

INSPECTION REPORT

ALVANLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Alvanley, Frodsham

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number : 111003

Headteacher: Mrs Margaret Papworth

Reporting inspector: Sheila Pemberton
20810

Dates of inspection: 18th – 19th February 2002

Inspection number: 196993

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

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Manley Road
Alvanley
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Cheshire

Postcode: WA6 9DD

Telephone number: 01928 722349

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs G Cousins

Date of previous inspection: April 29th – May 2nd 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20810	Sheila Pemberton	Registered inspector	English, Science Art and design Design technology Physical education Equal opportunities	What the school should do to improve How high standards are How well pupils are taught How well the school is led and managed
9895	Roger Williams	Lay inspector		How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents / carers
22062	Peter Graham	Team inspector	Geography History The foundation stage	
31012	Ann Welch	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music Religious education Special educational needs	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How good curricular and other opportunities are

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

With 55 pupils on roll, Alvanley Primary School is smaller than most primary schools. It is housed in a modernised Victorian building in a small and mainly prosperous rural village. Some parents, who want their children to benefit from small classes and eventually to attend a local secondary school, travel to the school from a seven-mile radius. A high proportion, a third of all pupils, joined the school at some time during the junior phase. There is a fairly even number of boys and girls on roll; 26 boys and 29 girls. Although most class sizes are small, pupils from different year groups are taught in the same class. Most children attend a private playgroup that is housed in the building before they start school. At the age of four, their early achievements are slightly above average. A below average percentage of pupils, 5.4 per cent, is eligible for free school meals. Fifty-two pupils are of white ethnic origin and three have black ethnic backgrounds. No pupils speak English as an additional language. A below average percentage of pupils, 14.5 per cent, have special educational needs and there are no statemented pupils. All pupils with special educational needs are recorded on the earliest stages of the school's register for learning difficulties in English. The school is a member of a federation of small schools and that increases teachers' expertise and pupils' social and sporting activities. French is taught to pupils in Years 5 to 6. The school has recently been awarded the Basic Skills Mark.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Alvanley Primary School provides its pupils with a good education. Strong leadership from the headteacher ensures that teachers have the skills and commitment needed to encourage pupils to do their best with support from a very caring community. Good teaching allows pupils to achieve high standards in English and mathematics. The high quality partnerships that exist between pupils, teachers, parents and governors have a very positive impact on pupils' learning and personal development. The school gives good value for the funding it receives.

What the school does well

- Good teaching is raising standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships contribute to the good progress they make in most lessons.
- Very good provision for pupils' personal growth makes a strong contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Close partnerships with parents have a very good effect on pupils' learning and the life of the school.
- Strong leadership and effective management by the headteacher provide the school with a good basis for development and improvement.

What could be improved

- More able pupils could do better in science.
- The work in different parts of lessons is sometimes too hard for pupils in Year 4.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made many good improvements to its provision since it was inspected in 1997. With small classes, the results of national tests fluctuate annually because they are affected by the performances of one or two pupils. However, pupils in Years 2 and 6 achieved standards in English and mathematics in 2001 that were either above or well above the national average. Standards in art, which were weak in the infants in 1997, have risen to a very good level. In science, standards improved at a satisfactory rate in the juniors so that pupils in Year 6 reached the national average in 2001. There is room for further improvement to the achievements of more able pupils in science. Teachers have

undertaken considerable training since 1997 to increase their expertise in English and mathematics. The way that teachers encourage good behaviour has improved to the extent that behaviour is usually very good. Partnerships with parents have also improved and are now very good. Strong improvements to assessments of pupils' learning make a positive contribution to the recent rise in standards. Governors are now more effective in carrying out their roles and responsibilities. They carry out all the responsibilities required of governing bodies.

STANDARDS

A table of the standards reached by pupils in Year 6 is omitted because comparisons with other schools are unreliable when a small number of pupils take National Curriculum tests. For the same reason, no conclusions can be drawn about differences in the achievements of boys and girls.

