

INSPECTION REPORT

**MEADOWBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL &
NURSERY EDUCATION CENTRE**

Atherton, Manchester

LEA area: Wigan

Unique reference number: 106425

Headteacher: Mr Jim Fisher

Reporting inspector: Mr O L Thomas
16041

Dates of inspection: 19 – 22 March 2001

Inspection number: 196820

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Formby Avenue
Atherton

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Revd G Bonson

Date of previous inspection: 28/04/97

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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16041	Mr O L Thomas	Registered inspector	Art Physical education Equal opportunities Special educational needs English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19344	Mr D W Jones	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
17711	Mrs J B Thomas	Team inspector	English Geography Religious education Foundation Stage	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught?
22578	Mr G Jones	Team inspector	Mathematics Music	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
27676	Mr M Thorn	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology History	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Meadowbank Community Primary School has 168 pupils on roll with a nursery which caters for 60 part time children from the local community and a further 15 full time with special educational needs, who are transported from across the local education authority. The vast majority of pupils come from the neighbouring large local authority housing estate, which is a designated area of high deprivation. Thirty six per cent of pupils in main school are on the register for special educational needs, 28 per cent are at Stage 3 or above. There are nine pupils with statements of special educational needs, both of these figures are well above the national average. The 60 per cent of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is also well above the national average. Attainment of children on entry to the reception class is mainly below average with a minority attaining well below what is generally expected. Not all of the children attend a pre school facility prior to entry, and on average 15 per cent of the nursery children transfer to the reception class.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school has a good number of strengths but it is not yet as effective as it could be in all important areas. The leadership and management of the Headteacher has brought good educational vision to the work of the school which is beginning to impact on improving standards in mathematics and science but this is not so for English and some other subjects where pupils' achievements remain too low overall even when their starting points are taken into account. Teaching quality is mainly good. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils' performance in national tests for 11 year olds are well above average in mathematics and science when compared to similar schools.
- The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is very good enabling rapid progress not least for those children with special educational needs.
- Teaching is good overall with many strengths in the Early Years and upper Key Stage 2.
- The pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good and support their learning well.
- Extracurricular provision is very good and enhances pupils' personal development.
- The levels of pastoral care by all staff are high and meet pupils' broad needs very well.
- Improvements to the accommodation and skilful use of grant funding have enriched the learning environment.
- The Headteacher has brought vision and clarity of purpose to the work of the school.

What could be improved

- Standards, particularly in English, ICT, RE, History and Geography.
- The use of assessment information to track pupils' academic and personal progress and set targets for improvement.
- The management of special educational needs within the main school.
- The provision for cultural development.
- The monitoring and evaluation of school policies into practice.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 1997. Since that time satisfactory progress has been made in addressing weaknesses although staffing difficulties have slowed the pace of developments. The school's staffing is now on a more even keel. The most significant improvements are that standards in

mathematics and science have improved against both national and similar school comparisons; this is not so for English where improvements are evident but still not good enough. Teaching quality has improved considerably. There is still scope for closer monitoring of curriculum delivery to ensure consistency. Curriculum planning is improving; schemes of work and policies have been written but there is still inconsistency in putting policies into practice. The governors have increased their involvement in school life; being actively involved and consulted about strategic planning. Coordinators roles were re structured in January 2001 and subject action plans have been devised. These are variable in depth and quality and some notably English require further diagnosis of needs and priorities with measurable success criteria. The school is now soundly placed to move forward at a more rapid pace.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E*	E	E	D
mathematics	E*	E	D	A
science	E*	E	C	A

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The table shows a slow but evident trend of improvement in standards in mathematics and science when compared both nationally and with similar schools, each subject having risen out of the category of being in the lowest five per cent nationally. However, the better strides seen in mathematics and science are not reflected in English where even when pupils' low starting point is taken into account standards and their achievements are not high enough.

It is important to note that the picture does not look as positive for the forthcoming year given that the cohort for year 2000 was generally more able than this current year group. The school's targets for the forthcoming year are optimistic when pupils' current work and attainment levels are judged.

The inspection finds standards in the core subjects are below national expectations for most 11 year olds except in numeracy and in science, in their knowledge of materials and their properties. In information and communication technology, pupils' knowledge of communication and word processing is broadly average but the systematic development of skills is lacking over time and so pupils cannot attain as expected in all elements of the subject. In the other subjects, pupils attain as expected in art and design, most elements of design and technology, music, physical education and in religious education in their knowledge of Christianity; pupils' knowledge of other religions is too limited. Pupils do not attain as expected in the subject skills of history and geography by the end of either key stage and their limited reading and writing skills and their use further restrict them. Pupils' ability to retain information over time hinders their attainment.

On entry to the school pupils' attainment is low particularly in their communication skills and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage but this

is not sustained consistently through the school and is satisfactory overall; pupils' achievements mirror the quality of teaching.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. They enjoy school and benefit from the security and organisation of its routines.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good and significantly supported by the teachers' vigilance in managing behaviour. Pupils settle quickly in lessons and are mainly attentive to their work
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils get on well with each other and cooperate readily when required in lessons. Levels of initiative and independence are limited.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory in spite of the many efforts the school makes to encourage and monitor attendance supported by the local authority.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Sixty four lessons or parts of lessons were observed. Fifty one per cent were good or better with 15 per cent being very good and on occasion excellent. Forty six per cent of teaching was satisfactory and 3 per cent were judged unsatisfactory.

The main strengths of teaching are thorough introductions where subject vocabulary is regularly used, high expectations for attention and behaviour; good relationships; interesting activities and good subject knowledge particularly in mathematics and of the Foundation Stage of learning. Numeracy is taught better than literacy although there are examples of good English teaching.

Areas for improvement include, for all teachers to plan work that is based on accurate assessment of pupils' needs and is carefully matched; to limit the use of photocopiable material; to ensure marking is consistent; to give plenary sessions appropriate time to check on pupils' understanding and to ensure the key skills from literacy, numeracy and ICT support the work in other subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. Extracurricular activities enhance pupils' experiences very well. The curriculum is not yet sufficiently well planned to provide continuity in all subjects. ICT does not meet statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Excellent in the nursery and satisfactory elsewhere. Good support for pupils with statements of special educational needs but there is an imbalance in the amount of support given to pupils who do not have statements of special educational

	needs in Key Stage 1 and 2. Teachers are not given sufficient guidance on matching work across the curriculum from the SENCO.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. Moral and social development are well provided for. Spiritual development is satisfactory. Cultural provision is weak, particularly multicultural education.
How well the school cares for its pupils	High levels of care for all pupils. Records of academic progress are satisfactory but personal records are in need of improvement to show the range of pupil needs. The use of assessments to track pupils' progress needs improving. The school makes every effort to work with parents although the response is often limited.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the Headteacher and other key staff	Good by the Headteacher. Satisfactory when the work of all key staff is taken into account. Recent restructuring of posts has established clarity and equity of delegation. Many staff, particularly Key Stage post holders, are recognising the need to rise to the challenges. The management of special educational needs and assessment are not as effective as they should be.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory overall save for the delivery of information and communication technology
The school's evaluation of its performance	Development planning is in place and soundly points the way forward; there is scope for more detail in the tasks and clarity on how outcomes will be measured. Monitoring of school policy into practice is not rigorous or systematic enough
The strategic use of resources	Sound overall. Funding is very well used to support initiatives, curriculum resources although improved are unsatisfactory; the use of all staff is not impacting well enough on all pupils' progress. The school is beginning to apply the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That their children like school and the behaviour is good. • The school is well led and managed and they would feel comfortable in approaching the school with problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in the amount of homework. • The information on their children's progress. • The range of activities provided outside lessons.

The number of parents at the pre-inspection meeting was 4 and 15 per cent returned the questionnaires. The inspection finds that it agrees with the positive points raised by parents. Homework provision is variable and best in the upper school although all pupils are encouraged to read at home but many do not receive the expected support from parents. The quality of progress reports is

inconsistent but mainly satisfactory; some do not set targets for pupils to improve. The range of additional activities is very good and supports pupils well.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school's performance in the national tests for 11 year olds shows a trend of improvement in mathematics and science when compared with standards nationally and with similar schools, each subject having risen out of the category of being in the lowest five per cent nationally. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The gains seen in mathematics and science are not as well reflected in English where, although improved, even when pupils' low starting point is taken into account standards and their achievements are not yet high enough or improved well enough since the last inspection. The proportion of pupils attaining at the expected Level 4 in English was well below the national average whereas in mathematics it was slightly above and in science well above. This better picture in mathematics and science does not look as good for the forthcoming year as the cohort for year 2000 was generally more able than this current Year 6 group. English looks set to remain similar to last year.
2. In the Year 2000 tests for seven year olds pupils' performance was well below other schools nationally in reading and writing and below in mathematics. However, when performance is compared with similar schools it was average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics.
3. In the Key Stage 1 national test girls fared better than boys in reading and writing, but the difference between them was far less in mathematics. In Key Stage 2, in English, boys' performance was particularly low with only one third of the boys in the cohort attaining at the expected levels. However, in mathematics the difference in performance was minimal and in science the boys slightly outperformed the girls. The school is aware of the deficit in boys' performance in English but as yet it does not have a definitive plan of how to improve it.
4. The school's targets for the forthcoming year are optimistic when pupils' current work and attainment levels are judged. The target setting process is not firmly embedded in the school's work and this too must affect standards and pupils' achievements.
5. On entry to the school pupils' attainment is low particularly in their communication skills and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They make rapid progress in the nursery and reception class, achieve well and overall many, but not all, are ready for the challenges of the National Curriculum by the time they enter Key Stage 1. By the time they leave the school pupils' achievements are satisfactory, but their progress between the key stages is inconsistent. They make good and at times very good progress in the Foundation Stage but this added value is not sustained consistently through the school. It is satisfactory with some weaknesses in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2 and then, it improves again in upper Key Stage 2. This inconsistency in progress must affect pupils' performance in the national tests and is an issue towards improving achievement and standards.
6. The inspection find standards are below national expectations by the age of 11 for most pupils in English, mathematics and science; the exceptions being numeracy and in science, in pupils' knowledge of materials and their properties, where most pupils attain in line with national expectations. These findings differ with the previous year's national test results for mathematics and science where

pupils performed well in the tests when compared to similar schools but not against national averages in mathematics although results were average in science. Evidence suggests that the ability of the cohort last year was higher than the current Year 6 although these same pupils who did well in mathematics and science did not perform well in the English tests, either when compared nationally or with similar schools. This matches well with the current findings because most pupils are not currently attaining as expected nationally or achieving in line with their prior attainment in English. In information and communication technology, pupils' knowledge of communication and word processing is broadly average but the systematic development of skills is lacking over time and so pupils cannot attain as expected in all elements of the subject. This shows little change since the last inspection report.

