needs, who voluntarily spends time in the school on a weekly basis.

51. The governors are very supportive of the school. They attend additional meetings to deal with specific issues, such as the effect of the fall in pupil numbers. Although committees have named members, in practice most committees do not meet regularly. They are unable therefore to contribute to the reporting cycle that the agenda for the termly meeting includes. The head teacher carries most of the burden for running and managing the school without the close support that a well organised governing body provides. Another consequence that arises from the absence of a fully operational sub-committee system is that there is very little detailed scrutiny of the effect of any of the decisions about the school that the governors ratify. The governors are also not informing themselves fully about all the health and safety concerns arising around the site.

52. The systems for financial control in the school are very good. They go beyond the requirements set by the local education authority and enable everyone involved in the day to day financial management of the school to track every decision, invoice and cheque. As a result, formal audit raises only minor concerns. The school development plan has improved with the inclusion of success criteria. The evaluation of the cost effectiveness of different educational initiatives is well established. Best value principles inform the decisions made about all projects, such as the development of the outside play area for the nursery. Plans for the development of the core areas of the curriculum are integral to the overall school development plan. The rolling programme for the maintenance and upgrading of the school premises is just one example of how the school plans its use of resources extremely efficiently, in pursuit of a high quality educational experience for all pupils.

53. The school makes very good use of the funds available for the education of all pupils with special needs to support this development. Organisational changes and the deployment of staff have helped the head to reduce significantly the incidence of bad behaviour. The improved behaviour enables the teachers to teach more effectively and makes an important contribution towards helping pupils to make progress. Each new budget builds on well-established precedent and, where appropriate, draws upon additional funding to support 'booster' classes that further the development of pupils to excellent effect. New technology facilitates the data analysis that enables the school to set appropriate targets for itself and for the pupils. The same technology then enables the school to analyse the progress made towards achieving the targets set. Overall, new technology has a very significant effect on the work of the school.

54. The number of qualified teaching staff in the school is good. This keeps class sizes down to relatively low figures and contributes significantly to the success of teaching in the school. All staff are suitably qualified to teach the range of subjects and a number have very good matches of initial subject training to the subjects they co-ordinate. There are suitable opportunities for staff to continue their professional development. The management of staff development, including the induction and training of newly qualified teachers, and teachers new to the school, is very good. Both receive a full and well-planned programme of induction. The school has trained several members of staff to support and advise newly qualified teachers as well as the students who train in the school. Newly qualified staff in the school are highly appreciative of the guidance they receive. Teaching assistants and other staff make a good contribution to the running of the school. There is a good ethos among all staff including the site manager who maintains the school to a high standard and who also finds the time to contribute to the spirit of care in the school

55. Accommodation is good overall. Due to falling numbers there is a surplus of accommodation. This is effectively used for activities that need space such as withdrawal groups. The open plan layout encourages teachers to use the shared areas well. The quality of display about the school is very good and a great contrast to the exterior. Displays celebrate and promote learning, and in classes they are highly informative and provide a good commentary for current work. For example, the display in the middle of the school that recreates an artists' studio is magical. The information and communication technology room allows whole classes to be taught together which is a more efficient way of introducing classes to new areas of study. The library is a pleasant, but small place, which promotes reading for pleasure well. Because of its smallness it has relatively few books but there is a good number of good quality books distributed around the classes and good use is made of these by teachers and pupils. Since the previous inspection, the school has made better use of the library. In addition to timetabled sessions for all classes, pupils can reserve a space there for personal study. On the negative side the school field is unsuitable for its purpose due to its misuse by people outside of school hours who leave unsuitable and sometimes dangerous material about and who have vandalised the fencing installed at great expense to the school.

56. Learning resources are generally good. Though the ratio of computers in the school is lower than national averages this does not take into account a number of older machines that are still providing the school with useful service. There are plans to improve the ratio of computers to pupils to the national average in the near future. The outside play area for the youngest children is very good and makes a significant contribution to their progress. Learning resources are of high quality in a number of subjects and areas including art and special educational needs. The computer programme used by the school to promote learning in numeracy and literacy is well used by pupils who are eager to return again and again to the challenges it presents. Staff make good use of facilities in the local area and beyond to make

learning more interesting. For example, there are visits to local museums such as the Catalyst Museum or to scientific sites such as that at Daresbury.

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

57. The Governing Body and the headteacher need to :

1) Increase the effectiveness Governing Body by:

- ensuring that the committees hold regular meetings;
- producing and formally presenting their reports to the full Governing meetings;
- setting up monitoring and evaluation responsibilities for these sub-committees;
- evaluating the effectiveness of their decisions.

Paragraph: 51

2) Pursue with the Local Education Authority and other outside agencies the ongoing health and safety issues relating to the school field so that pupils can learn and achieve in a safe environment.

Paragraphs: 55,129

3) In addition the Governing Body should also consider, as part of their school development planning the following minor issues:

- A more rigorous approach to monitoring of the punctuality of pupils. (17,35)
- The reporting of the arrangements for special educational needs in the annual report to parents. (43)
- A more formal approach to risk assessment. (34)
- More opportunities for pupils to complete written work in music. (11, 123,125)
- An increased emphasis on multi cultural issues in English. (33,76)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	80
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	47

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	26	35	19	0	0	0
Percentage	0	33	44	23	0	0	0

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

### 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)	21.5	267
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	152

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	31
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	9	123

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	37
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	29

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.8

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.8

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	20	12	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	14	14
	Girls	9	10	10
	Total	19	24	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	59 (60)	75 (68)	75 (68)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	14	13
	Girls	9	10	10
	Total	19	24	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	59 (58)	75 (70)	72 (70)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	32	16	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	15	20
	Girls	6	6	8
	Total	23	21	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	48 (40)	44 (44)	58 (67)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	17	20
	Girls	6	7	7
	Total	23	24	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	48(44)	50 (48)	56 (62)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	305
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	5	2
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)	17.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.1
Average class size	20.5

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	195

**Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher (FTE)	22
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Financial information**

Financial year	2001
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	£
Total income	843068
Total expenditure	814239
Expenditure per pupil	2929
Balance brought forward from previous year	17570
Balance carried forward to next year	46399

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6.4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out

284

Number of questionnaires returned

90

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	33	5	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	67	30	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	48	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	31	19	3	4
The teaching is good.	69	28	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	60	34	6	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	31	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	28	0	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	53	40	2	0	5
The school is well led and managed.	58	36	2	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	40	1	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	36	7	5	11

### **Other issues raised by parents**

None

## **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**

58. At the time of the previous inspection, the Foundation Stage was very good and a strength of the school. The same judgements apply now but the Foundation Stage has improved in the meantime. Staff now track individual pupil's progress very thoroughly and their records are based closely on annotated and dated pieces of evidence, as well as half-termly summative judgements based on teaching notes. The recent development of the outside area adds substantially to the resources available to the youngest children and makes a significant effect on the quality of education provided.

59. Children attend the nursery for either a morning or an afternoon session. Attainment on entry is well below expectations but by the time that the children join reception it is only below. Children make good progress from the moment they start in the nursery. The work is very well planned and well co-ordinated between the nursery and reception. Boys and girls achieve equally well but about one child in three does not complete the early learning goals before the time they enter Year 1, and this reflects the well below attainment they have when they enter the nursery. In addition the lack of nursery education for some pupils coming into the reception class also limits their attainment.

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

60. Children's personal and social and emotional development is a focus of attention throughout the Foundation Stage. Members of staff teach the children well and they achieve more highly in this area of learning than any other, but only about half the children complete the early learning goals for this area of learning by the end of reception. As soon as they start in the nursery children learn to make choices about what snack to make for themselves. They also learn to tidy up after they have used the table area so that the next person will also find it attractive and clean. Members of staff highlight examples of good behaviour well so that the whole group has good models to copy. All pupils know about 'golden rules' and can explain them in their own terms. During plenary sessions, music helps to set the right mood and children learn to relax so that they can share all the good things that they have achieved during the preceding session. In reception, circle time resolves minor squabbles well and, because the children in the circle are quick to generate good ideas about how to resolve the problem, friendships are soon restored. Parachute games encourage co-operation between the children and they also learn to complete large pieces of artwork as a group activity. Children receive praise for every success and they are quick to recognise when others do well; all the work in the other areas of learning supports this one area in particular. Overall, teaching, and relationships between members of staff and children are very good.