- From slightly above average starting points in 2001, children in the reception class make good progress in all areas of learning.
- Some children make such good progress in reading, personal development, gymnastics and art that they are starting work from the National Curriculum in the second term of the reception year.
- Despite variations to its results over the last three years, the school did well in national tests in 2001. Standards in Year 2 were consistently higher than in most other schools in reading, writing, mathematics and science. In Year 6, they were above average in mathematics and well above in English. Standards in science were not as high but were close to the national average.
- More able pupils did well in English in 2001. Their results were consistently higher than in most schools in Year 2 and above average in Year 6.
- While a higher proportion of pupils in Year 2 reached higher standards in mathematics than in most schools, this positive picture was not maintained in mathematics in Year 6. This happened, despite strong enough teaching because several pupils just missed the higher level in tests.
- In 2001, too small a proportion of more able pupils reached high standards in science in Year 2 or Year 6. A lack of high attainment in science is still evident in lessons and in pupils' books.
- A positive trend of the achievements of pupils in Year 2 from 1999 to 2001 was that the combined results of national tests were better in the school than most other schools in reading, writing and mathematics. The school maintained steady improvements to standards in writing.
- Over the same period, a higher proportion of pupils in Year 6 reached the national average in English and science than in most schools nationally.
- This year, standards in English, mathematics and science in Years 2 and 6 are closer to average than they were in 2001.
- The school did well to exceed its targets, which were appropriately challenging for pupils in Year 6 in English and mathematics in 2001.
- Pupils in Years 2 and 6 reach standards that are typical for their age in most subjects except art and design where standards are far higher than those reached by most seven and 11-year-olds. Pupils in Year 2 reach high standards in gymnastics.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very positive. Most pupils bring enthusiasm and enjoyment to their learning. They try hard to do their best in lessons and other activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' very good behaviour helps them to work attentively without disturbance during lessons and to enjoy the time they spend together in the playground and at lunchtimes.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils are usually sensible and reliable. Very harmonious relationships between pupils and staff make a strong contribution to effective teaching and learning.
Attendance	Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in good levels of attendance.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Children in the reception class make good progress in all areas of learning because of teachers' clear understanding and ability to meet their needs. Pupils achieve the best they are capable of in English and mathematics because teachers are good at teaching the skills needed to make good progress in literacy and numeracy. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with work that meets their needs and helpful guidance from teachers and support staff. Very positive and supportive relationships between teachers and pupils encourage pupils to do their best in most subjects. Because of teachers' clear understanding about where pupils are up to with their learning they provide work in English and mathematics that meets pupils' needs. Since the work teachers provide is not challenging enough for them, few more able pupils reach the high levels they are capable of in science. In most lessons, teachers' planning is effective enough to meet the needs of pupils in different year groups and levels of attainment. The learning of pupils in Year 4 slows down when the work provided in parts of some lessons is more suited to the needs of pupils in Years 5 and 6.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school provides a suitable curriculum that effectively meets the needs of children in the reception class. Most pupils in the infants and juniors are also provided with a curriculum that meets their needs and is relevant to their age and experience. However, the work provided does not always meet the needs of pupils in Year 4 or more able pupils in science. The school extends the curriculum through a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities and a good range of specialist workshops, residential visits and visitors.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The work, guidance and resources provided for pupils with special educational needs help them to make good progress towards their personal targets. Pupils' learning also benefits from the well-managed teaching they receive in small groups from a skilled classroom assistant.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are no pupils in the school with English as an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision for moral and social development makes a very positive contribution to pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships. Good provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development makes them thoughtful about the effects of their actions and aware of the traditions of their own and other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of pupils' well-being and is very good at maintaining harmonious behaviour. The close checks teachers make on pupils' progress and use they make of information from assessment ensures that pupils do their best in English and mathematics. Very close partnerships with parents provide an effective basis for pupils' learning and personal development.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good leadership is based on the way the headteacher encourages teachers and support staff to work together as a team to raise standards, maintains very positive relationships between staff and pupils, and effective partnerships with parents. Efficient systems are in place to ensure that the school is in a good position to bring about essential changes and developments to the quality of teaching and learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory overall. Governors fulfil all statutory responsibilities and are clear about the school's strengths and areas for development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Clear evaluations of the school's performance are based on careful analyses of pupils' progress, monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, and systematic examination of aspects of its provision.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of all available resources. It has sufficient teachers and support staff to teach the number of pupils on roll. The school supplements shortages in its resources with loans from other schools and agencies. It makes good use of the village hall to compensate for a lack of space for physical education. Prudent financial planning for improvements to the building was overturned in 2001 as a result of unexpected hazards to safety. The temporary overspend caused has been rectified this year. The school takes all essential measures to ensure that it gets good value from its spending.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is well led and managed. • Their children make good progress. • The teaching is good. • Parents think that behaviour in the school is good. • They appreciate the way that teachers work closely with parents. • They feel comfortable about approaching teachers about their concerns. • Teachers help their children to become mature and responsible. • Their children like school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They would like a more interesting range of activities for their children outside lessons. • Some parents would like more homework for their children.