7. In the other subjects, pupils attain as expected in art and design, most elements of design and technology, music, physical education and in religious education in their knowledge of Christianity; pupils' knowledge of other religions is too limited. Pupils do not attain as expected in the subject skills of history and geography by the end of either key stage; their limited reading and writing skills and the use of them further restrict them. Pupils' ability to retain information over time hinders their attainment.

8. In the Foundation Stage children make good and at times very good progress; in the nursery because of effective teaching and the high level of support available and in the reception class because of the high quality of teaching and very effective classroom assistant. In Key Stages 1 and 2 in the lessons seen pupils' progress mirrored the teaching and where teaching was good or better so was progress. However, when all evidence is taken into account including discussions with pupils about their work and what they know their progress over time is largely satisfactory. This includes pupils with special educational needs in Key Stages 1 and 2. Teachers do not all make effective use of assessment information to plan and offer suitably challenging or supportive work. Target setting for individuals although begun is not well established or shared with pupils so that they may understand how to improve their own performance. This lack of planning inhibits progress.

9. The introduction of the literacy and numeracy projects has had a positive effect on pupils' attainment particularly in their knowledge of basic skills in early reading work and in numeracy, however, the use of these acquired skills in the other subjects is limited and not enough thought is given to how and when these basic skills need reinforcing or the best method to use when teachers plan work across the curriculum. Again this restricts progress.

10. The school has made very positive strides in improving achievement in mathematics and science and this is recognized in its School Achievement Award. However, its strategic planning to raise standards in English is not yet precise enough and has not resulted in raising achievement well enough in this subject as testified by the low results last year in comparison to similar schools and also the inspection findings which judge standards in English to be still too low.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. The pupils' attitude to the school, their behaviour and personal development are good. Attendance is unsatisfactory in spite of the school's efforts.

12. A majority of pupils attend school eager and willing to learn and the school makes every effort to stimulate and motivate the significant minority who do not. The lack of parental support or encouragement for this minority serves to highlight the school's success in raising self-esteem and achievement, and encouraging self-discipline. The generally good behaviour management of teaching staff has an important role in supporting pupils and ensuring an effective learning environment. When the work stimulates and challenges them the pupils respond with enthusiasm and they are eager to

contribute. During a mathematics lesson for pupils in Year 5 they were clearly enjoying the lesson and were excited to be able to offer their answers. Pupils responded well to the teachers' behaviour management in the lesson and made good progress. During an English lesson for pupils in Year 1 in their eagerness to answer questions they started to call out. They responded well to the teachers' reminder and later worked sensibly in groups.

13. Their behaviour overall supports learning and they understand the need for good conduct. Although there is a significant element that lack maturity and social values they are well managed by teachers and supported by the good conduct of the majority. There is some inconsistency in behaviour management and personal development. This is evident during lunch or recreation when the pupils following their meal leave considerable quantities of food on the floor. Supervisory staff are not sufficiently active in supporting pupils' personal development and sense of responsibility by ensuring better standards of behaviour and conduct during meal times.

14. Many pupils accept roles of responsibility and they are proud of their contribution to school life. Photographs of school prefects are displayed in the hall accompanied by pupils' accounts of their role and responsibilities. Many pupils have monitor roles and senior pupils assist in the nursery during lunchtime. The quality of relationships is good and on many occasions during lessons the pupils can be seen working cooperatively on projects, sharing tasks and applauding each other's success. Opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning in lessons are not evident. The school is active in ensuring that pupils are not affected by bullying and they are confident and secure in their relationships. They enjoy a wide range of visits to outside venues including residential courses for older pupils and they are actively involved in their local community.

15. The large nursery class has children with a broad range of development and needs. They are all settled well into school life and they play cooperatively and with appropriate independence.

16. Across the school levels of attendance are just above 90 per cent. However in reception class they are consistently below this figure. Attendance for all classes is significantly affected by holiday taking in term time, sickness and late arrival. The school is very active in seeking to encourage regular attendance and through the education welfare officer has initiated support programmes. There is however an element amongst parents who persistently fail in their responsibility to ensure the regular and prompt attendance of their child. In consequence the continuity of their children's learning and personal development is adversely affected.

17. This report accords closely with the previous inspection findings. The school is making good provision in this aspect to compensate for pupils who are disadvantaged through a lack of parental support.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching is good overall, and it is regularly very good and at times excellent in the reception class and Year 6. Fifty one per cent of teaching was good or better, 15 per cent were very good or excellent, 46 per cent satisfactory and 3 three per cent unsatisfactory. This is a more positive picture than at the time of the last inspection when less teaching was very good and considerably more was unsatisfactory.

19. When each key stage is considered separately, the Foundation Stage reveals effective teaching where children make good and at times very good progress including those who have special educational needs. Teachers and nursery nurses have a good knowledge and understanding of early learning and child development. They use language well and directly teach skills within an effective

social setting. Clear procedures, routines and expectations are established to create opportunities for the development of independence and initiative. In the nursery, the freedom of choice children have, at times, conflicts with focused and systematic learning. In Key Stage 1, teaching overall is satisfactory, with some which is barely so. It varied from one unsatisfactory lesson to some good teaching in Year 2 and for a small part of the week in Year 1. Work is not always well matched and at times lessons lose direction as the pace and challenge are inappropriate, thereby pupils waste time and gain little. In Key Stage 2 teaching is good overall but with greater inconsistency from unsatisfactory to excellent. Most teachers have secure subject knowledge but expectation, challenge and match of work are the key inconsistencies and areas for improvement. There is insufficient use of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in the other subjects and an over reliance on the use of low level, mundane worksheets.

20. The teachers' subject knowledge is secure for most subjects and is particularly good in mathematics, physical education and the later Foundation Stage of learning in communication, language and literacy. Clear objectives are set for most lessons in English, mathematics and science and these are generally made known to pupils.

21. Planning for literacy follows the structure of the literacy hour although some planning in Key Stage 1 is barely acceptable and clearly some teachers are more committed than others to the strategy. Overall the school's approach to literacy could be more effective, if there were more detailed diagnosis of weaknesses particularly in the development of writing. Good attention is given to subject vocabulary and phonics. The implementation of the numeracy strategy has worked well and has given the teachers good guidance for their planning and teaching. Several teachers have good subject knowledge and put this to effective use in raising standards. As a result standards have risen well in mathematics since the last inspection. Pupils are being taught more effectively, leading to greater understanding, productivity and firmer acquisition of subject skills. In science, teachers are working to the agreed structured programme of topics in a systematic and productive way, which has supported pupils well and helped standards to improve. However, in both mathematics and science the use and application of subject skills is a weakness and too much learning fails to give pupils opportunities to show initiative and independence in what they do.

22. Teachers expect pupils to pay attention and behave well, which they do. They encourage them to concentrate on their work and persevere with tasks. Accordingly most pupils respond very well and their attitudes to learning and behaviour in lessons are almost always good. For example, when Year 6 pupils were expected to work together in mixed gender groups to develop work on arguments for a debate on the pro's and con's of a working a six day week they responded with maturity, were sensible, cooperative and worked well to agree outcomes for presentation. This has much to do with the training they receive and the teacher's vigilance and high expectations. Some pupils in Year 4 have poor work ethics and are very immature.

23. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress when receiving support from the highly skilled staff who are committed to pupils' welfare and academic needs. Tasks are well matched and reflect the targets in their individual educational plans. However, the short term planning by teachers is not always sufficiently well tuned particularly in the foundation subjects which causes progress to slow and to be satisfactory overall. This feature of teaching also has an adverse effect on the level of challenge being offered to the more able pupils in some classes.

24. In most lessons the teachers' management and organisational skills are good and sometimes very good except in the unsatisfactory lessons. Good relationships prevail resulting in pupils who feel safe and secure in their learning. Teachers generally use questioning well to engage pupils in discussions for example, Year 5 pupils working on rhymes, rhythm and onomatopoeic words made

good progress and achieved well through the skilful questioning by the teacher which enables them to achieve well.

25. There are weaknesses in the use teachers make of assessment information in order to guide the next stage of planning and the marking of pupils' work is not helping them to improve or show them they might.

26. Pupils' achievements mirror the quality of teaching in that they start off well and then go through some inconsistency until the upper Key Stage 2. Given the good start they make within and by the end of the Foundation Stage, which shows there is potential for pupils to improve, achievement is satisfactory overall when all evidence including scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils about what they know, understand and can do are taken into account.

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

27. Although planning for the nursery does not yet make best use of current national advice for planning work for this age, it does provide a relevant and appropriate curriculum. Within the rest of the Foundation Stage, that is, in the reception class, the planned work is wholly appropriate, ensuring that within the whole of the Foundation Stage the quality and range of curricular opportunities are good.

28. The curriculum for the remainder of the school is satisfactory, although provision for Information and Communication Technology, (I.C.T.) fail to meet statutory requirements and is unsatisfactory. Within this satisfactory overall provision, there is a lack of enrichment, particularly in the Foundation subjects, for example geography, history, art and religious education, where there is little evidence of good standards of work, based on topics, which are presented with interest and excitement to capture the attention of the pupils. The case was similar at the last inspection.

29. There is breadth and balance across the curriculum with pupils being taught all but one National Curriculum subject together with aspects of personal, social and health education. Currently, these elements are treated separately. The appointment of coordinators for this subject is a positive move so that elements of the work might be better organised in order to provide clearer progression in learning which build in a more systematic way through the school.

30. The school has put the National Numeracy Strategy into effect well. It has made a positive impact on teacher's teaching and pupils' learning. This has stemmed from clearer planning, better subject knowledge and more focused teaching of basic skills. The National Literacy Strategy has not been so effectively or consistently adopted. The Strategy is in place and has helped to improve aspects of the teaching of English. Teachers often do not plan activities sufficiently well to meet the range of needs of pupils in their classes.

31. The school has completed its policy statements for its National Curriculum subjects and has adopted either local authority or nationally recommended schemes of work in order to safeguard the step by step teaching of those subjects.

32. Although the school has a homework policy and work is regularly sent home, there was little evidence of this seen during the inspection.

33. The more able pupils are not catered for sufficiently well; this is in line with comments made at the last inspection, although generally there is equality of access to the curriculum. Whilst this group

may be quite small, the lack of direct support given to these pupils and the lack of tracking of their specific progress means the school's results are lower than they would be.