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

61. Teaching is good throughout the classes but despite this only a minority of children are likely to complete the early learning goals for this area of learning by the end of reception. Many children enter the nursery with very poor speech and language skills but teachers act as good role models for language use, from the moment they greet families at the entrance to the class until the time the children leave school to go home. Children learn to listen carefully to stories and to one another and members of staff give them time to think about what they want to say before helping them if necessary. Teachers encourage the children to use the language of thinking when children talk about how and where to erect a tent and then learn to revise their plans, when things do not work out for them quite as they had foreseen.

Children sign into the nursery when they arrive for a session. They learn from this and a range of other imaginatively designed activities that writing is important and serves a variety of purposes from completing a postcard to preparing a party invitation. Songs and games create an awareness of letter names and sounds and members of staff teach the children to use the correct pencil grip when they copy or trace, so that good habits are taught early. Children who are gifted and talented go to a reception class if their skills are sufficiently advanced for them to be able to cope with the work of the older children.

62. In reception the good work started in the nursery continues because children have to learn to listen to the precise question asked and then to speak clearly in response. Those with special educational needs are reminded about the correct mouth shape to use for particular letters and sounds but these reminders include everyone so that they support and reinforce the learning of all children. The structure of the literacy hour is used to encourage children to concentrate and to introduce a variety of tasks, such as completing a book about one of the letters in the alphabet. Teachers show good awareness of phonics and use the technical language of English with confidence. Despite this good teaching many children still struggle to sing their way through the alphabet by the end of reception. Big books provide a clear focus for teaching and learning and older children generate a range of possible questions that a character in a book might ask. Making books and presenting information in them consolidates the idea of writing for a purpose. The template used by the children to make books not only reinforces ideas about the author and the illustrator but it also includes details such as the international standard book number and a bar code, so that children learn a wealth of incidental detail.

### **Mathematical development**

63. Teaching is good throughout the Foundation Stage but despite this only a minority of children are likely to complete the early learning goals for this area of learning by the end of reception. When they start in the nursery children have frequent opportunities to count and invitations to make three dough balls, for example, give this learning additional relevance. Counting songs make learning fun and teachers build on this real sense of enjoyment by creating a small pool with five green and speckled frogs in it in so that, as the children discover the pool, they start singing and counting together. Picture dominoes, dice of different kinds, computer programmes and a wide variety of other resources support the children's learning. In reception, the structure of the numeracy hour gives shape to the curriculum but never totally at the expense of other forms of discovery learning. Teachers form sets using the pupils themselves and by careful questioning reinforce the point that groupings can form around a wide variety of different criteria. This work helps to develop the children's speaking and listening skills, just as painting and colouring in numbers reinforces motor skills and number formation, as well as number recognition. Some of the older children are able to work with numbers up to one more and one less than thirty but most are working with smaller numbers and still learning about the properties of five and about how to add on three more.

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

64. Teaching is good, but despite this only a minority of children are likely to complete the early learning goals for this area of learning by the end of reception. In the nursery, children look after the flowers and plants they are growing outside and tell visitors what they are. They know what part of the world chocolate comes from, and can describe what will happen when it is heated. Because this work grows out of their main book for the week, they are able to draw upon a wide variety of other pieces of related information. This enables teachers to make large numbers of learning points across a number of different areas. For example, mending a bicycle relates to an incident in their main book and encourages the children to share tools and take turns with a popular activity. Construction toys of different kinds are



available every day and these promote some longer conversations than usual between the children about the way to set out a track or why things go one way rather than another. Children acquire a good understanding of road safety through outside play opportunities, and the school sets challenging tasks that involve the children making broomsticks and tripod stands. This gives them an opportunity to show their ability to solve problems, and enables teachers to assess the depth of their understanding. In reception, the greater formality of the curriculum develops science as a separate subject, but otherwise the children have an equally wide range of activities to explore to those on offer in the nursery. The quality of planning for the activities in reception builds on the records shared with the nursery and ensures that are more demanding for the older children. In the nursery, for example, children explore different computer programs but in reception they use computers to develop their own illustrations of letters in the alphabet.

### **Physical development**

65. Staff in the nursery teach the children how to use the fixed apparatus outside with care and show them how to jump and land on both feet so that their legs absorb the shock of landing. In reception, work in the hall, takes this further by asking the children to reflect on how their bodies feel after jumping and hopping. The children also know the purpose of a warm up. Teaching is good but despite this only a minority of children are likely to complete the early learning goals for this area of learning by the end of reception. Throughout the classes, children are well supervised and whenever there is any reluctance to join in an activity, teachers are very skilful about how they set about including the child concerned. A full range of games equipment enables the children to use balls of different sizes, quoits and golf clubs as well as bicycles and scooters. Fine motor skills are developed using inset boards, threading cotton reels and general artwork and design technology. Links to other curriculum areas are strong and balancing a basket of fruit on your head was one such challenging activity that arose from the book of the week in the nursery.

### **Creative development**

66. Teaching is good throughout the key stage but despite this only a minority of children are likely to complete the early learning goals for this area of learning by the end of reception. In the nursery there are plentiful opportunities for the children to develop in this area of learning. They use cutters and rollers of different kinds and they paint silhouettes in the style of an African painter using carefully prepared backgrounds. All painting is based on the use of primary colours plus black and white and the discipline that this imposes sets the direction for the entire school. Children make clay pots and play with puppets. Teachers use puppets as aids to reinforce teaching points and then the children play at being teachers using puppets so that learning goes on all the time and children can explore new ideas in role play. In reception the formality of dressing up as Victorian schoolchildren supports the learning objectives of the lesson but also gives the children plenty to talk about with visitors. The cuddly toy mascot in reception has a wide variety of special things made for him including beds and vehicles and this linkage between tasks and what appeals to children is at the heart of this area of learning as it is of the others. Not only does it reinforce good learning that is relevant to the children, but it also makes the start to schooling exciting and fun.

## **ENGLISH**

67. Since the previous inspection the school has worked hard to improve the English curriculum so that all pupils have the best possible chance to achieve their full potential and make good progress. The majority of pupils enter Year 1 with below average skills in all aspects of language and literacy. Despite the good progress made in both key stages, standards in English at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 for the current group of pupils remain

below average. This is reflected in the 2001 tests, where attainment in reading at age seven was poor in comparison to national averages, and well below average when compared to similar schools. Pupils' attainment in writing by the time they are age seven is likewise below average. By the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment in English is below average, though the test results show that attainment is average when compared to school with a similar intake. However, standards achieved by pupils must be set within context of the school intake, with nearly half of pupils being on the register of special needs. Attainment is also influenced by the high mobility rate in the school, with many pupils arriving at and leaving the school from both key stages, and sometimes more than once.

68. Evidence from the work seen during this inspection suggests that the overall standards are still below average in Years 2 and 6, although more than half the pupils reach the levels expected for their age. This is because the number of pupils with special educational needs in each year group is high. Analysis of pupils' written work indicates that overall standards in English have improved since the previous inspection. This is despite the fact that there is nearly double the number of pupils with special educational needs in the school than at the time of the previous inspection. Evidence from lessons observed and analysis of work confirms that both infant and junior pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well. There are no significant differences in the performances of boys and girls.

69. Pupils enter Year 1 with below average speaking and listening skills. They are generally good listeners, though they can be easily distracted if they do not always understand what is expected of them in lessons. Teachers use good questioning skills to ensure that pupils make an active contribution to oral activities. Simple role-play activities are used in an effective manner to promote speaking and listening skills both within English and other areas of the curriculum. A good example of this was observed in geography with pupils taking on the roles of the inhabitants of the island of Struay, and being expected to answer questions about their lives on the island. Despite this good provision, many pupils, including those with special educational needs, still find it difficult to articulate their ideas at length and speak in clear extended sentences. Attainment in speaking and listening by the end of Year 2 is below average.