The inspection team agrees with parents' very positive views of the school. The team considers the range of activities outside lessons to be satisfactory, especially as it is supplemented by residential visits for pupils in every year group. Most parents who want more homework have children in Year 6. They think that the homework provided is insufficient to prepare their children for the amount they receive in the secondary school. Although older pupils receive more homework in the summer term, inspectors agree that it would help them to establish good study habits if homework was increased throughout Year 6.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children's early achievements on entering the school vary every year because in a small school the numbers are so small. In 2001, assessments of children's early learning indicated that their experiences were slightly above average in reading, writing, mathematics and physical development. Whatever their starting points, however, children make good progress with their learning and many are ready to work in the National Curriculum by the end of the reception year. Some make such good progress in personal development, reading, gymnastics and art that they achieve the national objectives for their learning a term before leaving the reception class. Similarly, the standards pupils in Years 2 and 6 reach in National Curriculum tests and assessments by teachers vary in successive years. As a result, the standards achieved by a single pupil accounted for 11 per cent of the school's results in last year's Year 6.
2. Despite variations in standards over the past three years, the school achieved good results in national tests in 2001. A positive picture of improved achievement was evident in Year 2 and Year 6. Every pupil in Year 2 reached the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils in Year 6 reached standards that were well above average in English and above average in mathematics. Their performance in science reached the national average. This was an improvement since the last inspection when standards in science were unsatisfactory. The only pattern of consistent achievement appeared in the results of more able pupils in 2001. While the proportion of more able pupils reaching a higher level of attainment was well above average in Year 2 in reading and writing, it was also above average in English in Year 6. This results directly from good teaching that has improved with the school's recent emphasis on writing and the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy.
3. In Year 2, more able pupils did well in mathematics in 2001. This pattern was not repeated in Year 6. This resulted partly from the absence of an able mathematician but also because several pupils just missed the higher level in national tests. None of the more able pupils in Year 2 reached a higher level in science in 2001 and too small a proportion of pupils achieved it in Year 6. Because the teaching of science is not strong enough to challenge the learning of more able pupils, attainment at the higher levels is missing from both year groups in the current year.
4. Standards are not as high in English in Years 2 and 6 this year. There is no evidence of high attainment in Year 2 and while some pupils in Year 6 are reaching the higher level, several also work at a level below average. While sound opportunities exist for pupils in Year 2 to develop their writing, too few opportunities are provided for pupils in Year 6 to write in different subjects. This also happens in mathematics when opportunities are missed to extend pupils' learning in subjects other than information and communication technology (ICT). Standards in mathematics are also satisfactory in Years 2 and 6 this year. As with English, this is because pupils set out from starting points that were close to average when they joined the reception class. However, all pupils learn at a good pace, especially those with special educational needs in English who receive good additional support for reading and spelling. Talented mathematicians in the juniors also make good progress with their learning. This results from teaching that meets their needs and the positive way the school has acted to improve their achievements.

5. The school has maintained satisfactory standards in Years 2 and 6 in ICT and has met considerable changes to its provision since the last inspection. Until national funding allows the purchase of specific resources, pupils in Year 6 are prevented from carrying out the more advanced work of which they are capable. Although standards in physical education are typical of those reached by most seven and 11-year-olds, pupils in Year 2 reach high standards in gymnastics. Pupils throughout the school achieve very high standards in art and design. This results from the school's successful efforts to improve its teaching since art in Year 2 was highlighted for improvement at the last inspection. Standards are satisfactory and pupils make steady progress in most other subjects including religious education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. They are better than at the time of the previous inspection when they were satisfactory. Pupils were very pleased to be back at school after half term and felt that their school has something special to offer because it is small. As one pupil in Year 6 commented, *we all know one another very well, we get on well together and look after each other*. Their enthusiasm for school is very apparent as pupils talk about their favourite lessons and activities. In history, for instance, all pupils in Years 2 and 3 joined in eagerly to the introduction to the lesson. They wanted to share their memories of weaving sheds seen during a recent visit to Styal Mill. Teachers provide pupils with good quality workbooks with the name of the school on the front. Pupils respond well to this by taking pride in the way they present their work. Pupils with special educational needs have very positive attitudes to learning because of the extra help and guidance they get and the success they enjoy from activities planned to match their needs.
7. Pupils' behaviour is very good. It has improved significantly since the last inspection as a result of well thought out and comprehensive strategies that involve parents, governors, staff and pupils. Staff apply an effective behaviour and discipline policy consistently so that pupils are aware of what is expected of them. They work well and apply themselves to tasks in the classroom, move quietly around the school and act responsibly when playing at breaktimes. No pupils have been excluded from the school for poor behaviour.
8. Pupils' personal development has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. The caring nature of the school promotes personal development very effectively and lessons take place in a pleasant atmosphere where courtesy and politeness flourish. Numerous examples of polite behaviour occur every day. Pupils hold open doors for one another and are courteous, both to one another and to adults. For example, during physical education in the village hall, pupils in Year 3 repeatedly said *excuse me*, to others who were in the way when they set out apparatus. Because of the very good relationships that exist, pupils work hard to meet the standards that are expected of them and are confident that their contributions will be valued. The helpfulness and care shown by older pupils to younger ones is commonplace. For example, pupils in Year 6 helped a child in the reception class by showing him how to carry out his duty for the day; cleaning his table after lunch. This genuine care for one another reinforces a sense of belonging and social cohesion, and sets a high standard for young pupils to follow.
9. Throughout the school, pupils take responsibility for getting out the materials they need in lessons and tidying them away when they have finished. As they get older, they take on more responsibility for a range of important jobs. When pupils in Year 6, for example, set up their classroom for a whole school assembly one of them took prompt

action to help one of the smallest reception children to get to the front and join her class as they prepared to sing. Pupils in Year 2 remember how kind pupils in Year 6 were to them when they started school. A number of pupils in Year 6 have extra responsibilities such as Recycling Officer, Junior Road Safety Officer or as members of the School Council. They carry out their duties in a sensible and mature way and look upon them as a natural part of being the oldest pupils in the school. Pupils have more opportunities to plan and organise their own work than they had at the last inspection, particularly as the school is now linked to the Internet.