34. The school makes very good provision for extra curricular activities, although some parents feel concern that the bulk of the activities are designed for older pupils. The range includes a wide selection of sporting activities as well as choir, drama and the provision of special assemblies. The curriculum is also enriched by a very good selection of visits and visitors, ensuring that the local and extended community makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. The school has been visited by a poet, painter and by a Mersey Minstrel, all of which have given some support to pupils' cultural development. Pupils have visited Pennington Flash, Leyland Farm, Wigan Rugby Football Club, together with older pupils attending a residential visit to a Lake District Outdoor Education Centre. All of these visits helped give pupils first hand experiences and have had a positive impact on their learning.

35. There are good links with partner institutions, particularly within the primary school group and the local high school to which most pupils transfer. Meadowbank also offers many students opportunities to take part in work experience activities and teacher training visits.

36. The provision made by the school to provide the pupils with personal values is varied. Provision for their spiritual development is satisfactory. Provision for their moral and social development is good whilst their cultural development is unsatisfactory.

37. The school has a commitment to teaching the pupils spiritual values within a Christian ethos. The celebration of collective worship is a significant factor in supporting this development through celebration of achievement, stories from the Bible and through their singing. Spiritual insight is not expanded through the curriculum across the range of subjects. In their artwork, music and through the teaching of religious education the pupils experience awe and wonder. However there is less opportunity for spiritual insight through other subjects of the curriculum and time for reflection.

38. The pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and the need to comply with the five basic rules for conduct required by the school. The application of rewards and sanctions is used well to foster good behaviour and encourage self-discipline. The school is very proactive in seeking to support the development of good behaviour and has a number of initiatives. The role model set by staff provides a good example for conduct and behaviour. However, this is not the case with lunchtime supervision, which does little to encourage good table manners or standards of behaviour by example or requirement.

39. The pupils are encouraged by the school's provision to take responsibility at appropriate levels for a number of activities. These include class monitor roles, assisting with setting out equipment, school prefect roles and helping in the nursery during lunchtime. They go out into their local and wider community and engage in activities that bring them into contact with residents. They have visited a nursing home and a special school and the school choir has sung for elderly residents as well as the Atherton Festival. They regularly sponsor charity collections.

40. The development of pupils' cultural values at a local level is good. They are introduced to many aspects of local culture through visits to community centres, the library and Atherton parish church as well as theme parks and visitor centres. Their knowledge of other cultures and the diversity faith and customs around the World is unsatisfactory. Some work on other faiths is evident in religious education studies however there is little evidence across the curriculum.

41. The youngest pupils enjoy their learning in an environment where they experience awe and wonder in making and modelling, seeing plants grow and learning counting and writing. They learn how to share and play together and are seen working cooperatively during their learning periods.

42. The findings of this inspection mirror those of the previous inspection, except in respect of pupils' cultural development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. The provision of care is varied. The school's provision for child protection, ensuring pupils' welfare and the monitoring of attendance is very good. Good provision is made for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are also good. Monitoring their academic performance and personal development, educational and personal support and guidance, and procedures for monitoring and supporting academic progress are satisfactory. The use of assessment information to guide curricular planning and the procedures for monitoring pupils' development are unsatisfactory.

44. The staff are caring and make very good provision for welfare and protection. The school strives to improve attendance through monitoring of records and by encouraging and supporting parents of difficult pupils. Rewards and sanctions are used effectively to encourage good behaviour and monitoring procedures ensure that oppressive behaviour is dealt with promptly and constructively.

45. Pupils are encouraged to make informed choices. They learn how to be safe from misuse of drugs; a range of visitors advises the pupils how to keep safe and protect their health. These include nursing and dental specialists, and safety officers from the police, fire and ambulance services. The school and its grounds provide a safe and secure learning environment.

46. Nursery pupils are able to learn in a secure environment where their welfare and safety receive high priority. They are encouraged to appropriate levels of independence and they are seen to be content and secure.

47. Procedures assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good, an improvement since the last inspection. The school makes use of a number of tests, which indicate standards achieved by pupils, mainly in English and mathematics. Tests for science are not well developed. Within the rest of the curricular areas assessment procedures are good only in music. The school has adopted the national tests for assessing the attainment of pupils at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5, but as yet, has not made sufficient use of the results in order to check pupils' progress and make predictions for their results at the end of Key Stage 2.

48. Children entering the nursery are assessed and their progress is carefully charted through their time there. However, much valuable time is lost by assessments not being carried out with enough frequency during normal teaching time. Some of the tests used are not standardised and therefore do not give results which could be checked against national norms and this limits the usefulness of the tests.

49. Baseline tests are administered during the first half term, which children spend in the reception class. These are used well by the teacher, allowing her to provide work suitable for the children's known abilities. Tests completed at the end of the Foundation Stage show that pupils have made good and sometimes very good progress in their learning due to well-focused teaching.

50. The provision and support for children with special educational needs in the nursery is excellent. The children feel safe and secure and participate fully in the wide variety of activities provided. Within the main school all pupils on the special needs register have individual educational plans that include appropriate targets. Arrangements for supporting pupils who have statements are effective. The high quality input by the support staff ensures that they attain standards that are in line with their prior attainment and that they make good progress. However, support for other pupils with special educational needs within lessons is less successful and the quality of provision is inconsistent. Too little use is made of the individual educational plans to inform planning or match of work to pupils' needs, which hinders their progress in some lessons. The monitoring of the planning by the coordinator is not thorough enough. Pupils withdrawn for additional sound work are benefiting from the good quality support to support their English work.

51. Results of National Curriculum tests have recently been analysed more closely by the school, in order to point to strengths and weaknesses in both teaching and learning.

52. Overall, the recording of test information and its use is at an early stage of development. The current way of presenting results does not make best use of the information and does not allow predictions to be refined in the light of new information.

53. Marking of work is too inconsistent across the school and does not always give pupils a clear picture of what it is they need to do to improve their work. Equally, teachers do not make sufficient use of assessment information in their planning. Whilst planning seen during the inspection shows that teachers are beginning to use information from assessments to provide suitably challenging work for all ability groups, work completed previously in exercise books does not confirm that this has been a long standing procedure.

54. Pupils are not yet involved in setting or checking on their own personal targets for either English or mathematics. Numeracy targets are displayed in classes, but these are simply taken from the level descriptors for each year group and are not specific enough for groups within the classes. At the same time, records of pupils' personal and social development are kept during the Foundation Stage but are then not added to during the rest of pupils' time at school. This makes the support of personal and social development difficult to organise with any accuracy.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55. The links the school has with parents are not consistent across all elements of this aspect. The quality of information provided about pupils' progress is satisfactory. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school and their contribution to the children's learning at home and at school is unsatisfactory. Parents' views of the school are good.

56. The school provides comprehensive information about its provision and activities and makes genuine efforts to involve parents in the life of the school and to provide support. Monthly newsletters advise on both academic and recreational activities, and pupils' annual reports of progress followed by parents' evenings enable parents to be informed. This is in addition to advisory group meetings for Nursery induction, end of Key Stage meetings and discussion groups for those with children who have special education needs. A significant number of parents do not take an active interest in school activities or their child's learning.

57. During the inspection little evidence was seen of parental involvement in school in either Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2. There is a small but active group of parents who assist in school, including recent work with an artist in residence when murals for the outside of the building were completed.

The school's commitment to parents is evident in its arrangements to provide behaviour support and child and family support to those parents experiencing difficulties.

58. The school provides for pre nursery induction groups to advise parents of pupils entering the Foundation Stage. A number of parents for this age group provide assistance in the classroom.

59. The school has maintained its commitment for effective links with parents as in the previous report. Parental support is less evident.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

60. Overall leadership and management provided by the Headteacher, key staff and governors are satisfactory. The general organization and administration of the school are efficient and effective. This is a similar situation found at the time of the last inspection.

61. The educational vision of the Headteacher has had a good impact on raising standards but there is still some way to go because circumstances related to staffing in relation to long term staff absences, secondment and staff changes have severely restricted the school's capacity to resolve fully the key issues highlighted in the previous inspection report. Good use is made of new technology to process documentation and data where and when necessary, which has a positive effect on the day-to-day life of the school. This has contributed to the school's systems towards improving the overall quality of education offered to its pupils.

62. The Headteacher and staff ensure that the school's caring aims are well reflected in its work, and that it is focused on the pupils' needs. The positive ethos created motivates the pupils; their behaviour and general attitude to learning are good.

63. The Headteacher has worked hard to communicate his vision of what sort of school Meadowbank should be. Improvements to the building, including the recently completed ground floor play area, computer suite, total redecoration to the inside of the building are but some examples which give vivid testimony to the entrepreneurial skills of the Headteacher in attaining and using extra funding and grants to enhance the school's learning environment.

64. The recently re-organised senior management team and the job descriptions negotiated with all members of staff have set in place a corporate and coordinated team approach to strategic management.

65. The small number of established key staff have been supportive and actively involved since 1997 in bringing the school to its current position. For example, the coordinators for English and mathematics successfully supported the implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy; Key stage managers have very recently fulfilled their responsibilities in establishing agreed curriculum guidelines and documentation to safeguard continuity and progression within teaching and learning. Recently appointed coordinators are offering help and advice to colleagues whilst establishing the needs of their subjects although this process has some way to go.

66. Although monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning have been carried out by the Headteacher and some senior staff, it has not impacted sufficiently to raise standards and the quality of teaching to the highest levels. Differences are apparent in teacher expectations and their interpretation and commitment to putting policy into practice. For example, in the marking of pupils' work and in the organisation and delivery of the literacy hour.

67. The school development plan is extensive and sets out areas for improvement across all aspects of school life, including raising standards in writing, improvements in information and communication technology, developments in target setting and tracking and monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. These are all aspects identified by this inspection as requiring improvement. However, the plan is flawed in that, the criterion by which the success of the actions can be assessed, lacks sufficient detail, English being a good example. The plan does not extend beyond the year 2001, failing to set out 'what if' scenarios over an extended period.

68. The governing body through an effective committee structure and visits by individual governors keep itself informed which helps it go some way to holding the school to account. However, there is an overall reliance on the Headteacher to furnish the governing body with evaluative information on standards and progress made rather than them asking pertinent questions. The procedures set in place to make key members of staff directly accountable to them is intended to give them a broader knowledge base on which to make informed decisions. The governors generally fulfill their statutory responsibilities except for the delivery of aspects of information and communication technology. They are beginning to apply the principles of best value for example, in comparing standards achieved with those of similar schools.