70. Pupils continue to improve their oral skills as they move through the junior classes with regular opportunities for them to discuss and plan their work in pairs and small groups. Teachers are demanding in their questioning skills. They challenge pupils' initial responses and encourage them to speak at length and in more detail. By the time they are in Year 6 most pupils are confident in their ability to talk in an informal manner to their friends, teachers and visitors. They are less secure in their ability to structure their ideas in a logical manner and speak at length in anything like a formal situation. Because of this pupils' speaking and listening skills at the end of Year 6 remain below average.

71. Many pupils, in particular the large number with special educational needs, arrive at school with a limited understanding and access to books. Reading skills upon entry into Year 1 are well below average. Despite this pupils make good progress in their reading, with additional support being given to pupils with identified reading concerns. Teachers place an appropriate emphasis on the teaching of phonic skills and understanding and use a number of structured reading schemes to develop reading. Guided reading is well promoted in order to develop pupils' reading for comprehension skills, with the home school reading links making a positive contribution to pupils' reading skills. Despite this good provision, whilst many higher attaining pupils achieve standards in line with expectations, reading overall at the end of Year 2 remains below average.

72. Pupils continue to make good progress in their reading skills as they move through the junior classes. Pupils are given the opportunity to read a good range of poems, stories and non-fiction materials, although there are limited opportunities for pupils to read pre-twentieth century literature, poetry and stories from other cultures and the plays of Shakespeare. A number of high attaining pupils have high order reading skills. They read regularly at home, borrow books from local libraries and receive books as gifts. In contrast to this many pupils read only at school and have problems in fully comprehending the nature of the characters, stories and issues in the books they read. Pupils generally have good library and retrieval skills. The school uses guided reading activities to promote reading for understanding. All pupils are given the opportunity to select books from the school library and class book boxes, and regularly engage in silent reading activities immediately after lunch. Pupils in the junior classes are given the chance to read some challenging texts as a whole class. These provide pupils with a very good stimulus for some imaginative writing activities. Despite this very good provision overall reading skills at the end of Year 6 remain just below average.

73. Attainment in pupils' written work upon entry into Year 1 varies considerably and can range from those pupils with special educational needs making meaningful marks on the page, to those higher attaining pupils who can already join together two or three brief sentences to convey information or tell a short story. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils and provide them with regular opportunities to develop letter formations and handwriting skills, and to focus on basic English skills relative to their age. Pupils are given the chance to write in different styles. They write about events in their daily lives and re-tell in a written form the stories they have read, or had read to them in class. Pupils also write short informal letters to their friends, develop an understanding of rhyming words and produce their own simple four-line poems. Pupils achieve well in relation to their prior learning in their written work, though overall attainment in writing remains below average.

74. Pupils continue to make good progress in their written work as they move through the junior classes. Pupils produce a good range of written work and can write for different purposes, in different styles and with a specific audience in mind. Pupils produce a good range of poetry, write book and film reviews and produce diary entries and newspaper reports. They write informal letters and letters of complaint. They create a number of brochures and produce a good range of instructional, descriptive and creative essays. Some very good practice exists in the junior classes with pupils producing a wide range of imaginative and challenging writing activities in response to their whole class readers. These include writing diary entries, letters between characters, turning parts of books into play scripts, writing imaginary backgrounds to characters' lives, and producing full-page newspaper reports about events in the book they have read.

75. There are limited opportunities for pupils to respond in a written manner to pre-twentieth literature, literature from other cultures and traditions and the plays of Shakespeare. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to improve their work through the use of drafting and re-drafting skills. Handwriting and presentation is good. Despite this good provision overall standards in written work by Year 6 are below average.

76. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is good, with some very good examples of teaching. Lessons are well planned, organised and managed. The school has responded well to the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, with teachers implementing the literacy in a very effective manner. Lesson objectives are shared with pupils, with work being matched to meet the abilities of pupils. This enables all pupils to make progress in their learning. Teachers make good use of time and resources, and work well with classroom assistants to support pupils with special educational needs in their learning. Learning objectives are reviewed at the end of lessons to see if they have been

achieved, and opportunities are given to enable pupils to share and celebrate what they have achieved. The good learning, which took place in virtually all lessons observed, owed much to pupils' positive attitudes towards their work, their good behaviour and their ability to work with sustained concentration.

77. Where teaching is very good, teachers demonstrate a personal enthusiasm for the work in hand and provide pupils with the opportunity to explore all English attainment targets within a single lesson, with the learning in one activity supporting the learning in another. Timed targets are used in an effective manner to ensure that pupils stay on task and that lessons are brisk and purposeful. This provides an active and rigorous learning environment where pupils work willingly and hard to achieve the known learning objectives and to please teachers with their work.

78. Leadership and management in the subject are good. It is led by two well-informed and forward thinking co-ordinators who, along with all other members of staff, are clearly committed to the raising of standards in English within the school. The school uses a good range of documentation to guide teachers in their planning of the subject, adapting National Literacy Strategy documentation to form its scheme of work. The curriculum provided for pupils is broad, balanced and imaginative. Although teachers regularly mark and correct pupils' written work, pupils do not correct their own errors and opportunities are lost for pupils to learn through their own mistakes. The school uses good assessment and recording procedures for English to track pupil's progress over time and to provide them with individual targets for improvement. The subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' social and moral development, with good interactive learning taking place in classes as pupils discuss and write about a number of contemporary and moral issues.

## **MATHEMATICS**

79. Since the time of the previous inspection the school has worked hard to improve still further the way the mathematics curriculum gives all pupils the best possible chance to achieve their full potential. The National Numeracy Strategy is now firmly embedded in policy and practice, the tracking of pupils' progress is consistent throughout the school, and the use of assessment information to target work appropriately for pupils of different abilities is of a high order. The information is used to place pupils in ability sets in both infant and junior classes, and this is having a positive effect on standards, particularly in the number of pupils attaining the above average Level 5 in the tests at the end of Year 6. The overall improvement is not reflected in the average marks for these national tests because of several factors, including the exceptionally high number of pupils with special educational needs, and high pupil mobility.

80. In 2001, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level for their age at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6 was below the average attained by similar schools. Evidence from the work seen during this inspection suggests that because of the number of pupils with special educational needs in each year group, the overall standards are still below average in Years 2 and 6, although the majority of pupils do reach the levels expected for their age. If the high number of pupils with special educational needs is taken out of the equation the results look very different. In the tests taken at the end of Year 6 last year, almost three quarters of the pupils not on the special needs register reached or exceeded the expected level. The school has closely analysed the results of these tests, and taking into account the factors already outlined, the targets set for the next two years are challenging but realistic. Evidence from lessons observed and analysis of work confirms that both infant and junior pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well. There are no significant differences in the performances of boys and girls.

81. From reception class onwards, there is a strong emphasis on practical activities that encourage pupils to think for themselves. For example, in one lesson Year 1 pupils who had previously found that large objects weighed more than small ones, were presented with a selection of large light objects and small heavy objects. They soon discovered that many very small objects weighed more than a large balloon! By Year 2 pupils are confidently explaining how they can use number with such statements as, 'When we double a number we add on the same number to it.' They are carrying out number investigations which give scope for the more able to extend their understanding. For example, in the task to find everything they could about the number 222 many gave a wide variety of answers such as 'more than 200' or, 'an even number' or, 'double 111'. They are working with simple fractions and some can confidently halve multiples of 10. Most are beginning to understand the place value of each digit in a number and can order numbers up to 100. They know the mathematical names for common two and three-dimensional shapes and most can describe their properties including the numbers of sides and corners.