10. Attendance is good. It is above the national average and has improved since the last inspection. There is very little unauthorised absence. Authorised absence is chiefly due to sickness and parents taking holidays in term time. Very few pupils are late for school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

11. Most teaching is good and some teaching is very good. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection because of teachers' commitment to maintaining and raising standards, and training to improve their expertise.
12. A common aspect of all good teaching is the skilled use of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The successful use of both strategies enables teachers to provide work at the right level for pupils' current needs and to move those who are capable on to higher achievement. Not as effective is teaching in science. Although it has improved in the juniors since the last inspection, teaching is still not strong enough to ensure that all the school's more able pupils achieve their full potential. Teaching in mathematics is especially strong in the juniors as a result of the teacher's knowledge in the subject. It is good enough to meet the needs of pupils that the school has identified as talented in the subject. Unsatisfactory teaching results from weaknesses in the planning and organisation of work for pupils in Year 4. This is particularly evident in lessons where the learning of pupils in Years 5 and 6 predominates.
13. The quality of teaching is mainly good in the reception class with some very good features. Teachers make good use of assessment and their understanding of the development of young children to identify strengths and weaknesses in learning and personal growth. They use this information to good effect on children's progress by planning interesting and challenging activities. A very good feature of teaching is the strong, caring relationships that teachers in the reception class form with children. This enables children to feel secure, settle quickly into school and develop enthusiastic attitudes to learning. Very good relationships between teachers and pupils in the infants and juniors promote pupils' confidence, ability to express themselves and positive approaches to work.
14. Teachers make good use of specialist teaching, resources, educational visits and residential experiences to broaden pupils' experiences and meet the constraints of teaching in a small school. High standards in art and design for instance, result from training and the influence of the co-ordinator and visiting artists. Teachers bring pupils' learning to life and strengthen their social development through role-play in historical settings and adventurous activities for the juniors at an outdoor centre. A support assistant provides good opportunities for pupils with special education needs to improve their spelling and reading. Teachers are good at including pupils with special educational needs in every part of lessons. Their encouraging manner and gentle

prompting give pupils the confidence to join in and achieve success, for example, in the mental starter activity during numeracy lessons or when reading in English.

15. The work teachers provide for pupils to carry out at home has a good effect on pupils' interest and achievements in reading. Insufficient homework is provided to prepare pupils in Year 6 for the next stage of their education.

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

16. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It is similar to that provided at the last inspection and meets requirements to teach the statutory curriculum. Children in the reception class are provided with stimulating activities and experiences that cover all recommended areas of learning, and enable them to move easily to work in the National Curriculum during their reception year. Religious education is taught in line with the locally agreed syllabus and specialist teachers extend the curriculum in art and music. The school makes good provision for personal and social education. Teachers work hard to build pupils' self-esteem and are very successful in developing their confidence as they progress through the school. There is sound provision for sex education and pupils are warned about the abuse of drugs in health education.
17. The school implements the National Literacy Strategy to good effect on pupils' learning. Teachers highlighted writing as an area for development and this has led to a significant improvement in standards. The National Numeracy Strategy is also in place and provides good opportunities for pupils at different levels of attainment to make good progress. Both strategies are well implemented and have a good effect on pupils' learning. This is especially the case as all classes contain pupils from different age groups. Although the school has an effective curriculum for English and mathematics, there are limitations to its curriculum for science. These limitations are caused when the programme provided for more able pupils in science is not challenging enough to allow them to achieve the high standards of which they are capable. Also, pupils in Year 4 do not always receive a curriculum that builds systematically on their earlier learning.
18. Provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory, as was the case at the last inspection. A few parents hold the view that activities outside lessons are not wide-ranging enough or interesting. However, in order to compensate for constraints to its provision, the school belongs to a small schools' federation that widens opportunities for pupils to take part in a variety of cultural and sporting activities. Pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 also benefit both academically and socially from residential visits and parents organise a reasonable range of clubs out of school hours that include High Five, rugby, netball, and cycle proficiency.
19. The school continues to make good provision for pupils with special educational needs and meets all requirements of the new Code of Practice. Individual educational plans show suitable and achievable targets that give direction to teachers' planning. This ensures that the work provided builds effectively on pupils' existing achievements. The school also makes good provision for pupils who are gifted in mathematics. Work is planned to match their special needs and the school has already secured good support for them in the future through contacts with the local secondary school and the local education authority's advisory service.
20. The school has very good links with the community and with other schools. This has improved since the last inspection and adds to the value and breadth of pupils'