69. Financial management, including the use of specific grants and funding is very good. The ratio of adults to pupils is good but use although broadly satisfactory is in need of review. For example, the enhanced resources for the nursery and the 15 children, with specific special educational needs, are mainly used very well. However, the Key Stage manager for the Foundation Stage has no formalised teaching timetable and spends much of her time on administration linked to the management of the nursery and special educational needs; thus diminishing the direct impact on children's learning, in both the nursery and reception class, of a highly skilled professional. In addition there is insufficient classroom support for teachers coping with high levels of pupils with special educational needs in spite of the fact that the school has a non-class based special educational needs coordinator. Whilst administration related to special educational needs is good, the amount of time spent on this aspect of the role and the limited contact with pupils hinders the coordinator from gaining first hand knowledge of pupils on the register or directly supporting their needs in the classrooms regularly enough. In addition, this limited knowledge of pupils' needs and the progress they make means that, the coordinator does not have a secure evidence base on which to advise teachers when they have to draw up the pupils' individual educational plans and set targets. The quality of work by non-teaching support staff is very good in supporting pupils who have individual educational plans and the school's recently established phonic based programme to support reading and spelling.

70. The management of assessment is overall unsatisfactory and does not support well enough the tracking of pupils' progress from entry to exit from the school. Although procedures are good, the use and purposefulness of assessments are not impacting well enough on pupils' achievements and continuity of their learning. The inextricable link between assessment of the breadth of the pupils' needs, planning and target setting is not sufficiently well embedded in the school's work to drive standards higher.

71. Resource provision is unsatisfactory overall. The library is poorly stocked and the school's reading resources although improved are limited. The range of reading books is poor, out of date and too reliant on commercial schemes; not least that the books do not represent a good enough balance of ethnic groups and gender roles. The school is awaiting receipt of the designated funding for information and communication technology resources.

72. Accommodation is good and used well by staff and pupils. Outside facilities are currently being developed through additional funding.

73. Given the standards achieved, the at times, inconsistent progress pupils make from their low starting point, the mainly good teaching and the quality of education overall the school gives satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

74. The governors, Headteacher and staff now need to:

Improve standards, particularly in English, ICT, RE, History and Geography by ensuring that:

- The subject coordinators gain first hand understanding of the subjects' strengths and weaknesses;
- The full subject requirements are planned for, and delivered;
- Literacy, mathematics and science skills are used to encourage independent learning;
- The school development plan and subject actions show more precisely how success will be measured;
- Resources are improved and used effectively to support independent learning and the acquisition of subject skills.

Reference to these weaknesses can be found in paragraph no's: 1,3, 6, 7,9,10,19, 21,28,67, 87-92,95,101-103,106 109,113-115, 122, 127,129-135,138-140,152.

Improve the use of assessment information to track pupils' academic and personal progress and set targets for improvement by ensuring that:

- All staff fully agree and understand the school's procedures;
- Systems and procedures are manageable and relevant;
- Assessments are used effectively to plan next steps of learning for the range of ability;
- Marking of work shows pupils how to improve;
- Targets are set, monitored for success and shared with pupils.

Reference to these weaknesses can be found in paragraph no's: 4,8,25, 30, 33, 43, 47, 48, 52-54,70,92,93, 104, 107, 112 and 114.

Improve the management of special educational needs within the main school by ensuring that:

- The special educational needs coordinator focuses attention on gaining first hand experience and supporting pupils' needs in the classrooms and groups;
- Short term planning by teachers identifies relevant activities more precisely;
- The use of support staff is more equitable across the key stages;
- Staff training for special educational needs is improved.

Reference to these weaknesses can be found in paragraph no's: 23, 50, 69, 93,100 and113,

Improve the provision for pupils' cultural development by ensuring that:

- There is an audit of provision within curriculum planning;
- Gaps are identified and plans drawn up for inclusion within delivery;
- Staff training is provided;
- Resources are reviewed and a systematic plan drawn up for improvement.

Reference to these weaknesses can be found in paragraph no's: 36, 40, 95,144, 148 and152.

Safeguard the monitoring and evaluation of school policies into practice to ensure:

- Consistency of understanding of school aims and policies;
- Delivery and outcomes of learning are monitored with clear criteria understood by all staff;
- Information from monitoring is used to set targets for improvement;
- Key Staff with responsibilities report regularly to governors to enable them to hold the school to account.

Reference to these weaknesses can be found in paragraph no's:30 ,66, 95 and 126

Other minor weaknesses can be found in paragraph no's:11, 13,16,19,37, 38, 55, 69,71,78,

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	64
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	9	36	47	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	45	163
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		93

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7	11
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	18	49

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	3.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	18	7	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	16
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	19	19	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (68)	76 (64)	92 (88)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	16	14
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	19	23	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (64)	92 (88)	84 (88)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	22	8	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	17	22
	Girls	5	6	7
	Total	13	23	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	43 (54)	77 (50)	97 (42)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	n/a (42)	n/a (46)	n/a (46)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	203
Any other minority ethnic group	

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	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.1
Average class size	19.6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	70.5

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	611,142
Total expenditure	619,732
Expenditure per pupil	3,009
Balance brought forward from previous year	55,940
Balance carried forward to next year	47,350

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	11.3

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	70.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	235
Number of questionnaires returned	36

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75	17	3	6	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	42	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	50	0	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	50	6	0	19
The teaching is good.	58	28	3	3	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	47	3	11	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	28	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	39	3	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	36	56	0	8	0
The school is well led and managed.	47	47	0	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	50	3	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	31	14	8	25

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

75. The Foundation Stage of learning meets the needs of children in the nursery and reception class very effectively and is a strength of the school. The provision for the pupils with specified needs is very good. Overall, this is an improvement on the provision reported at the time of the last inspection when within the nursery it was satisfactory overall. The nursery serves the local and wider community. It receives enhanced funding to support the broad range of children's needs; not all of whom go on to attend Meadowbank; about 15 per cent move into the reception class out of the 60 children who attend the nursery part time for either a morning or afternoon session. In addition, another 15 children who have high level, multi faceted special educational needs attend the nursery on a full time basis and it is for this group that the additional funding is allocated. The nursery is purpose built and facilities are excellent, as is the ratio of staff to children. On entry to the nursery children's attainment is comprehensive but mainly lower than usually found for children of this age and for some it is very poor with severe speech, communication, personal, social and emotional and physical difficulties. As a result of the very good care they receive and the staff's knowledge of child development those children who move into the reception class have made good progress through the 'stepping stones' towards the Early Learning Goals, but their attainment is still lower than expected by the age of four.

76. The identification of children with special educational needs is swift and comprehensive; the children benefit from receiving support from an extensive range of outside specialists. The school has very good links with local authority schemes to support pre-school learning, social services, speech therapists and educational psychologists. The targeting in their individual educational plans is detailed, appropriate and well followed through. It is not only the additional 15 full time children who have high level special needs, indeed a good proportion of the part time children have needs which are far in excess of what is usually found at this young age. The extensive monitoring of progress and fine tuning applies equally to this group. The progress children make is very good across all areas of learning but most notably in personal, social and emotional development and in communication skills.

77. On entry to the reception class about one third of the children who have attended the nursery are joined by about twice this number, some of whom have not had any form of pre-school education. Attainment is overall below average with a proportion with high level special educational needs and a smaller number whose attainment is at least average if not better. The provision in the reception is high quality and provides an excellent bridge from the Foundation Stage to the challenges of the National Curriculum. Through the intuitive and skilled teaching, very ably supported by a non teaching assistant, the children's progress is good and often better ensuring that by the time they enter Key Stage 1 many have attained as expected in aspects of the Early Learning Goals as outlined below.

78. Whilst the overall provision in the Foundation Stage is a strength of the school the stage manager recognises the need to review assessment practice to ensure it is purposeful, relevant and that planning also reflects the stepping stones very precisely. At times the organisation in the nursery with children having complete freedom of choice detracts from continuity and places unduly onerous demands on staff to monitor what children have been doing and how well they achieve. These areas for improvement are recognised and welcomed by the stage manager in order to build on the significant strengths of provision so that the staff may continue to set the strongest of foundations of children's learning and enable them to achieve their best.

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Personal, social and emotional development

79. By the time they have completed the Foundation Stage, many children have made very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and meet expectations for their age. This shows the very good achievement and reflects the good teaching they receive.

80. Children feel safe and secure in the nursery. They know the staff well and have established trusting bonds with them. On arrival children know their routines and most quickly settle to well prepared activities. They know their peg, hang up coats, some with help, and show independence in the choice of what they want to do. The children cooperate largely very well although they are still learning to share and understand that they are now one of many and must take their turn. For example, two children in role play as Cinderella and Prince Charming cannot agree who should have the Fairy Godmother's wand and need some lengthy adult intervention to help them resolve the conflict. Nevertheless, in the end there are no tantrums or tears and play continues happily. Children enjoy coming together for the register and they sit very well with good attention, listening for their name and responding to the teacher. At tidy up time they go with their group leader and most make swift work of putting equipment in the correct places with some guidance. In the reception class, these skills are built on very well. The classroom is well organised and children quickly learn what to do, where things belong and there is an ever vigilant, firm but caring insistence on how 'we behave in the reception class and what we have to do'. Children enjoy this security and they show increasing confidence in their environment. Many show high levels of independence in that, when the teacher is working with a focus group, they settle quickly to the relevant tasks, which challenge them to work to a target for example, 'make a long snake,' 'make a short snake'. Very few disturb the teacher and there is little disagreement between children as they talk with each other about their play. The very good relationships, which pervade the Foundation Stage and the high levels of care set a climate, which is very effective in encouraging children to want to learn, cooperate and explore. The ethos in both the nursery and reception classes is of high expectation for children to feel happy, content and achieve their best with achievements, no matter how small being celebrated by all. The children respond very well to this as they relish adult attention, praise and care.

Communication, language and literacy

81. Children enter the nursery with skills below those usually found in three year olds in all areas of communication, language and literacy. Only a small number are working at expected levels. Communication is particularly weak for many and some children have very poor speech, in part due to a lack of experiences about which they can talk, because they have not experienced talk very much previously and some because they have physical problems which affect their speech. Some children have little or no ability to communicate through speech at all and communicate through gesture and touch. Their progress in the nursery is very good because of the good teaching. They listen well when the teacher calls their name and watch eagerly for their group card, recognising that symbols carry meaning. They listen very well when the teacher describes making Cinderella's punch for the party. The teacher promotes language very well encouraging the children to touch, smell and describe the colour of fruit they will cut up. When listening to a story, about 'Little Chick' which was well read by the teacher, a group of children, a number of whom have high level special needs, are intent on following as the teacher turns the pages. When questioned about aspects of the story their interpretation is less secure but the teacher is patient and allows good time for children to think through their ideas even though some do not speak, and others give one word answers. Children readily use the book corner and sit quietly together turning the pages of a book and repeatedly starting the story over

and over. They are very settled in the cosiness of the book corner. Opportunities to write are given at the 'Post Office' and children use pencils suitably to make marks, and scribble their letters. A group works well and learns about sequencing when they make storybooks about Cinderella by cutting and sticking the pictures in order. Teacher intervention is very good, promoting language, and encouraging children to recall what happened first, next and last.