82. In Years 3 and 4 the pupils build on the confidence gained in the early years, and many enjoy the challenge of the subject. For instance, in one lesson pupils competed against each other to give the fastest answers to times table questions. They enjoyed the competition and were generous in their applause for the winner. This air of excitement was carried through to the next part of the lesson where they were using multiplication to check their answers to division sums. By Year 6 most pupils are working confidently with decimal fractions and most can carry out all four operations using mental and written methods of calculation. The more able know how to use written methods to find the answer to long multiplication and division sums, some involving very large numbers, and can check the answer by estimating and by using a calculator. They understand and can use an increasing number of mathematical words, such as factor, multiple and square. They measure angles accurately in degrees and use negative numbers in context, such as when working with co-ordinates. Most know and can use with confidence the appropriate units to measure length, mass or area, and can record or interpret data on pie charts or line graphs.

83. The quality of teaching and learning in the vast majority of the lessons is good or very good. A key element in this is the thorough planning that enables work to be carefully targeted at pupils of different abilities. Even though the pupils are taught in ability sets, work is planned for different groups and sometimes individuals within the set, so that it is rare to find a pupil being given work that is too easy or too hard. Good use is made of the generous pupil/staff ratio to give extra support where needed in small groups outside the classroom. Mathematics targets are identified on individual education plans, but because these often remain with the class teachers rather than following the pupils to their groups, these are less effective than they might be. On the odd occasion when the assessment is not sufficiently rigorous the effectiveness of the lesson is reduced. For example, in one lesson the task involved pupils working with numbers to three decimal places despite the fact that many were unsure of the function of the decimal point. Another important factor in the good teaching is the way teachers are very skilled at encouraging pupils to think for themselves and to work out their own ways of solving problems. In every class pupils are encouraged to explain their thinking and use correct mathematical language.

84. In the best lessons there is a sense of excitement and fun, which in turn leads to high motivation by the pupils. Most thoroughly enjoy mathematics lessons and behaviour is invariably very good. From the youngest upward, pupils show great maturity in the way they co-operate and can work independently when required. This enables the teacher to use time to maximum effect by focussing on one group for an extended period without being interrupted. In the rare lessons where this routine was not as well established concentration was harder and the effectiveness reduced. The subject makes a good contribution to social

and moral development in the way that pupils take responsibility for their own work, co-operate sensibly and appreciate each other's efforts.

85. Leadership in the subject is good. The co-ordinator monitors standards by looking at planning, sampling work and through regular weekly meetings. She analyses all the tests in detail and makes sure that staff are aware of potential weaknesses or gaps. She also ensures that resources, which are of good quality, are looked after and kept up to date, and provides help and guidance to staff, both informally and through in-house training.

## **SCIENCE**

86. Since the time of the previous inspection the school has worked hard to improve the quality of this subject within the curriculum and so that pupils can achieve their full potential. Teachers have increased their use of investigation and this is now satisfactory though the range of tests is still sometimes too limited.

87. In the 2001 assessments tests for pupils in Year 2 and in Year 6 the standards of attainment were below the national average. Only a small number of pupils in Year 6 reached the higher Level 5. This was lower than the number gaining this level in mathematics and English, where the effect of the setting arrangements, booster groups and the national teaching strategies are having a very positive effect. The inspection findings, based on analysis of pupils' work and observation of pupils working in the classroom, reflect that standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are below national averages.

88. By the end of Year 2, pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. Pupils can identify electrical appliances in the home and are aware that electricity can be dangerous. They investigate electricity in the world about them and use drawings and text appropriately to record their observations. The presentation of their work is good, and it is clear that they take pride in it. Teachers put appropriate emphasis on teaching through investigation and this is something that excites and engages pupils' interest and attention. Pupils investigate simple electrical circuits and discover those combinations that produce light in a bulb. They record their findings in diagrammatic form. Teachers are aware of difficulties many pupils have in literacy and, as a consequence, make sure that pupils are given every support to record findings in clear, logical forms. This is demonstrated well in the matrix teachers supply for pupils to record healthy or unhealthy foods in their diet or to show the metamorphoses of tadpole to frog or caterpillar to butterfly. These provide pupils with good records for future reference, and demonstrate clearly what has been learnt. Pupils make good progress in learning the characteristics of animals and know that humans are another form of the genus. Pupils are accurately using a number of scientific terms, such as evaporation. With the teacher's prompting and help they are making predictions as they conduct simple experiments.

89. By Year 6, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in acquiring scientific skills knowledge and understanding including investigation. They gain a basic understanding of insulation and conduction in relation to electrical circuits. They make predictions and explore what will happen if, for example, a longer or shorter wire is used in a simple electrical circuit. Teachers stress the importance of investigation in the scientific process. For example, in a topic about light pupils look at the overhead projector and investigate the ways in which it functions. This topic broadens pupils' knowledge and understanding well by incorporating the investigation of mathematical aspects, such as angle. Pupils extend their knowledge of healthy eating to the concept of a balanced diet. Most know that plants need nutrients to grow and that they need sun and water to complete this process. They express interesting ideas about ways in which plant life has adapted to

surroundings. Year 6 pupils know that a test must be fair to be valid though they do need a lot of support from teachers to set up experiments.

90. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils' enjoyment of the practical side of science is evident and contributes well to their good progress in the subject. The behaviour of pupils is very good in most lessons and this can be directly attributed to good behaviour management and to small classes. The good behaviour means that pupils can be trusted to work in small groups on their investigations. This they do well, talking purposefully to each other and maintaining concentration on the task. The structure of lessons is good. They always begin with short introductions that clearly set out the work for the day. Pupils are left in no doubt as to the direction of their learning. Teachers question pupils well, prompting them to think carefully about their responses. This makes a good contribution to the development of literacy skills. Lessons end with a session that recalls what has happened during the lesson and places what has been learnt in its context. Overall planning of science is good and this means that lessons and topics build meaningfully on what has gone before. Marking is mainly encouraging, but sometimes misses opportunities to point out ways in which a pupil can improve. Assessment by teachers is good and is used to modify the planning of lessons. Teachers set homework when appropriate to reinforce learning in science.

91. Since the previous inspection, schemes of work based on national guidelines have been successfully introduced. The teaching of science now lays appropriate emphasis on investigation though this is still not as strong an area of the science curriculum as it could be. The school recognises this and has set aside one of its training days for science investigation. Assessment of pupils' work is good. There are end of unit tests and teachers keep detailed checklists of pupils' progress through the units. The information gathered is appropriately analysed to see whether pupils are making suitable progress.

92. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator. Resources are good and support investigation work well, but there is only limited evidence of pupils using computers to record their work using, for example, spreadsheets or in research. The school has identified this area as one for development. Good use is made of visits and visitors to make learning more meaningful. The school nurse helps with aspects of health education and this makes a useful contribution to the science curriculum. A good number of pupils have visited the scientific facility at Daresbury and this has helped to underline for staff and pupils the importance of the investigational process in science teaching and learning.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

93. The school's provision for art and design is good, and has been maintained since the previous inspection. The standards of work seen were above those expected nationally for pupils at the end of Year 2. However, because of the limited amount of time available for art, particularly for the older pupils, they are in line with those expected nationally at Year 6 rather than above. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. This is in line with the previous inspection. There are high quality displays of pupils' work throughout the school, which demonstrates their skills and ability to use a variety of techniques and materials. For example, a high quality display in the entrance hall showing Van Gogh's study with paintings of sunflowers, with contributions from all the classes, including the nursery children, using a wide range of media, including oil pastels and painting on acetate. There are examples of older pupils, painting in the style of Picasso and Turner, using a range of materials and media to very good effect. The pupils' work on display in classrooms is well annotated which is a good reminder to the pupils of the materials used in creating them. Computer programs are used satisfactorily across the school for art, particularly a drawing program for the younger pupils and a publishing program for the older pupils.

94. By the end of Year 2, pupils are able to mix primary colours, draw, and paint from direct observations. They use different materials with confidence, for example, air-drying clay, paper and tissue paper to make three-dimensional sunflowers. They draw miniature portraits, which supports their work in history, and use dough and air-drying clay to support work on how materials can change in science. They understand how to mix the three primary colours, blue, red and yellow to make a range of secondary colours. From nursery age, the pupils use just the primary colours, black and white, so they learn to mix colours from an early age. There is a very effective display of colour wheels showing pupils the results of mixing colours, which is a good reminder for them. They use a wide range of techniques to produce good quality results, for example they use graphite and charcoal to make pictures with different textures.