education. For instance, strong links with parish and district councils, garden centres, a Landscape Trust and MANWEB produced flower bulbs, trees and shrubs for pupils to plant in the grounds. Local groups and national companies contributed to improvements to the grounds and playground. This initiative benefits pupils' learning in subjects such as art and physical education and their enjoyment of leisure activities. Through discussion, a waste disposal company provided pupils with valuable environmental understanding and appreciation of aspects of its work. When involved in the playground project, pupils in Years 5 and 6 came into contact with a variety of experts and contractors, such as a landscaper and a playground artist, as they debated the practicalities of what needed to be done. By visiting the Catalyst museum, pupils increase their understanding of aspects of science. Visits to a local farm extend their experience of agriculture.

21. The school makes good use of its links with the church to celebrate festivals and assemblies with parents and friends. It provides accommodation for a playgroup that familiarises children with the building and provides them with positive experiences of the staff and older pupils. Good relationships with the local community include helpful arrangements with a public house in the village that provide safe parking and access to the school for pupils and parents, by helping them to avoid a busy road.
22. Helpful links with the local secondary school provide pupils in Years 5 and 6 with realistic expectations of the next stage of their education. For instance, they attend an annual science lecture at the school and secondary teachers take lessons in Year 6 prior to pupils' transfer. Membership of a federation of small schools leads to sharing resources and good practice amongst teachers, as well as widening teachers' experiences. Trainees and students from higher education establishments provide pupils with experiences of working with a wider range of adults than is available in a small school. As an active member of a local arts' association, the school provides pupils with access to festivals and competitions. Teachers make good use of the locality for educational visits and visiting speakers and artists make a useful contribution to pupils' education.
23. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall and is much better than at the time of the last inspection when spiritual development was unsatisfactory. Since then, the school has addressed this issue and spiritual development is good. For example, *light* was used effectively as a theme for an assembly where pupils were reminded of the festivals of *Christingle*, *Divali* and *Hanukkah*. When asked how they showed their own lights, pupils suggested *by loving and caring for one another*. Pupils were encouraged to gather their thoughts at the beginning as well as at the end of the assembly. One pupil commented *I feel refreshed and ready to start the day again*. During a class assembly on light, pupils in Years 2 and 3 were given opportunities to reflect on Van Gogh's *Café at Night*. They were fascinated because the artist had not used black paint to portray night. One pupil remarked *it was so he could pick up the exact colour*. Although teachers provide daily acts of worship, some miss opportunities for pupils to reflect on the *thought for the day*. The school has good contacts with the local parish and nearby Methodist church. Ministers from both visit the school on a regular basis and contribute to pupils' spiritual growth.
24. Provision for moral development, which was satisfactory at the last inspection, is now very good. The school's code of conduct emphasises the care and respect that pupils are expected to show one another. Because expectations of good behaviour are very high, pupils are rarely in trouble. Teachers consult pupils about rewards for good behaviour and sanctions for poor behaviour through the school council when the code

of conduct is reviewed each year. This strategy is very productive in that it involves pupils in promoting their own moral development. Council members take their roles very seriously and appreciate the way they are encouraged to act responsibly. Teachers provide regular opportunities to discuss moral issues during personal, social and health education and during *circle time* when pupils discuss matters that are important to them.

25. Provision for social development is very good. It has improved since the last inspection when it was satisfactory. This improvement stems from the way that teachers link social development to programmes for personal, social and health education. Teachers provide very good examples of courtesy and respect for others. Their calm and gentle approach forms the basis of very good relationships, which contribute to pupils' positive attitudes and self-discipline. Teachers encourage pupils to work responsibly and co-operatively during lessons. For example, pupils in Years 2 and 3 shared thread and sewing frames very amicably and helped one another by threading needles or giving advice about starting or finishing a line of sewing. Raising money for charities such as *The Claire Hospice* and *Save the Family* makes an important contribution to pupils' understanding of citizenship. Opportunities to take part in residential visits allow pupils to develop their social skills in unfamiliar settings.
26. The school has maintained good provision for cultural development since the last inspection. In religious education, pupils learn of the diversity of British society when studying Hinduism and Judaism. They are introduced to good quality children's literature and authors who talk about their work. Pupils study past societies such as ancient Egypt and contemporary ones such as Benin in West Africa. This helps to widen pupils' horizons by comparing other cultures with their own. Teachers introduce pupils to music from different cultures and this is complemented by visits from musicians. Pupils study the work of famous artists and are taught to appreciate the richness of techniques used by artists from different traditions. Visits to museums and local landmarks such as Helsby Hill and Spike Island at Widnes help pupils to see how the local area has been shaped over time. The school continues to take part in the village Maypole dancing each year.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