82. In the reception class, communication is still weak but improves rapidly because of the very good and excellent teaching so that they make very good progress and many but not all achieve well and attain the Early Learning Goals by the age of five. In an excellent literacy lesson the teacher uses a puppet 'Percy the Penguin' to support children's listening skills. She challenges them to offer answers when asked to listen to sounds within words and change one letter to make another word, which they then read. Many understand what to do. A few mouth the words and others are entirely passive but are regularly encouraged to join in by the penguin. In group activities children make words using magnetic letters write letters and match animal pictures to the initial letters of their names. They are learning well to shape letters and write their own names. A group of children with special educational needs make very good progress under the guidance of the classroom assistant when they describe by shape, size and colour objects to be placed in a bag, basket or on the table. The children give the instructions, although some speech is very poor, and the others with adult help follow correctly the instructions. One or two of these children can form sentences and they recognise 'a', 'm', 't', and 'e', when playing a magnetic fishing game. The children understand the early conventions of reading and treat books with care. The classroom provides a fine example of a literate environment. In the plenary sessions time is rightfully given to children describing their work, which supports their abilities to speak to an audience. Other literacy sessions observed were also of high quality enabling many children to be on target to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the age of five. The children with special educational needs make very good progress but not all receive suitable parental support with reading at home.

Mathematical development

83. By the time the children leave the Foundation Stage most children have made good progress and many reach the Early Learning Goals by the age of five when they leave the reception class. Teaching is good and allows children to achieve well, especially in numeracy. In the nursery children learn to count in order from one to five, some can count higher. They have regular practice each day when they use their fingers to count how many children are absent. Five children working in a group match and count out to five and describe the objects they are counting. When washing dolls clothes they learn the language of size when they are prompted to consider whom the clothes will fit. Children know many colours and can name some shapes such as circle, square and triangle. In the reception class they develop their knowledge of size and make long and short, big and small objects from playdough. Their speech when explaining ideas and giving answers still detracts from learning and progress in spite of support. The teacher encourages mathematical language when she uses a number stick and 'Busy Bee' moves 'backwards' and 'forwards' along the number line. All pupils can say their numbers one to ten, but not all can order 0 to nine on a number line. They understand how to calculate one number 'more than' on a dice. The teacher is at great pains to promote language. The most able children are able to cut up strips with numbers and re-order them. The teacher uses information and communication technology suitably to support mathematical development.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

84. Attainment in this area of learning is below the expected standard by the time children reach five. Children come to school with very limited experiences of their own world and their knowledge of the wider world is sparse. Their vocabulary is weak to describe what they see and their confidence in

language is, as previously described, lower than expected. All of this inhibits their ability to attain as expected although they make good progress and achieve well given their prior attainment through a broad range of experiences and good teaching. In the nursery children develop their senses when making fruit punch, they learn colours and that different fruits have different shapes, smells and patterns when they are cut open. They learn about the job of the Postman and are very eager in their learning to wear his hat and carry the bag delivering letters to classmates. The children are learning slowly about computers but very few bring experiences of technology from home. Some children can use a mouse and control it to move objects on the screen. There is a tendency for boys to dominate the use of computers when teachers do not directly intervene. In using construction materials children make a carriage for Cinderella and the teacher discusses safety 'Can you make it safer for her?' The children learn about growing things as they have planted seeds to make a replica beanstalk from listening to the story of Jack and the Beanstalk and they have planted their own seeds, which they watch grow into small plants as Mothers' Day gifts. They learn that when a lamp is shone behind a screen they can see the shadows of the characters from Cinderella. They take absolute delight in this activity and are quick to recognise the characters. In the reception class children continue to improve their 'mouse' skills on the computer. They learn about objects, which float and sink and can sort them into sets. Some offer reasons why, such as, it is heavy or it is light', all quite justifiable. Children learn about the work of the builder in role-play and three gain an understanding of how the vet looks after sick animals in his made up surgery. In spite of these broad experiences the further development of children's knowledge of the world is a goal for improvement through the Foundation Stage and to enhance children's ability to talk about what they know.

Physical development

85. Children attain as expected in the Early Learning Goals for physical development by the age of five and their progress is good because of the effective teaching particularly in small skills work such as cutting and sticking and joining objects together. The children use paint brushes, glue sticks and pencils with increasing skill in the nursery to make bag puppets, cut out pictures and thread the laces on Cinderella's slippers. They can fit jigsaw pieces into the correct place when they have turned the object several times, some need considerable support for this. They handle pencils correctly although need reminding about holding them. The children develop cutting skills and are regularly if somewhat overly assessed for these skills. In the reception class children improve their skills and manipulate playdough, cut out shapes well, use rolling pins correctly, make patterns with tools and build tall models using bricks. Children have ample opportunity to play outdoors, use push and pull toys and run in free space; the reception class does less of this than the nursery. However, in a very good physical and creative lesson in the hall the teacher supported very well the children's ability to control their speed of movement and direction. They were able to change direction quickly and make appropriate movements for big Brown bear, Honey Bear and Slow Heavy Bear, going flopping along. The good choice of music aided their progress and enjoyment and children tried hard to improve their performance.

Creative development

86. The children's attainment is in line with the expected Early Learning Goals by the age of five. They make very good progress in this aspect in the nursery and good progress in the reception class developing their achievements in imaginative play and art and design and making activities. The quality of teaching is good overall. They have good opportunities in the nursery to paint and daub to music, create bag puppets, and experience the sensation of wet and dry sands and water play. They dress up as characters from Cinderella, and love to use the wand to cast a spell. They use household replicas to play house and are encouraged to use language appropriate to the task for ironing and folding clothes. Children delight in creative activities. Children recognize musical instruments and can name some of them in a good music lesson. However, the organisation of this activity detracted from learning in other

areas as the teacher walked through the area playing an instrument and all children on other tasks left what they were doing to follow.

ENGLISH

87. Standards in English are below national expectations for most pupils by the end of both key stages. This is a similar situation as found at the time of the last inspection. Although pupils' performance in the national tests has improved over time; when compared with national figures the school's results are well below what is usually found and when compared with similar schools standards are below others. Too few pupils achieve the nationally expected Level 4 at the age of 11 and the number achieving the higher Level 5 is too low even given the pupils' low starting base.

88. The school has taken steps to improve standards in English and this is acknowledged. For example, the national strategy for teaching literacy has been adopted, monitored and is generally well taught, although, there is still too much variation in teaching across the key stages. The recently adopted phonic based programme is beginning to show results in the pupils' knowledge of letter, sounds, word building and spelling; it's success is due to the good structure of the programme and the highly skilled support staff who implement it. A subject action plan has been drawn up, but it has flaws; because, it is not based on a clear diagnosis and assessment of where pupils have weaknesses in order to show in a precise and detailed way, a clear direction forward for improvement. For example, in the school's development plan in 1997 the need to improve handwriting was identified; this need is still in the current plan with no clearer picture of the 'what, how, why and when' of improvement with measurable success criteria against which to rigorously monitor success and identify further improvements to raise standards and pupils' achievements. In spite of it successes the school does not yet have a firm grip on how to raise standards in English.

89. Standards in English are below expectations overall by the age of seven. Standards in speaking are below national expectations by the age of seven and in line with them in listening. Pupils listen well to introductions; they are attentive and interested. Most follow well the teachers' instructions and can answer simple questions although too many use one word answers, say 'I don't know' or take too long to formulate their ideas into understandable sentences. The few higher attainers use sentences correctly to give more detailed answers for example, when asked 'Can you tell who the author of this story was? The reply is given 'We don't know that because it was written ages ago'. By the age of 11, standards are similar to those in Key Stage 1 with less than half of pupils on target to attain at the expected Level 4. The school's targets for Year 2001 in the subject are overly optimistic based on current performance. Eight out of 17 Year 6 pupils have special educational needs. Pupils' progress well towards speaking confidently but nevertheless do not attain as expected as they lack both the confidence and vocabulary to be articulate in a coherent and well structured way. Listening is at least satisfactory but interpretation and analysis are weak.

90. In reading, standards by the age of seven are below for too many pupils even though there are clear signs that they have acquired the early conventions of handling books with care, recognise some common words by sight and can blend simple two and three letter words. Few read confidently or with expression and many are hesitant when they self correct misread words. Only the higher attaining readers recognise many words on sight or attempt to read complex words; they can also talk quite well about characters, plot and express a view about their favourite part of the story. When using a text about the story of 'Cinderella' a number say they have never heard of the story and the lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs, of which there are many in Year 2, could not read or follow the text accurately. Very few pupils have early information or library skills. Whilst pupils are gaining reading cues to decode words from the structured programme introduced recently and technical vocabulary about books and punctuation too few have sound comprehension skills. They are

not well used to discuss the story nor do many have the speech or confidence to do so. Prediction is a general weakness. Not all parents are supportive of hearing pupils read at home. By the age of 11, the higher attaining pupils in the group are reading at least the expected Level 4. However, most others are still gaining in fluency and developing reading techniques of using the text to find information, reading to make sense or using expression well enough. Many can sustain silent reading but take too little from what they have read. Most know how to use dictionaries. These older pupils have many gaps in their phonic knowledge. Pupils usefully complete reading reviews and these although very variable in quality are a good attempt at improving and assessing comprehension skills.

91. Standards in writing by the age of seven are below expectations and for some pupils well below, particularly boys. Lessons and scrutiny of work show that pupils have made better progress in writing in Year 2 than Year 1. Too much early writing in Year 1 is copied, hindering the pupils' abilities to 'have a go' and use their phonic knowledge to attempt spellings. Pupils are not keen writers although the higher attainers show the ability to write many words independently and their work is beginning to show imagination and structure. However, most pupils although showing evident progress in output do not progress well enough in shaping letters correctly or in working towards a joined script, spelling common words correctly, use spelling rules or make plausible attempts to spell unknown words. Writing tasks are too closely directed by the teacher, and in the other subjects, pupils complete too many worksheets. Writing lacks imagination and pupils rarely correct or improve their own work or increase the complexity of events or characters. This is also the case for the oldest pupils. By the age of 11, standards in writing are too low. Pupils' punctuation and spelling skills are limited as is their ability to write in paragraphs. The work scrutinised ranges from Level 2 to Level 4 with only one pupil showing any signs of Level 5 writing. The gaps in pupils' learning restrict their achievement even though their progress is more rapid in Years 5 and 6. Very few pupils write with any imagination even though the range of tasks offered are interesting. Through clearly well structured and detailed teaching pupils have produced some interesting characterisations of players in Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'.