95. By the end of Year 6, pupils work confidently with a wide range of materials, including watercolours, plaster, batik, pastels, charcoal as well as paints and pencils. The pupils from Year 3 onwards have sketchbooks, which they use to make drawings, although these are not annotated describing the methods or materials used. The pupils do not use them sufficiently as working documents for developing projects although the books do show a satisfactory progression in the use of different media. The sketchbooks include well-executed still life drawings done in pencil as well as sketches of designs. A visit to a felt-making factory for Year 3 pupils inspired them to make felt when they returned to school, then paper, resulting in them making a book with a felt cover, through which they learned to use and link a variety of different artistic skills. The choice of materials available for the pupils to work with is of high quality throughout the school; this helps their personal development in making decisions about what they should use for a particular project. Effective use is made of art to support other subjects well, for example the drawing of Egyptian tomb masks to link with history. The pupils discuss the shape of the mask and learn to draw a face in the correct proportions. In English, the older pupils have created a 'Cloth of Heaven' display, which uses mixed media very well to create a collage, to illustrate the poem. The older pupils have created a good display, showing how Harry Potter would look if drawn by Klimt, which show imagination and humour. In discussion with the pupils, they expressed how much enjoyment they got from art and they are able to make realistic evaluations of their work, knowing what they can do well and what they would like to do better.

96. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Planning is good, linked with the comprehensive scheme of work and supports the pupils' work and development of skills. The older pupils show confidence in drawing accurately, they are well guided by the teachers and are prepared try and retry their initial drawings until they are satisfied with them. The pupils work with great concentration and enthusiasm. The teachers develop the pupils' independence skills by giving them responsibility for getting and choosing their own media, for example, choice of pencils. The objectives of the lessons are explained clearly and the teachers demonstrate with confidence. Pupils use a variety of techniques when drawing an Egyptian tomb mask. For example, they use shading, hatching and smudging to give different textures and density to their drawings. The pace of the lesson is good, encourages the pupils to concentrate well, and gives them time to complete their work without rushing. The teachers intervene at appropriate times to develop skills, for example encouraging the pupils to study the proportions of the face they are drawing. Planning for extension activities is good ensuring that the more artistically skilled pupils have additional work that extends their techniques, for example focussing on different features in a face. The younger pupils discuss the texture of wet clay and are able to manipulate it well, even though it dries out quickly. In the lessons where teaching was good pupils were encouraged to extend their vocabularies by describing the texture, for example, as 'slimy', and good discussion centred around the differences in using clay and plasticine. As a result of this discussion the pupils learned that by adding a little water, the clay remained flexible for longer. The pupils work together well



and are confident in making judgements about how much they like the shapes they have produced.

97. The curriculum is good and takes account of the National Curriculum and the programme of study document. The co-ordination is very good, the co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge which is used through in-service training and discussion with teachers to give them confidence to teach art well, which has a positive effect on the development of pupils' learning. The resources for the teaching of art are of a very high quality and range and these are used well to support teaching and learning. The pride and care with which the pupils' work is displayed around the school reflects how much the staff value it. These displays have a very positive effect on the school environment.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

98. Standards in design technology meet national expectations in all classes. This is good improvement since the previous inspection when standards were judged to be below national expectations. The progress that has been made is largely due to the introduction of national guidelines to guide planning in design technology. In the previous inspection there was insufficient emphasis placed on the design elements of the subject particularly in the older age range and this has now been largely rectified.

99. By end of Year 2 pupils are designing and making cushions in fabric following the design process set out in the National Curriculum. With the teacher they research existing designs and choose those that they find most attractive. They find out about ways in which they can apply pattern to their own product and produce step-by-step plans for the making phase. When they look at making appliqué shapes they use templates to ensure that all shapes are of consistent size. They are given the choice of gluing or stitching their shapes to the cushion. They then successfully complete a guided evaluation of their work. In a topic on vehicles that involves investigation of basic design concepts, such as form and function, pupils produce sound labelled drawings. They examine a sack barrow and a wheelbarrow, and through discussion decide on the differences and similarities between them. They gain satisfactory knowledge and understanding of mechanisms when they make a model wishing well.

100. By end of Year 6, pupils make good progress following the design process when they research lighting in a project inspired by the Harry Potter books. This makes a useful link with their literacy. They produce sound ideas boards with the images they collect and from these they derive their final designs. Their design drawings are appropriately annotated and communicate their design intentions well. In guided evaluations they produce sound answers to questions such as 'How did you change your design?' and 'Does your design fit the need?' Year 6 pupils work with a sound range of materials including food. They produce Harry Potter cakes. There are elements of design in this project as pupils research and choose the basic recipe for the cake and then decorate it. They design and make musical instruments in a project linked to science. In the initial stages they explore ways of making sounds and then research the materials they might use to produce them. Though pupils follow the broad outline of the design process, they are not expected to record their progress through it in a consistent way across the projects and across classes. It is difficult to see from any of the folders just what pupils have worked at to produce the final product.

101. The quality of teaching and learning is good in design technology. Teachers discuss projects with pupils at every stage to increase their knowledge of what they are learning. Projects often begin with a good discussion session that produces lots of ideas that contribute to the design process. Pupils are prompted to discuss the properties of materials and suggest which are the best for the job. Teachers and pupils discuss factors such as the

equipment that might be needed in the making of the products. In Year 5 in a challenging topic to design slippers pupils are expected to offer ideas about the durability of the soles, the appeal of designs to the various age groups and safety issues relating to the making. These sessions help pupils form wider views of design and the manufacturing process and to see design as something that is always around them in the man-made world. In choosing to set topics in the context of the Harry Potter books teachers are offering projects that already have an element of excitement. This helps engage pupils' interest at an early stage. Teachers organise pupils well, often in pairs and groups, which helps their social development. Behaviour is not a problem in classes and learning proceeds without interruption. Teachers successfully promote basic skills such as sketching to design. Safety and hygiene are always prominent considerations in teachers' planning for and management of lessons.

102. The subject is well co-ordinated. The improvement since the previous inspection can be directly attributed to the successful introduction of national guidelines for design technology. These have helped to ensure that all elements of design technology are planned for and taught. Though there is inconsistency in the way pupils record their work, there are examples of good practice in this area in the school and this can be more widely shared. The school recognises the need to develop design technology further and has planned to produce an action plan for the subject to guide development over the next year or so. One element that is to be considered is the development of assessment procedures in the subject so that the progress of individuals can be monitored. Some aspects of design technology make a good contribution to the cultural development of pupils, in particular the planned Greek Week during which pupils will experience the delights of Greek cuisine.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

103. Pupils make satisfactory progress in geography and achieve standards in line with expectations for their age. The good support given to pupils with special educational needs enables them to make the same progress as all other pupils. The school has addressed the issue concerning the lack of a scheme of work through the introduction of a well-structured scheme which addresses all areas of the National Curriculum. Standards in the subject have been maintained since the previous inspection.

104. Geography is linked to an overall class topic taught in the infant classes. Good cross-curricular links exist in topics with the geography work in Years 1 and 2 being linked to their study of the Katie Morag stories and her life on the island of Struay. Through the good use of the stories and colourful illustrations pupils develop a simple understanding of the natural and man-made features of the island of Struay and draw comparison with their lives and links with the locality of Widnes. The very good use of role-play activities made a positive contribution to the lesson observed, with pupils being hot-seated in the role of the inhabitants of Struay about their lives, and the facilities available to them.

105. Pupils in Year 5 displayed an effective understanding of land use in Widnes and the surrounding area and were able to record and evaluate their findings. The good range of differentiated resources, principally photographs, provided by the teacher enabled the pupils to make progress. Pupils worked in a collaborative manner in this activity, and listened to, and valued, each other's ideas, before deciding how best to record their evidence. In a similar activity in Year 6, pupils explored primary, secondary and tertiary resources in Widnes, and used this knowledge to draw comparisons between Widnes and the nearby seaside town of Southport. The satisfactory progress was helped by the pupils' ability to work with sustained interest and concentration.