27. The school's good procedures for child protection and pupils' welfare have improved since the previous inspection. This results in part because staff and governors have had recent training in child protection and are fully aware of essential issues. The policy for child protection is clearly written, follows approved guidelines and is specific to the school. Pupils throughout the school take part in discussions during *circle time* that increase their understanding of personal and social issues and raise their awareness of matters related to health and personal safety.
28. Issues of health and safety are addressed well by governors and staff. Risk assessments that are carried out are recorded, acted on and reviewed. Thorough procedures ensure pupils' safety from fire and electricity. First aid and medical arrangements are good. Systems for checking on and improving attendance are also good and have improved considerably since the last inspection. Good links with an educational welfare officer promote pupils' well-being and a governor regularly checks attendance registers to ensure that they comply with requirements. The school discourages parents from taking their children on holiday during term time and reminds them of the benefits of full time attendance on pupils' learning.
29. Procedures for monitoring and encouraging good behaviour were in need of improvement at the last inspection. Procedures are now very good and the school has succeeded in establishing a culture of very good behaviour through the consistent and fair application of its behaviour policy. Policies and practices are regularly reviewed, and pupils and parents are part of the process. A well-designed playground and the involvement of the School Council in formulating sanctions and school rules make a positive contribution to pupils' behaviour. Surveys over the past two years show that parents consider behaviour has improved significantly. The school has very effective systems to discourage bullying. Any incidents are carefully monitored, discussed and discouraged at circle time, and older pupils act as positive role models. A theatre group that visits the school emphasises that bullying is wrong.
30. There are very good arrangements for maintaining a good level of personal development for pupils. Teachers know their pupils very well and use this information to give them the support and guidance they need to develop confidence and self esteem. Teachers' records of pupils' personal development are used helpfully to report aspects of their children's personal growth to parents.
31. Support for pupils with special educational needs remains good. Individual educational plans are reviewed and modified in response to how far pupils have achieved their targets. Teachers maintain a constant ongoing review of every pupil's progress including those with special educational needs. Although the school has no pupils with physical disabilities, procedures are in place to use the advice of outside agencies if the need arises. The school has the necessary ramps in place for wheelchair access. It enlists the help of the local education authority's *Reading Recovery* team to give extra guidance to pupils in the juniors. This support provides pupils with a wide range of helpful strategies to improve their reading.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

32. Most parents have very positive views of the school. The last inspection reported that the school needed to improve its links with parents. The very good partnerships developed by the school since that time have a very helpful impact on pupils' achievements since knowledgeable and well-informed parents encourage their children to learn at home and are involved in school activities and events.
33. Through their involvement, parents have a very successful impact on the work of the school. They boost standards and pupils' interest by coming into infant classrooms one morning each week to read with their own children and other pupils. They bring in toddlers, who as they play become familiar with the life of the school. A total of fifteen parents were in classes for this period during the inspection. A very active parent, teacher and friends' association makes a strong contribution to the social life of the school and the village by organising fundraising events. Parents raise substantial amounts of money for the school that are used, for instance, to subsidise educational visits and valuable resources for teaching and learning. Parents respond enthusiastically when asked for help. They have cleared the school's pond, tidied the grounds and provide extra supervision for school trips. Parents appreciate the school's accommodation of a private playgroup in the building. Many use it as preparation and a useful link to starting school in the reception class.
34. Parents are very well informed about happenings in the school. Newsletters keep them up to date with issues from governors' meetings, topics that are taught each term, educational visits, advance news about events and ways that they can support their children's learning. Annual reports have improved. They now provide clear information for parents about what their children do well and where there is room for improvement to their learning. Reports share pupils' personal targets with their parents and pupils' own views about their achievements. Reading and homework diaries provide a helpful channel of communication between parents and teachers that support pupils' learning and well-being.
35. By involving parents in pupils' individual targets the school places them in a good position to support their children's learning. It also provides workshops that inform parents of new initiatives and changes to the curriculum. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved in developing their children's educational plans. The school informs them about activities that include their children and any changes in provision. After seeking parents' views over the past two years, the school shows that it values their opinions by implementing good ideas. Parents appreciate the welcoming atmosphere of the school and take advantage of opportunities to speak informally with teachers and to share their concerns. A number of parents, who attend school regularly to help in classrooms, make a good contribution to teaching and learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

36. In a calm and systematic manner, the headteacher provides strong leadership and good management for the work of the school. Since the last inspection, her role has grown and strengthened in response to the challenges inherent in implementing national initiatives in a small school, meeting issues for improvement from the last inspection and continuously evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and learning in the school.
37. Strong leadership is based in the headteacher's drive to raise standards by