92. The inspection finds that pupils' achievements when they leave at the age of 11 are broadly satisfactory given their low starting base but could be better if progress was more consistent as they move through the school. On entry to the reception class, children's attainment is mainly below average with some poor attainment in communication; often because they have limited experiences of the world on which to base their talk. By the time pupils' enter Key Stage 1 many more are ready for the challenges of the National Curriculum because of the good and at times very good progress they have made in the reception class which results in good achievement across all elements of English. In Year 1, their progress is adequate but on occasion is unsatisfactory because time is lost on inappropriate work and there is too little independent writing and too little understanding of what they read. Progress improves in Year 2 but the inspection finds that many of these current Year 2 pupils are not on target to achieve soundly within the expected Level 2, although aspects of reading are better than writing. In lower Key Stage 2, progress is adequate because although in lessons pupils work soundly to the lesson objectives, scrutiny of work shows that assessment has not been used effectively to match work accurately to the range of need and too often pupils are not being required to use their literacy skills to read, research, organise and record information independently in English and the other subjects; instead they complete too many worksheets which require little effort or skill from them and marking of work does not show them how to improve. In the upper Key Stage 2 progress improves and language and literacy skills are used far more productively as a springboard for pupils' learning across the curriculum; in Year 6 on occasion progress is very good. However, these upper school teachers have too much 'firefighting' to do and there are too many gaps in pupils' learning. The value-added achievement from reception to Year 6 is not consistent or impacting well enough on standards.

93. Teaching in the lessons seen was satisfactory overall in Key Stage 1 with some unsatisfactory teaching and mainly good teaching in Key Stage 2 with the better teaching in the upper school and the very best in Year 6. In a very good lesson on debating and argument with Year 6, the lesson is well structured, recap of previous learning is thorough, and the teacher draws well on pupils' views and introduces technical vocabulary regularly. When pupils offer answers the teacher never fails to challenge pupils to justify their answers and explain their arguments for and against the issues. This supports their speaking skills well and their ability to explain themselves. Where teaching is less effective, but nevertheless satisfactory, the introductions to the lessons are good, stimulate pupils to listen, question them about the text or teaching points and explain the tasks carefully. Direct teaching of the focus groups helps them move forward in their learning. However, the pupils of all abilities, including, those with special educational needs, working on very similar independent tasks make less useful gains in learning about and understanding rhyming words. This is because of their immature work ethic and because too few fully understand and have internalised the needs of the task. Few understand how to use the dictionaries they have been given well enough. This is a typical case found elsewhere of where assessment is not driving the planning and match of work well enough. Plenary sessions are less productive in some lessons because not enough time is given over to them and they are not always well used to assess what has been learned. In Year 1 the quality of the lesson planning is very weak and does not match the generally extensive planning seen elsewhere in the school.

94. Pupils respond generally well to the structure of the literacy hour. During lesson introductions they listen well and pay attention. In Key Stage 1 some young pupils lack concentration and those with demanding special educational needs sometimes distract the learning of others. In Key Stage 2 pupils show an increasing maturity although in Year 4 there are many special educational needs and they do not have well developed work ethics. Across all classes the pupils' abilities to work independently are limited.

95. The literacy coordinator has monitored the implementation of the literacy hour and staff have found this useful. Monitoring of planning is not ensuring consistency of detail in Key Stage 1. Insufficient time has been allocated to scrutinising the pupils' work across the key stages to identify where gaps and weaknesses prevail. Although there are literacy targets these are not sufficiently fine tuned for individuals to know what they have to do to improve nor does marking of work assist this process except in Year 5 and 6. The delivery of English covers the programmes of study but sufficient thought is not given to the depth of work or the opportunities within all lesson planning to enhance communication skills or use literacy skills effectively. The resources for the subject although improved are overall unsatisfactory in the range of reading and reference material; with not enough material which represents social, ethnic and gender groups.

MATHEMATICS

96. Results from the Year 2000 National Curriculum assessments at the end of Key Stage 2 showed that standards were below the national average when compared with all schools nationally, but well above average when compared with schools in which pupils come from similar backgrounds. The improvement over the results of the previous year is seen in the percentage of pupils, seventy six per cent, who achieved the expected level 4 or higher. Overall results were limited by the very small percentage, three per cent, who were able to achieve at a higher than average level.

97. Following a dip in results in 1998, results have improved year on year since the last inspection. The results of the current inspection suggest that whilst a significant minority of pupils will achieve the nationally expected level, once again very few, if any, will achieve levels higher than this. There are currently eight out of seventeen pupils in Year 6 who have special education needs.

98. Results of the most recent National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 showed that whilst over ninety per cent of pupils achieved the nationally expected level 2 or higher, only eight per cent achieved the higher level 3. This meant that when compared with all schools nationally, results were below average. However, when these results were compared with similar schools, they were above average. These results continue the year on year improvements seen at this key stage since the last inspection. Inspection evidence suggests that with fourteen pupils in Year 2 on the register for special education needs, the school will struggle to produce similar results this current year, although a significant number of pupils will achieve the expected Level 2 grade.

99. Progress made by many pupils in lessons is often good. Pupils pay attention and try hard in their lessons. However, over longer periods of time, work in their books suggests that they do not retain the knowledge and understanding they gain in lessons, neither do they always remember the skills they have learned. As a result, there is often a need to recap work before trying to move forward. This means that progress over time, although satisfactory, is not so discernable.

100. Pupils with special needs do not often enough have work set for their particular needs. They are often catered for within a group of lower ability pupils. As a result, they make similar slow overall progress as their classmates. However, when a class assistant or the class teacher is able to work alongside these pupils, progress is much better. Little direct teaching of pupils with special needs was noted during the inspection.

101. By the age of seven, many pupils are confident with their understanding of place value and the majority know their number bonds to 10, with a small number able to describe bonds up to 100. Many recognise particular value coins within a general collection and can make simple calculations of change, some from a pound. Their mental recall is gradually being developed during Numeracy Hour work, with the chanting of tables often heard around the school. Pupils know about two and three-dimensional shapes, but due to weaker language skills, often have difficulty in describing these shapes in mathematical terms. Whilst the school's core books for mathematics and a wide array of worksheets are used to try to set mathematics in "real life" situations, there is very little evidence of pupils being given opportunities to investigate number problems, using their acquired skills, without necessarily there being right or wrong answers. Not enough use is made of pupils' mathematical understanding in attempts to solve open-ended problems.

102. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are working well in the oral/mental section of their Numeracy Hour lessons. They enjoy using and working with resources such as number cards, operation cards and number sticks. Through their use, pupils' speed of response and range of immediate number facts are both improving. They have an understanding of the links between fractions, decimals and percentages, while some pupils show a grasp of the principles of negative numbers. Many are gaining confidence in multiplying and dividing with larger numbers and remainders, a weakness noted in the last National Assessments. Work within space, shape and measure is not as strong as it should be. Whilst pupils have had experience of measuring both length and mass, work in finding perimeters, areas, measuring angles and recognising more complex shapes is limited. Work in data handling is hampered by the lack of opportunities to use information and communication technology (I.C.T.). Whilst pupils have created some graphs and charts, this work was not enhanced or extended through working with computer programs, which provide pupils with many more quality opportunities to interrogate data and build their own data banks of information. Equally, work in investigative mathematics is less well developed. Teaching has been concentrated on other aspects of the syllabus, with pupils having too few opportunities to pursue open-ended problem solving, drawing on their knowledge and understanding of many aspects of mathematics.

103. All full time teachers were seen teaching aspects of numeracy. Of the ten lessons observed, there were no unsatisfactory lessons and the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall and ranged from satisfactory to very good. Six lessons were satisfactory, two were good and one very good. The best teaching was seen in the top two classes. Overall, this shows an improvement on the standards in teaching noted at the last inspection. Positive features noted in lessons were that all lessons were well planned, as a result of the influence of the National Numeracy Strategy. This meant that teachers were more focused on learning objectives and consequently learning was improved. Work was often prepared for different ability groups within classes, taking some account of their levels of ability. However, when looking back in exercise books, it was not always possible to see this happening enough in previous terms. As a result higher attaining pupils were not always challenged sufficiently and work was not always prepared specifically for the pupils with special education needs. At the same time, little extra support was noted from class assistants or special needs support adults for pupils with special needs within numeracy lessons.

104. The management of lessons was nearly always good, with pupils responding well to the work and to the teaching. Teachers tried to maintain a good pace in their teaching in order to motivate pupils and keep them interested. This usually worked well and pupils remained active, tried hard to respond to questions and behaved well. Bearing in mind that many pupils had poor literacy skills, not enough emphasis was placed on the development of mathematical vocabulary. Many teachers used new vocabulary consistently, but few classes had new words on display at the time when pupils met them, providing a constant reminder of them. Teachers do not always show high enough expectations of the standards, which might be reached by the very small percentage of higher attaining pupils in the school. Class teachers are often seen giving support to pupils with lower ability, but do not spend sufficient time in making work challenging enough for the higher attaining pupils. Although this is not necessarily the case in Years 5 and 6, pupils' individual needs are not clearly tracked throughout the school.

105. The school has made good use of the National Numeracy Strategy. All teachers have attended training with some teachers having attended more extensive training. The Strategy has ensured that all teachers plan in a similar way and that they deliver the same type of three part lesson. At the same time, the syllabus of work planned for the Strategy has ensured that there is continuity of learning from year to year throughout the school. All of this has had a positive effect on results.

106. Lack of use of I.C.T. has had a detrimental effect on standards both in I.C.T. itself and in mathematics. Software seen at the end of Key Stage 1 is unsuitable for that age of pupils, and little evidence is seen of computers being used to support any aspect of mathematics. At the same time, the use made of mathematics across the curriculum deserves further investigation as there is not enough evidence of mathematics being used consistently in design and technology, science, geography or history.

107. Marking of work in mathematics, whilst being adequate, does not give pupils enough advice on how they might improve their work. Assessments are made regularly during the school year, but they have only recently been brought together in order to establish how pupils are progressing in their learning during their time at the school. In the same way, whilst class targets for mathematics appear in all classrooms, there are currently too many and they are not specific enough for individual pupils. Personal targets are not being agreed or set in agreement with pupils.

108. The subject coordinator teaches mathematics well and has had opportunities to monitor her colleagues while they teach mathematics. She is clear about the strengths and areas for development in the subject.

SCIENCE

109. In the end of Key Stage 2 tests, for the Year 2000, pupils' attainment was well above the national average, and in comparison with similar schools, attainment was very high. Attainment in the previous three years was consistently below that of the national average and also well below that of similar schools. Inspection findings show that currently most pupils' knowledge and understanding in science is below national expectations except in their ability to sort and classify materials, in their knowledge of how plants grow and of the solar system, and in their understanding of how to make simple electrical circuits. The pupils' knowledge, understanding and experience of "fair testing" is limited and below expectation. Without this opportunity pupils are unable to devise and carry out their own investigations. No evidence was available to show that pupils are encouraged to evaluate and so refine their methods when carrying out practical activities

110. The Year 6 teacher and the science coordinator, agree that the very good results in the Year 2000 end of Key Stage 2 tests were the outcome of a particularly able class; additional teaching by another teacher with expertise in forces, the establishment of Booster Class work in science, and a systematic revision programme by the class teacher. Teacher assessment indicates that the results for 2001 will not reach the level of last year but will be better than the previous three years. The inspection findings support that judgement.