106. Analysis of work indicates that the school provides pupils with the opportunity to cover all geography topics in a reasonable depth. This can be seen in a Year 5 and 6 topic on

'Water'. Pupils identify the availability and use of water around the world. They explore the uses of water in the home, industry and leisure facilities. Some of the written work for this topic, for example, the pupil's individual water diaries, is of an extended length. Pupils' involvement in this topic promoted a concern for peoples around the world who had a limited access to clean drinking water, with the school now raising funds for Water Aid to provide funds for the sinking of wells and the installation of water pumps.

107. The quality of teaching and learning in the limited number of lessons observed was satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and organised, and objectives for learning are shared with pupils. Teachers provide good introductions to lessons, set work to match the abilities of groups of pupils, and this helps pupils to achieve. Opportunities are provided for pupils to work in a collaborative manner, and to use a number of geographical skills. The final part of lessons is used in an effective manner to review lesson objectives and for pupils to share their findings with the rest of the class.

108. The subject is led by two well-informed subject co-ordinators. There is an appropriate range of documentation in place to support teachers in the planning of lessons. The subject makes a useful contribution to pupils' social, moral and cultural development as pupils work well together in considering a number of issues concerning our moral responsibility for the natural world around us and come to a better understanding of other cultures and countries.

## **HISTORY**

109. Standards in history have improved since the previous inspection. A curriculum matrix supports the scheme of work that is now in place and this ensures good coverage of appropriate topics. Additional advice, based on the co-ordinator's own experience of the subject as a non-specialist teacher, has a clear focus. Although history still has strong links with other subjects, the development of historical understanding is a theme that runs through all the planning for the subject. Attitudes towards the subject are better now than they were at the time of the previous inspection. The report of a consultant forms the basis for an action plan that will develop the subject still further, especially in the areas of the assessment of pupils learning and the monitoring of teaching.

110. During the course of the inspection it was not possible to observe any lessons in the infant classes but the analysis of work, an examination of planning and photographic records as well as discussions with staff, show that standards are above national expectations by the end of Year 2. In the early part of the junior school, standards are also good but pressures on the timetable reduce the amount of time available for the subject for older pupils so that standards fall slightly but meet national expectations.

111. In Years 1 and 2, pupils start to learn to look at evidence carefully so that they can arrange different photographs of the seaside at Blackpool in historical sequence. They dress up in role as Victorian school children and draw one another using the ornate, formal style of the period. In some extended work about Florence Nightingale and the Crimean War, pupils not only recognise that she lived a long time ago but also know that her work in hospitals changed ideas about cleanliness and nursing that are still important today. This work gains additional relevance from the imaginative way that teachers transform the home corner into a hospital ward. Older pupils compare early photographs of Widnes with recent photographs taken from the same vantage point and identify all the differences. Pupils with special educational needs talk to their taxi drivers about the changes they have seen in their lifetimes. From this work they learn at first hand about the smoke that used to hang over the town and that made people ill and buildings dirty.

112. In Years 3 to 6, pupils compare the lives of the rich and poor in Tudor times. Their study of the Romans extends to include three-dimensional models they make of themselves as legionaries. They examine artefacts in order to develop ideas about what they reveal about the ancient Egyptians and recycled, broken artefacts buried in sand give the pupils some first hand experience of the work of an archaeologist. Pupils then write up this kind of work as a 'time team' exploration, thereby linking the work in school with televised history. Pupils confront the problems of history when they have to try and categorise statements about previous civilisations and eras on the basis of insufficient information. They have clear ideas about how to find out the information they need from the resources available in school and from the Internet. They are also keen to find out and respond well to the challenge of this kind of enquiry. Pupils also respond well to the challenge provided by having to work out whether documentary evidence is a fake. Work on the ancient Greeks, by older pupils, starts from their understanding of words such as 'marathon'. It then moves quickly onto more abstract ideas, such as democracy, and pupils explore this idea in its historical context and in terms of the elections for the school council.

113. Work undertaken in the literacy hour based upon ancient legends and myths deepens the pupils' awareness and understanding effectively. Artwork in the style of the Greeks adds to the cultural understanding of the pupils when they compare their work with what is still on sale today. Pupils in the junior classes write up their work in a variety of styles and forms and work together well to interview witnesses to the changes in society since 1948. However, more opportunities are needed for pupils in Year 6 to produce extended pieces of work that give them the chance to demonstrate the full extent of their historical understanding and knowledge.

114. The quality of teaching and learning is good in both the infant and junior departments. Teachers plan their work well, and teachers in the units are part of the same planning process. They know what achievements they are working towards and reinforce the key learning objectives at different points in every lesson. However the quality of marking of pupils' work differs between teachers, and does not always enable pupils to understand how they can improve their work in history still further. All pupils have access to a very similar curriculum and, as a consequence, the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in history is good. Relationships between teachers and pupils are never less than good and pupils' interest in and attitude towards the subject are also positive.

115. The co-ordinator for the subject has a clear understanding of what is important in the teaching of the subject. She has worked hard to overcome the gaps in her knowledge of history with an enthusiasm and interest. This is an example to other staff who share her lack of specific expertise. The school has acquired new resources according to a clear plan and more will be purchased in order to broaden the range of topics that the school can cover in different years. Good quality historical artefacts are part of the displays all around the school. The school makes full use of opportunities such as the funeral of the Queen Mother and the Golden Jubilee to celebrate contemporary history.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

116. Standards in information and communication technology are below national expectations by the end of Year 2. This is an apparent decline that in part reflects the large number of pupils with special educational needs who often have problems following complex commands of modern software programs. Another factor is the comparatively low number of pupils in this age range using computers at home that utilise the software used in school. These pupils are not able to develop or consolidate skills at home. Nevertheless standards are in line with expectations by the end of Year 6 and these pupils make good progress working with a sound range of programs.

117. By the end of Year 2, few pupils use word processing software with confidence. They display poor familiarity with the keyboard and so the putting in of information is slow and progress with tasks is limited. They have a very basic understanding of control technology through entering simple commands into a robotic vehicle. They model information using simple programmes that allow them to simulate situations. Their use of databases is mainly restricted to searching for information using the Internet. They are limited to exploring information and are not able to make effective use of it.

118. By the end of Year 6, all pupils including those with special educational needs have made good progress and are reaching national expectations. Their skills in communicating information are practised using a wide range of programs. As well as newsletters, they are creating sports posters that promote fitness and a healthy lifestyle. They are also using presentational software well to produce slide shows that incorporate a range of information including sound and animation. Projects are produced using the photographic images that have been scanned in, and pupils are aware of the audience they are working for. They have acquired a sound knowledge and understanding of databases and the ways in which they are used in the world about them. They therefore have a sound knowledge of how computers are used, such as in medical surgeries and in supermarkets.

119. Pupils are aware of the need to be careful in framing questions when using the Internet and can describe efficient ways of searching for information. Though they have not used sensors to record information they have a basic knowledge of their uses in, for example, bar code readers. They have learnt a basic programming language to enable them to draw geometrical shapes on the computer screen. Using commercial programs, they model information to a satisfactory standard, and those who are more advanced have these facilities at home. For example, one Year 6 boy uses a program that enables him to plan model railway layouts, while others use programs to build theme parks in on-screen simulations that demand a high level of financial and entrepreneurial reasoning. In school, opportunities to model information are not well developed, particularly in the use of spreadsheets to model financial information.

120. The teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers make good use of a data projector linked to a computer in their introductions, using it to demonstrate to pupils exactly what they have to do. This engages pupils' interest from the beginning. Tasks are well planned, follow national guidelines and ensure that lessons build progressively on skills. Teachers' language is clear and as learning objectives are shared at the start of lessons, pupils are rarely in doubt as to what they have to do to progress. Teachers are careful in organising pairs and small groups and often make sure that pupils with better reading skills are paired with others who need help to follow instructions and, for example, to read screen menus. Teachers are careful in using the technology only when it enhances learning. For example, when they require pupils to design posters that are to be produced using a printer, they make sure that pupils sketch to design before they commit designs to the computer. Thus they waste no time in front of the screen but make productive use of it. Teachers work well circulating around classes and promoting good learning through good quality feedback. Relationships are very good and no time is lost gaining pupils' attention or reminding them of classroom conventions such as taking turns to contribute ideas.

121. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator. She is well aware of the importance of continuing professional development. Most staff have undertaken nationally funded training recently, but this has not been of great benefit to all staff and some have not had the training at all. She is fully aware of the need for further investment to secure more computers and other equipment, and is developing plans to effect this. Despite these factors there has been good improvement in the teaching and learning of the subject. The development of an

information and communication technology room has been an important factor in this success.

## MUSIC

122. The provision for music is satisfactory. The standards of work seen are in line with those expected nationally for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6. For pupils at the end of Year 2 this is the same as at the previous inspection, but at the end of Year 6, who were above national expectations at the previous inspection they are now in line. This is partly because the demands of the curriculum as a whole limits the amount of time available for older pupils to spend on music. Consequently, although they perform well, they do not record their work, nor is there any written evidence of their compositions or appreciation of a range of different music. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in performance.

123. Pupils in the infant classes develop a sense of rhythm and learn to keep time with a beat. They join in enthusiastically with the encouragement of the teacher, and sing different parts, for example, by working in small groups to make different sounds. They understand such musical terms as 'timbre' and 'tempo' and prepare a class composition of sounds for a 'weather song'. They listen quietly to music in 'Circle Time', for example, the 'Humming Chorus' from *Madame Butterfly*, and imagine what it portrays.

124. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 listen to each other carefully when they are playing instruments, identify tuned and un-tuned percussion instruments, play and sustain a rhythm. They identify crotchets and quavers and the rhythm from musical notation. They use terms such as 'ostinato' (a repeated phrase) and 'pulse' (keeping a steady beat), confidently and correctly. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 compose their own songs and put their own words to pieces of music, for example 'The Beatles' or 'Destiny's Child' song. These are performed and videoed but they do not record their observations and evaluations in books. They listen to a range of classical music, for example Beethoven, evaluate what the music is saying to them, and are asked to make pictures in their minds. They understand time signatures, simple musical notation and use descriptive words well to describe what they have heard. They can make up stories and put music to them to illustrate mood. However, they do not have the practical skills to write down their compositions either using musical or symbolic notation, and lack confidence in this area.

125. During hymn practice, which is well planned and recorded, the pupils sing with enthusiasm and gusto, although not enough emphasis is given to singing melodically. They are able to use sustained notes appropriately. They work hard and concentrate very well. All the pupils handle musical instruments very carefully and replace them in the storage area of the small hall with very few prompts. They make their own musical instruments, such as rain sticks in art and design, and using the knowledge they have gained in science, they describe how they can change the sounds of these instruments by leaving less room for the sound to vibrate.

126. In the small number of lessons seen during the inspection, teaching and learning were good, particularly for the infants and lower junior pupils. Lessons are well planned and the teachers use very good questioning to check pupils' understanding of their work. The teachers have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and because of this the pupils work enthusiastically and concentrate well. The teachers use musical vocabulary accurately and confidently enabling pupils to learn that it means very specific things, which helps them when they are performing. Good preparation for lessons and time taken with pupils at the end of the lesson to revise what they have done helps them learn well and make good progress. Where teaching is less good, not enough consideration is given to pupils' previous experiences and

skills, or how their lack of understanding of how to write their compositions down makes it difficult for them to play and for another group to perform their music.

127. The curriculum for music meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and ensures that all the pupils have equal access to music. The scheme of work is good and takes into account the national guidance. Leadership and management by the two co-ordinators of the subject are good; they guide teachers' planning and support those who have limited musical knowledge. Assessment of pupils' work is good, regularly carried out and there is a final assessment to evaluate pupils' progress and experiences at the end of each year. The accommodation and resources for music are satisfactory. There is a range of percussion instruments for the pupils to use but currently there is no provision for instrumental tuition, although this is being addressed for the coming year through the local authority setting up a bank of instruments for the local schools to use.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

128. Overall, pupils' attainment in physical education In Years 2 and 6 is in line with that expected for pupils of similar ages. They make satisfactory progress throughout the school, and some make good progress and successfully represent the school in local sporting competitions, especially in rugby and athletics. The school has recently been granted the 'Sportsmark' Award for its achievements in this area. The standards achieved in this subject have been maintained since the previous inspection. However, the condition of the school's sports field has deteriorated due to local vandalism. Although the school has spent a considerable amount of money on secure fencing, local young people still manage to gain access to the field and as a result it is continually littered with glass, rubbish and dog excrement. This constitutes a serious health and safety hazard for pupils, and places the school in a difficult dilemma of whether to risk pupils' welfare or not to offer them a full curriculum in this subject. In order to use this facility for sport staff have to clear an area before each lesson, but this cannot always ensure that all pieces of glass have been removed from the grass.

129. By the end of Year 2, pupils make good progress in gymnastics. They travel around a space using high or low movements and combine these movements to perform sequences with control. They carry out simple planning tasks, perform and then evaluate others, and are able to work harmoniously in small groups, with the majority taking turns to use the equipment. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain a satisfactory understanding of the importance of fitness training in relation to a healthy lifestyle. In a Year 5 lesson two pupils very effectively lead the warm up activities, and show that they have learnt the routines well. All pupils respond positively, listening and following the instructions well. Pupils of all abilities move well around the hall, making good use of the available space, and improve their balance and co-ordination. In games, they practice and improve their techniques for triple jump, but although they can describe how to carry out the jump some find it difficult to co-ordinate the necessary movements. Pupils' attitudes to the subject were very good across the whole school and throughout the observations undertaken. The school places a great emphasis on swimming, and as a result, the majority attain the appropriate national levels for their age.

130. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, but it does vary with the level of experience that teachers have in teaching the subject. In the lessons observed it ranged from satisfactory to very good. Many teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, and ensure that pupils understand what they are going to learn. In the best lessons, pupils, especially those who have special educational needs, are helped to learn new skills through good demonstrations carried out by teachers. This was particularly evident in a Year 5 lesson on triple jump, where some pupils have co-ordination and sequencing difficulties and where they were helped individually to improve their skills. In the best lessons the teachers ensure that

pupils have a great variety of activities. This sets a brisk pace to the lessons and ensures that the pupils' motivation is maintained and that behaviour is good. In a few lessons where teachers are less confident in teaching the subject, they spend too much time talking and explaining to pupils what is expected of them. This causes pupils, who are eager to participate in the activities, to become restless as they stand and listen. In most lessons the achievements of pupils are reviewed at the end of the session. Best practice is chosen for demonstration, such as in a Year 1 and 2 lesson on 'travelling' and 'combining movements'. This provides pupils good opportunities to reinforce their language skills and the key words associated with the activity, and therefore supports pupils' literacy skills.

131. The subject is given appropriate time allocations in across the school. It is slightly higher than average in years 3 to 6, but this is due to the importance that the school places on swimming as very few pupils have this experience outside school hours. The subject has been completely evaluated, revised and updated since the previous inspection. A very detailed and excellent scheme of work has been produced by the co-ordinator that provides all teachers with a very good framework for planning their lessons. Developments in the subject have been identified within the school development plan with an emphasis on the teaching of gymnastics, and the current in-service training for teachers has centred on the teaching of dance. The co-ordinator provides good leadership. Analysis and evaluation of pupils' skills in gymnastics has been carried out in each class, and along with the monitoring of planning has provided the school with skill levels for pupils and equal achievement between boys and girls. However, the co-ordinator has not yet monitored the quality of teaching in each class or been able to share good practice.