- motivating and securing the commitment of teachers, governors and support staff
 - providing an effective model of good practice by working as a part-time teacher in the reception class
 - maintaining close partnerships with parents and governors that have a positive impact on pupils' learning
 - creating a positive ethos where pupils feel safe and make good progress.
38. Good management results from the headteacher's ability to coherently plan improvements to standards by
- addressing issues raised from the monitoring of teaching and learning
 - laying strong emphasis on improving standards in English and mathematics
 - using performance management to raise standards while also supporting the development of teachers' personal expertise
 - providing teachers with specific skills in English and mathematics
 - prudently managing the school's finances to get the best value from limited resources
 - sharing responsibilities so that teachers gain expertise in managing different subjects
 - maintaining a rigorous programme to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's provision.
39. Since the last inspection, when it was an issue for improvement, governors have developed a sound sense of their roles and responsibilities. They fulfil all statutory requirements and now have clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Several governors take an active part in the life of the school. They attend staff training, deal with relevant issues from the last inspection, work in classrooms and provide good support for the co-ordinator for special educational needs. Governors' understanding about the impact of teaching on learning has increased through their involvement in managing teachers' performance. The need to make best use of limited funds motivates the headteacher and governors to exercise careful control of the school's finances.
40. The management of special educational needs remains good. The co-ordinator carries out all duties conscientiously and maintains effective contacts with staff, parents and outside agencies. The school regularly supplements the budget for special educational needs to buy in extra help from the authority's Learning Support Services. This funding is spent wisely as it contributes effectively to the progress made by pupils who need help with their learning or personal development. Training to implement the new Code of Practice is in the pipeline. The co-ordinator is a member of a small group made up of teachers from similar schools. This provides opportunities for co-ordinators to share expertise and resources, and to solve mutual problems.
41. Effective procedures support the professional growth and confidence of newly qualified teachers, and ensure that pupils' learning is not disturbed when new staff and students join the school. The school makes good use of the skills of a trained classroom assistant to guide the learning of pupils with special educational needs and to work with small groups of pupils in different subjects. Because midday assistants are trained to deal efficiently with pupils' needs at lunchtime, pupils enjoy their meals and play in a sociable atmosphere that is free of tension.
42. Resources are mainly satisfactory and teachers use them effectively to improve pupils' learning. They also make good use of visits and visitors to extend the curriculum. Staffing levels are satisfactory. There are enough, suitably qualified teachers and

support staff to ensure that pupils make good progress with their learning. Efficient administrative support ensures the smooth running of the school and allows teachers to concentrate on their responsibilities. Special grants, such as those for pupils with special educational needs, are used productively to provide additional help for their learning. Teachers make satisfactory use of ICT to increase resources for learning and are beginning to use it with confidence to extend pupils' understanding of different subjects.

43. Accommodation has improved since the recent refurbishment of the schoolhouse. The extra space it provides relieves pressure on ground floor rooms and provides space for a playgroup in the building. The accommodation allows for effective learning in all subjects except physical education. However, this is catered for by the use of the village hall for dance and gymnastics. A spacious classroom for pupils in Years 4,5 and 6 is adapted for assemblies and other gatherings. The school has developed its grounds to a high standard since the last inspection. An excellent playground forms a very effective resource for learning and leisure. The building is spotless, contains displays that capture pupils' imaginations and reinforce their learning. It is maintained to high standards of cleanliness and repair.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

44. The school should

- (1) raise standards for more able pupils in science by
 - boosting their scientific understanding through a challenging range of experiments and investigations
 - increasing the pace of pupils' learning so that they can study aspects of science in greater depth
 - providing more able pupils in Year 6 with a greater variety of ways to record their work
 - keeping close checks on the quality of teaching and learning in the subject
(paragraphs 3, 12, 17, 58, 67, 69, 71, 72 and 90 of the report)

- (2) ensure that the work provided in some subjects meets the needs of all pupils in classes with more than one age group by
 - planning objectives, tasks and activities at the correct level for pupils in each year group
 - using a greater variety of strategies to manage pupils' learning and to organise suitable resources
 - maximising opportunities to use skilled support assistants to guide the learning of small groups of pupils
(paragraphs 12, 17, 63, 79 and 80 of the report).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	17
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	4	9	3	1	0	0
Percentage	0	23	53	18	6	0	0

Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents six percentage points.

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)	0	55
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	8

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	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	3
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	52
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18
Average class size	18.3

Education support staff: YR – Y1

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0.7
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000 - 2001
	£
Total income	174,865
Total expenditure	175,978
Expenditure per pupil	3199.6
Balance brought forward from previous year	69
Balance carried forward to next year	-1044

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	55
Number of questionnaires returned	19 (31.7%)

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	26	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	63	37	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	79	21	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	42	11	5	0
The teaching is good.	68	32	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	63	32	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	95	5	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	26	11	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	68	32	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	79	21	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	68	32	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16	63	21	0	0

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

45. The school admits children to a mixed reception and Year 1 class in the September following their fourth birthday. They start the reception year with skills that tend to be slightly above average but there are variations in different year groups. Most children make good progress and achieve well by the time they reach Year 1. There are no children with special educational needs in the reception class and all children are presently on target to reach the early learning goals by the end of their reception year. In many cases, they are already working in the first stage of the National Curriculum in reading, gymnastics and art, and have reached the goals for their learning in personal development.