111. Teacher assessment at the end of Key Stage 1 for the Year 2000 showed the numbers of pupils that reached Level 2 or above to be below the national average. Attainment of the more able pupils reaching Level 3 was close to the national average. The inspection judgement is that the teacher assessments for the present Year 2 class will be similar to those of last year.

112. Many of the weaknesses outlined in the last report have still to be addressed. The science policy has not yet been revised, assessment is not being methodically undertaken, and there is no portfolio of levelled work to help teachers with the task of assessing work. Several of the strengths identified in the report remain in place. There is some good teaching across both key stages most pupils have opportunities for practical work, and for pupils with special needs progress is satisfactory and even good on occasions.

113. Pupils in both Key Stages show a keen interest and enthusiasm for science. They are mostly well motivated to listen, able to offer predictions and to share their findings and ideas when participating in the pre-determined tasks set by teachers. For example in Year 1 a group of pupils was permitted to repeat the class investigation into dissolving. Great care was taken not to spill water, to stir the mixture the same number of times, to take turns, and to check that the answer agreed with result written on the board. The same eagerness and willingness to collaborate was observed in a Year 2 class when they were planting seeds. In the Key Stage 2 classes that were observed pupil motivation to participate was good, although the lack of resources resulted in larger numbers having to share equipment and consequently a falling off in pupils' willingness to share and wait their turn. In a Year 3 lesson about testing rocks for hardness the children became frustrated and noisy when they had to wait for their rock specimen to be passed on. A Year 4 class investigation into the effectiveness of materials as heat insulators was hampered because there was an inadequate number of thermometers. This resulted in there being insufficient time for the pupils with special needs to take measurements with a consequent loss of attention by them. However, there is little evidence that pupils are challenged to plan, carry out and evaluate their own investigations, and this prevents them from developing their scientific understanding to the levels expected. The majority of work is teacher directed and results are often copied from the board or used to complete photocopied blank worksheets. There is only limited evidence of differentiation to match the needs and abilities of the pupils. This strategy does not encourage the development of the pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills and so does not support the

school's efforts to raise standards in those areas. For some pupils with special needs this hinders their progress.

114. The quality of teaching observed in lessons was satisfactory across both Key Stages. The strengths observed are the good use of questions by teachers especially in introductions, the care taken to use scientific vocabulary and the practical nature of most lessons. The weaknesses are that learning objectives are not specific enough and do not always relate to the activity planned, individual planning is of varying detail and quality, and teachers' knowledge and understanding of "fair testing" is inconsistent which limits pupil progress. Activities are mainly teacher determined and do not allow pupils opportunities to develop their own thinking and ideas for enquiry. There is insufficient differentiation for pupils across the whole ability range with over dependence on photocopied worksheets and on copying. Teachers' marking does not provide pupils with enough help to improve their understanding of the task or include suggestions of how pupils could make their work better. Often pupils' work is poorly presented and incomplete. Higher teacher expectations would encourage pupils to take more care. More carefully selected work would benefit pupils with special needs and assist their progress.

115. A new coordinator, a permanent and senior member of staff, was appointed in January this year. A review of the science policy has begun following an audit and a subject action plan has been drawn up. A rigorous monitoring system needs to be put in place and further staff development provided in planning and assessment so as to improve continuity and progression across the programmes of study and support better differentiation. The accommodation is well used and a new outdoor learning area is under construction. Resources are inadequate. There is not enough apparatus, consumable items or books. In a lesson that involved measuring the temperature of water the pupils had to use a "room thermometer" because there were no other thermometers available.

ART AND DESIGN

116. The last time the school was inspected, standards in art were broadly in line with national expectations by the end of both key stages. Since that time standards remain the same with examples of good quality work within both key stages and pupils making sound progress overall. . During the inspection two lessons were observed and scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils added to the evidence.

117. In the lesson in Year 1 pupils listened attentively to what was expected and concentrated well to persevere and produce a Mother's day card. They were able to cut and paste and manipulate the coloured pieces into the prescribed flower shapes. Older year 6 pupils used their skills to produce sophisticated, symmetrical patterns, based on mathematical shapes. They concentrated well and evaluated their work, making effective changes, which enhanced its quality.

118. Scrutiny of displays, sketchbooks and discussions with pupils show that they are offered a wide variety of opportunities to explore all aspects of art and design in an interesting and challenging way. For example, mixing colours and printing techniques used by Year 1 pupils to illustrate the 'Minpins' story by Roald Dahl, the hugely successful 'lighthouse' produced by Year 2 pupils through the striking use of crumpled paper, through the pastel portraits by Year 6 pupils to create effects of contrast and colour show a healthy progression in their ability to express their own ideas, to represent real objects and to express their feelings through the use of line, texture and tone.

119. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some excellent teaching in Year 6. Lesson planning is satisfactory and activities are well prepared and resourced. An area for improvement

however, is that too often the teacher overly prescribes the outcomes and thus work is very 'cloned' and it is hard to identify one pupils' work from the other.

120. The pupils express enthusiasm for the subject and in the lessons they concentrated and behaved well affecting positively the quality of learning.

121. The established policy and scheme of work gives effective structure to the programme of art being offered through the school. The recently appointed coordinator is already supporting colleagues in providing ideas. Resources are satisfactory and continue to enable the full range of activities to take place.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

122. During the inspection it was possible to observe one design and technology lesson. In addition discussions were held with the coordinator, teachers and pupils, pupils' previous work was analysed. The evidence gained indicates that pupils' attainment and progress is average at both key stages in design and making but not yet fully in line with expectations in evaluation. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection.

123. In Key Stage 1, pupils can satisfactorily cut accurately, fixing objects and materials together, paint and decorate their finished products. They manipulate construction kits, clay, wood and a variety of fabrics effectively. There are examples of model elephants which the children had made from clay and to show careful fashioning of face and body details along with a Mothers' Day cards, showing a flower which could be moved up and down in the pot. However, this work was not derived sufficiently from the pupils' own ideas and suffered from little evaluation of success or how to improve their own piece. In Year 2, the children had produced a good quality classroom display of a working lighthouse related to the Lighthouse Keeper's stories, which the pupils had been reading. Discussions with them revealed that from their work they understood the purpose of a lighthouse and shared that it is 'to keep the boats safe from rocks'. The pupils were able to suitably discuss their designs of the lighthouses, how and from what they had been made and how they had shaped the contours of the paper to make rocks. Evidence of written evaluations of their work is very limited and they were not able to describe well enough how they thought they could have improved them.

124. In Key Stage 2, pupils improve their skills of cutting, shaping and joining a range of materials and use different finishing techniques to modify the appearance of their product to a satisfactory level. Year 3 pupils have shown how they can make model toy theatres, using card and other similar materials. In Year 4, pupils have designed and constructed Tudor houses linked to their history project and in Year 5 pupils had made clown models using pins to join the body parts. In Year 6, pupils had shown the ability to modify the surface textures on their model planets to illustrate their physical properties. Throughout both key stages a feature of the work is the effective links made with other subjects across the curriculum. However, as in Key Stage 1 there is too little written evaluation and in some cases insufficient evidence of designs being refined and improved on paper before they arrive at the making stage.

125. In the lesson seen in Key Stage 1, teaching was satisfactory and enabled pupils to achieve in line with their prior learning and make suitable progress in the lesson where they made mini beasts linked to their science topic and 'elastic band' tanks. The organisation and management of the lesson was good and the nature of the activities described in the introduction motivated pupils to listen and want to engage in the practical tasks. The teacher effectively questioned pupils to allow them to share their knowledge and understanding of forces, linked to their science work. Whilst all pupils had

opportunity to make a tank they had less choice of experimenting with their designs. However, this was rectified to some degree when making their own mini beasts. They showed reasonable skills in joining and manipulating materials. The plenary session was well used to share what had been made but not to evaluate success. Planning by teachers does not include enough on investigation and evaluation of existing products so as to assist the children in generating their own designs.

126. Subject planning addresses the programme of study, however, food technology is not included at Key Stage 2. The subject coordinator does not have sufficient opportunities to monitor planning and teaching and to evaluate the standards of pupils' work to impact on improving subject gaps and the overall achievements of pupils across all elements of the programmes of study. Currently there is no agreed system in place to record pupils' attainment and skills development as they progress through the school.

GEOGRAPHY

127. Standards in geography are low by the age of 11 and about average by the age seven. This represents a decline in standards against those reported at the last inspection. Whilst the work is planned to cover the required programmes of study pupils do not retain knowledge easily. The way in which much work is presented in the form of teachers giving information and pupils completing worksheets regardless of their abilities is not satisfactory and this approach does not support pupils' understanding. By the age of seven, pupils have made sound progress in learning about where they live and how water is formed on a simple level. They can compare Atherton with the Isle of Struay, a fictional place in Scotland, identifying differences in buildings, landscape and what people do; they can also compare a house today with houses in the past. By the age of 11, pupils have studied the major continents and oceans of the world, labelled the highest mountains on a map and know about environmental issues, such as, the effects of pollution on nature and the destruction of the rainforests. They have studied the water cycle in greater depth and can name the characteristics of a river valley when prompted and supported by the class display. In discussion with pupils only the highest attainers have anything like a sound recall, knowledge and understanding of these features. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of places far away is weak, they do not have well developed mapping skills and their knowledge and use of geographical vocabulary is limited. However, they have used the local environment.

128. Only one lesson was observed and the teaching was good in Key Stage 2. A video of the River Severn was used effectively but prior to seeing it the teacher assessed the pupils' knowledge of large rivers. The content of the lesson was appropriate for the pupils' ages and made sound progress in considering how a river is a resource and how can man make best use of it. The pupils responded well and showed good interest in the subject.

129. The coordination of geography has recently been reviewed. The coordinator who works in the nursery is keen to gain a view of geography teaching through the school in order to identify the way forward. Resources are limited and there is too much use of photocopiable material. Whilst planning shows coverage of the required programmes of study the delivery of the curriculum is not practical enough nor are the pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology employed regularly enough for them to research and record what they know independently.

HISTORY

130. Pupils' attainment in history is below national expectations across both key stages; this is a decline since the last inspection. Pupils acquire knowledge adequately as they move through the classes but achieve less well in developing historical skills and using them appropriately and effectively.

131. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils can distinguish between past and present using the terms then and now. They have examined artefacts, including a dolly and a washing tub, used for washing clothes from an old home and compared them to their modern equivalent and they have looked for differences between old and new toys. Pupils were able to relate the story of Florence Nightingale and her lamp. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils were able to explain that the terms Viking, Tudor and Victorian referred to important periods in British history. They were able to explain which countries were Britain's allies and which her enemies during World War II. Older pupils were able to carry out research from a range of sources including CD-Rom, the Internet and databases. The tasks required the pupils to find simple facts and record them simply but not give suggestions about the causes and outcomes of historical events.

132. The pupils' understanding of historical skills such as chronology, the use of historical vocabulary and the ability to make links between main events within and across different periods, is insecure and unsatisfactory. Pupils in Key Stage 2 were unable to explain the meaning of "ancient" when used in conjunction with Greece or Rome. There were time lines within most classrooms but pupils very often could not name them or explain that they were a way of showing dates/events in time, or chronological, order. No evidence was gained during classroom observations or from the scrutiny of work that the time lines were used. Pupils were able to explain the meaning of BC and AD, Millennium and century.

133. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection varied from unsatisfactory to good. In Key Stage 1 one good lesson and one satisfactory lesson were observed. A feature in both of these was the careful use of questioning that was linked to the instructions for practical activities. This ensured that pupils had the appropriate language to describe their actions and their findings. At Key Stage 2 two lessons were seen; one satisfactory and one unsatisfactory. In the unsatisfactory lesson the teacher did not have a clear objective and the children became confused about their task which was to make a list of personal belongings for an evacuee to take away with them. The outcome was that many lists mixed present day items, such as Gameboys, with items like gas masks mentioned in an earlier history lesson.

134. The school has a new coordinator who is reviewing the policy and the school's scheme of work. She has attended a training course on the role of coordinator and has begun to use the Internet to research for appropriate teaching materials with which to support her colleagues. The school does not yet have the expertise needed to raise standards in the subject through the better use of differentiation, the use of marking to provide guidance for improvement, and to provide opportunities that enable pupils to research independently using the historical skills set out in the National Curriculum. Resources such as reference books, artefacts, and I.C.T. software are inadequate and need to be supplemented so that teachers challenge the pupils by moving away from the present diet of undemanding worksheets.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

135. Standards in information and communication technology (I.C.T.) are below national expectations in both Key Stages. There are not sufficient opportunities for pupils to acquire adequate knowledge, understanding and skills across the breadth of study set out in the Programmes of Study. The work in information and communication technology does not meet statutory requirements as not all the elements of the Programmes of Study are taught. This was not judged to be the situation at the time of the last inspection, which found that attainment was broadly in line with national expectations in both key stages. That report also found that the computers available were of variable quality, which restricted the range of software that could be used. Since then very little has been done to

upgrade the stock of computers and teachers report that their reliability is poor and that little new software is available. With outdated and unreliable machines and lack of good quality software it has not been possible for pupils to develop sufficient skills to reach the required standards.

136. The school is aware of this situation and has begun to take action. A specialist ICT suite has recently been constructed. The suite has been equipped with furniture and the necessary electrical supply and networking capability has been installed. Money has been allocated in the budget for the purchase of new computers.

137. Pupils in Key Stage 1 were observed using several programs including matching, phonics and spelling tasks. The programmes required using the direction keys and the mouse. There was evidence in displays and exercise books that pupils have opportunities to carry out basic word-processing gaining experience of using the keyboard. In one class the pupils were using a program that gave them opportunities to practice basic adding and subtraction. No special provision was observed for children with special needs.

138. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have had the opportunity to use more sophisticated word-processing software and have been taught how to edit, change fonts, cut & paste and save to disc. Work in the classrooms shows little evidence that these are used to any significant extent to support the pupils' literacy development. The older pupils have begun to make searches using the Internet. Pupils in Year 6 were using a website to find out about the phases of the moon. The animation of the different phases was very effective in helping the pupils understand terms such as half moon and crescent. In Year 4 there was a good display showing graphs drawn from a database of local historical information which illustrated to the pupils some of the many different ways the computer can be used. In Year 3 pupils were using a CD-Rom to find out information about World War II. The pupils were not required to make use of the information in their written work or to report back to the other children. No evidence was found that pupils were given opportunities to explore the monitoring and control possibilities of computers, create data bases of their own, or to combine graphics and text. In Year 6, one pupil with special needs was being taught touch typing as a way of helping to overcome his difficulties with handwriting successfully.

139. In most classes there is no time allocated to teach the skills specific to the programs currently in use. Consequently pupils mostly learn from their peers and this makes progression slow and uncertain. In most of the lessons observed no mention of ICT is made in the teachers' planning, and when computers are used the tasks assigned are mainly simple and undemanding. This makes it difficult to comment upon teaching in this area. When teaching was observed it was of a teacher interacting with a small number of pupils as, and when, the teacher found time.

140. All teachers are currently participating in in-service training in ICT funded by the New Opportunities Funding initiative. A recently appointed coordinator has drawn up an action plan to form part of the School Improvement Plan. A new ICT policy is being produced and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) scheme of work has been adopted. The ICT suite should shortly be ready for use. However, this will not overcome the poor quality hardware and software in classrooms making it very difficult for teachers to use ICT across the curriculum and in particular to raise standards in literacy and numeracy. During the inspection discussion with some coordinators revealed that they had begun to access the relevant websites such as those of the DfEE, QCA, and the Virtual Teachers' Centre. This will be helpful for improving the teaching of ICT as the teachers' own skills and confidence increase.

MUSIC

141. Pupils throughout the school attain standards expected for their age and enjoy their music making activities immensely. A specialist teacher, who teaches every class in the school once a week, provides the teaching of music. This is a strength within the subject. She has very good knowledge of all the pupils, through the good assessments she makes, and can direct her teaching effectively to all groups and individuals. As a result, standards have remained satisfactory since the last inspection.

142. Notes of previously completed lessons show that pupils have experience of all aspects of the National Curriculum Programme for music. They often have this put into an overall topic such as “The countryside”. Within this topic younger pupils sing songs such as “Trug along tractor” and “Six shiny eggs”. They are introduced to a reasonable range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments, which they often use to accompany their singing.

143. Later in the junior classes, pupils gain a better understanding of the elements of music as they learn about timbre, texture, tempo and rhythm. This once again, is often set within a theme or topic, which is sometimes supported by the use of taped programmes. Links are made with subjects such as history, as pupils learn songs of World War Two, or of the media as they learn about musicals and shows.

144. An overall weakness in the music is the contribution it makes to the cultural, and more especially multi-cultural, development of pupils. The school keeps a reasonable collection of recorded music, but it is far too biased towards music composed by white Europeans or Americans. There is not enough representation of Native Americans, Africans or Australians in the collection, thus depriving the pupils of opportunities to listen to music of the wider world. A strength within music is the clear pattern of assessment work carried out and utilised by the teacher responsible for music.

145. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory with elements of good teaching within all lessons seen. Strengths are noted in the careful planning of lessons, using the guidance of the local authority scheme of work to ensure progression between year groups. The teacher knows all pupils well and works hard at involving them actively in their work, as in a Year 2 lesson in which pupils were able to see and touch a selection of stringed instruments such as a mandolin and a balalaika. She manages both large and small classes well, but does have some problems managing the timing of lessons. Lessons have been reduced to thirty minutes in length and as a result, the teacher finds it difficult to end the lesson on time or complete all the planned work. In spite of this, she motivates pupils well and they respond readily to her questioning and suggestions, as in a Year 6 lesson in which she organised a card game in order to encourage pupils to remember the Italian instructions, which appear on most pieces of music. They love their music and it is largely as a result of the sound teaching they receive.

146. Singing is the dominant element of music taught in the school. Its good quality is heard in assemblies and at the hymn practices held in assembly time. For example, pupils in Key Stage 1 practice “All the flowers are waking” and “There’s only one mother for me”. They sing these beautifully, with clear diction, good intonation and obvious enjoyment. Even the youngest pupils know most of the words.

147. The school places great store in its continuing provision of good quality music for its pupils, but it currently does not provide the music teacher with sufficient good quality resources with which to teach. There is a designated music room, but the quality and range of equipment is barely satisfactory. The school lacks computer and appropriate software.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

148. Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations by the end of both key stages and they make satisfactory and at times good progress enabling them to achieve soundly although they have little experience of dance from other cultures. By the age of seven, pupils are able to explore different ways of moving on their feet, walking, hopping, skipping, changing speed and direction at a satisfactory level. They made good progress in using their movements to move like 'minibeasts' in response to taped music. Movements carried out by young junior pupils in their lesson gave testimony to their improved gymnastic skills of balance and coordination. Whilst a class of Year 6 pupils delighted their teacher by their ability to listen carefully to a piece of music and to interpret it through senses and movement. Pupils have opportunity to go swimming and receive a suitable range of awards and certificates.

149. The quality of teaching is good with very good teaching in Key Stage 2. Planning of lessons is good; the teachers have secure knowledge of the subject requirements. Full attention is given to the pupils' prior learning; the school having addressed this aspect was previously unsatisfactory. Lessons are part of a well-structured, developmental programme covering all aspects including swimming.

150. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. And their behaviour and sensitivity to health and safety issues generally has a good effect on the quality of learning. They work well and cooperate fully when required to work together.

151. A wide variety of activities are offered including competitive sport. Resources are good overall and well used. There is a large well-maintained grassed area, good size playground and a satisfactorily equipped hall.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

152. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity is in line with the locally agreed syllabus at both key stages. However, their knowledge and understanding of the other main World religions is not sufficiently well developed; although the whole of the subject is suitably planned for, pupils do not retain the knowledge well and their achievements in this aspect are slow. Collective worship is well used to further extend their knowledge of Christianity.

153. Too little teaching was seen to make an overall judgement but the lessons observed in Key Stage 2 were satisfactory overall with good teaching in Year 4. Clear planning is provided for religious education within the curriculum and the pupils' work correlates with the planning. They are currently studying signs and symbols and special people. In a lesson for pupils in Year 4 they were learning about martyrs and persecution. Teaching was good and pupils made sound progress. Good questioning drew on the pupils' previous knowledge. The lesson was well used to relate the learning to the pupils' own experiences without losing the religious context. In a lesson for Year 3 pupils the teacher introduced the Jewish faith through the display of artefacts accompanied by an explanation of their meaning. The pupils showed good recall from their previous learning of the Jewish faith.

154. The quality of the pupils' response to religious education is good. They enjoy hearing the stories from the Bible and show a clear ability to reflect on issues of faith and give reasoned opinions on some of the challenging issues raised.