132. The curriculum is very good. It meets the requirements of the revised National Curriculum, and pupils are assessed at the end of each unit of work against the National Curriculum. There are good opportunities for pupils to become involved in extra-curricular activities. These activities revolve around the co-ordinator's strong leadership, good coaching qualifications and her general passion for sport. An enthusiastic team of teachers supports her. The school has identified talented performers in football and athletics, and pursues additional opportunities for them to experience and achieve in. The school is in the fortunate situation of having a very large hall for dance and gymnastics work, and the amount of resources that the school has is good. The school is well supported by the community through awards from a major retail outlet and this has provided a good range of resources for pupils to use.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

133. Standards of work are in line with expectations throughout the school, and taking into account the low average attainment on entry, this represents good progress. The previous inspection found that standards were above average by the end of Year 2 and in line by the end of Year 6, but there is no evidence that standards have declined, and the evidence suggests that the curriculum has been expanded and enriched in the last few years.

134. The emphasis in the early years at school is very much on making learning come alive by relating the teaching of Christianity and Judaism to the pupils' own experiences, and by making very creative use of role play and drama. For example, in one lesson Year 2 pupils were learning about the parables of Jesus. The story of the rich man inviting guests to his feast was brought alive by a simple dramatisation, and then related through role play to a common playground situation where one child wants to join in with another one's game. On another occasion all the infants came together to act out the story of Noah, using drama, music and singing to bring the story alive. A notable feature on both these occasions was the way that all pupils, including some with special needs, were fully integrated into the lessons. Work in exercise books shows clearly that every pupil is encouraged to interpret stories in



their own way, however young or limited in writing skills. By the end of Year 2, despite relatively poor language skills, almost all pupils have made good progress in their understanding of the Bible and the main features of the old and new testaments.

135. From Year 3 onward pupils learn more about different religions, particularly Islam and Hinduism. Again much of the learning is related to the pupils' own lives. For example, Year 6 pupils have devised their own rules to match the Five Pillars of Islam, and have compared objects special to Muslims with their own special objects. Much of the work at this stage is research based using books, pictures and the Internet, and pupils show good progress in their ability to identify the key elements of each religion. By the end of Year 6 most have a sound understanding of the differences and similarities between the religions they have studied. For example the fact that Christians and Muslims believe in one God but that Hindus worship many.

136. Overall the subject is well taught, particularly when drama is used to bring the lessons alive. All aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education are well supported in assemblies and in most lessons. There is, however, scope for more use to be made of visits and visitors, particularly to places of worship such as mosques or temples. Classes do visit the church and visitors, including the local vicar, come in to talk to the pupils but within the obvious financial constraints more could be done. The main Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter are well used to enrich the children's experience, as are the festivals of other religions such as Divali or the Chinese New Year. Video evidence shows that these occasions give every pupil in the school the chance to dress up and participate in a joyous and spiritual occasion.

137. The leadership of the co-ordinator for religious education is very good. She has a deep knowledge of this curriculum area and has been very proactive in helping to formulate both the local agreed syllabus and the school scheme of work. By emphasising the spiritual side of religious teaching she has separated it from other aspects of personal and social education, and has succeeded in giving the school a direction and purpose in its work in this area. The subject action plan effectively identifies areas for development, such as more training, updating of resources, particularly videos, and the organisation of more visits.

## **THE PROVISION OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS UNITS**

138. There are two units in the school, one for infants the other for the junior pupils, located in the appropriate parts of the school. The Infant Diagnostic Unit has 12, 11 of whom have statements of special educational needs. The junior unit has 14 pupils with statements of special educational needs.

139. The achievement of pupils in relation to their previous attainment is good. They make good progress in both the units against the targets in their individual education plans, as they did at the time of the previous inspection. Some of the pupils make very good progress and go into their local schools no longer needing a statement. The pupils in the infant unit are confident in talking to visitors, they are able to describe the characters in the book, 'Spots on Kate', and say what may have caused the spots. The pupils are keen to discuss their work and describe what they are doing. Some of the pupils select letters, for example, h, s, u, and n, and know the letter sounds. The pupils make progress in their reading skills and are able to identify the characters in the reading books and most understand that print carries meaning and that words are read from left to right. They use picture clues well to tell the story. The pupils make good progress in developing handwriting skills over time, gain more control of pencils, and make increasingly well-formed letters. In mathematics, the pupils make good progress in writing numbers and ordering the days of the week. They work well on putting the numbers in the calendar together, sing number rhymes, and are able to put numbers onto a

magnetic number stick using the numbers zero to nine. The more able pupils work on sorting cubes into groups of tens and units and make progress in understanding, for example, that 15 is one ten and five units. Less able pupils work on sorting three-dimensional shapes and can name the shapes with confidence. Others can sort different shapes of animals into groups by colour or shape, for example, all blue shapes or all a particular animal.

140. The pupils in the junior unit listen well and can make very good suggestions of words to describe a giant, based on work on a passage from the book 'The Big Friendly Giant'. They can enthusiastically recall a story and can write it in their own words. The more able pupils are expected to write extended pieces of work in full sentences, which they do with the support of a key words crib sheet. Good opportunities are given to record tasks in different ways and in different lessons, for example in history, to support their progress in English. In mathematics, the pupils make good progress but are not always accurate in their counting and estimations, particularly of coins. The pupils in both units make good progress in all subjects, many of which, for example, physical education or religious education, they join in classes within the school with pupils of the same age. Information communication technology is used well to support the pupils, particularly in English and mathematics. The younger pupils use a computer program for sorting, counting and moving pictures around using a mouse, which develops their confidence in using computers. The older pupils work on a commercial package, which has carefully graded steps and assessments to support their learning in English and mathematics.

141. The quality of teaching and learning in the units during the inspection were good overall. The teachers and support staff work well together to enable the pupils to complete tasks and succeed. All the staff have high expectations of behaviour and independence, and the pupils respond by behaving very well, completing their work and trying very hard. The staff know the pupils very well and relationships are very good which gives the pupils confidence to ask if they need help. Lessons are well paced which helps the pupils to concentrate well and not become distracted, which has a positive effect on their learning and progress. There is good planning for extension work to support pupils who complete their initial work, ensuring that time is well used during the lessons. The teachers' planning and recording of what pupils can do and in setting their next objectives is good. For example, in the junior unit the pupils have individual target books in which they record their chosen targets for the week and assess how well they meet them. This ensures they understand what they are learning and how well they learn.

142. The teachers reinforce the basic skills of literacy and numeracy throughout the day; for example, in history the pupils learn that writing, reading and spelling are part of other subjects. The staff encourage the pupils to help in clearing up the classroom after a lesson and putting away the equipment, which helps them to take responsibility and work independently. Pupils are encouraged to work in small groups or on individual work, which they do with confidence. Teachers make the lessons fun and this extends the pupils' interest and concentration, for example, choosing texts, particularly appealing to the junior age pupils to encourage their understanding of the use of adjectives. The younger pupils are able to play purposefully in pairs or small groups that the teacher encourages by choosing resources and activities well. The displays in both units are very good and are a good mixture of pupils' work and teacher led displays. The infant unit has a 'wild life hide', which reflects a residential visit to a nature reserve. The pupils can play at 'bird watching' and camping, which encourages them to remember and talk about their visit. The junior unit has some high quality artwork, drawings of the landscapes of Turner, which shows the pupils have learned to use their observational skills well. The nursery nurses and other staff who work in the units with the teachers work very well as a team. They are well prepared, have very good relationships with the pupils and are supportive with the pupils and their time is well used. Homework is used

well to support pupils learning, the infants take home a range of books each week to read with their parents and the juniors have a task at the weekends.

143. The curriculum in the unit is based on the National Curriculum and there is regular integration with the other classes in the school. At break times, the pupils from the units join the rest of the school as they do for school assemblies, which support their inclusion within the school. The curriculum is broad and balanced and the good teaching ensures that it is interesting for the pupils and accessed at a level that is appropriate for their needs. Assessment in the units is well developed and detailed and this is very well used to set individual work for the pupils, enabling them to make good progress. The special needs co-ordinator in the school gives good support to the teachers in the units for annual reviews and target setting. The unit staff work closely with the Speech and Language therapist who supports the unit staff in a way that they value very much, by giving support in the classroom twice a week. The records are accurate and detailed as in the previous inspection report and meet legal requirements.