Personal, social and emotional development

46. Provision for personal, social and emotional development is good. Very good teaching enables children to make such good progress that they comfortably reach a standard that is typical for their age by the end of the reception class. Teachers and other adults in the school quickly get to know the children and use this knowledge skilfully to promote their personal growth. Because teachers develop their self-confidence effectively, children understand the need to deal fairly with one another and become increasingly independent at selecting their own activities. With very little help, children change and dress themselves competently for lessons in physical education. They soon adapt to the school's routines and take part in whole class activities and assemblies with enthusiasm.
47. Teachers' caring relationships with them have a significant impact on children's positive attitudes towards the school and develop their keenness to learn. They concentrate on the work and display strong interest in all activities. Children often share their ideas and experiences. When playing in the role play area, for example, they discussed their imaginary characters and planned what they wanted to do in *Cinderella's kitchen*. All children love to do well and respond with pleasure to praise and encouragement from their teachers. Children's behaviour is very good and they demonstrate clear understanding of right and wrong.

Communication, language & literacy

48. Good teaching accounts for children's good progress in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Children talk confidently with one another and adults, and listen carefully to their teachers during stories and introductions to lessons. The strong relationship between staff and children promotes children's confidence and ensures that they are not afraid to experiment with new vocabulary. Teachers encourage children to speak clearly when answering questions, and through their own good use of language, help children to develop a wide vocabulary.
49. Reading is taught well and children enjoy sharing books with the teacher and with one another. More able readers tackle simple texts confidently and correct their own errors. All children develop the strategies needed to make sense of the stories they read. They recognise many words and use the sounds of letters to build unfamiliar words. Teachers extend children's reading by encouraging them to take books home. They also encourage parents to read with their children at home and in school.

Consequently, all children attain the standard that is typical for their age and by their second term in the reception class many are approaching the first level of the National Curriculum. By providing varied opportunities for children to write as part of their play and through more formal activities, staff help them to make good progress with the early skills of writing. All children write their own names independently and form letters accurately when copying words. More able children write simple sentences with support from the classroom assistant.

Mathematical development

50. Good teaching develops children's interest in numbers. Because their teachers motivate them, children in the reception year make good progress and enjoy the challenges provided in this area of learning. Teachers place strong emphasis on practical activities to help children understand the relationships between numbers. This prepares them well for future work in mathematics in the first level of the National Curriculum. For example, the use of cubes to add numbers together helps children to understand the process of addition. Children have a secure knowledge of numbers and shapes by the end of the reception class and all count confidently beyond 10 and count backward from 10. They sort, count and match numbers and objects and are quick to work out *one more than* or *one less than* a number. Children recognise and accurately write numbers up to 9. They identify shapes around the classroom and name two-dimensional shapes such as triangles, squares and rectangles. When describing shapes, children refer to properties such as the number of corners and sides.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

51. Good teaching that is typified by high expectations and well-planned and interesting lessons, ensures that children have good knowledge of a range of topics by the end of their time in the reception class. Teachers use practical activities effectively to support children's learning. As part of a topic on light, for example, children made good use of their senses to identify different sources of light. They used their knowledge of night and day to discuss features of night, such as the different stars that can be seen. Through careful observation children are beginning to identify and describe the properties of various materials. They know that some materials are shiny and are aware of the textures of different fabrics. Children are interested in living things. They talk about animals such as bats that are active at night and know that animals have skeletons. Teachers use resources effectively to engage children's interest in the work. This has a good impact on their learning. For example, when the teacher showed children the work of a local textile artist and of famous impressionist painters, they developed their knowledge of art and artists.

Physical development

52. Children's physical development is good. Many children enter the school with well-developed physical skills. Very good teaching extends and improves children's skills so that at the end of the reception year they are all working at the first level of the National Curriculum. Most children understand the purpose of exercise and its physical effects on their bodies. One child, when asked by the teacher what exercise does answered *it makes you tired and sweaty*. Lessons in physical education provide good opportunities for the formal teaching of physical skills and children are enthusiastic about the work in gymnastics. In one lesson, they followed their teacher's clear instructions carefully and as a result, became increasingly skilful when running, hopping and jumping round the hall in different ways. They used the space sensibly and handled equipment such as large mats competently and with care. The teacher's high expectations encouraged

children to extend their initial activities very effectively when balancing and performing forward and backward rolls. Children use tools such as scissors, pencils and paintbrushes safely and accurately.

Creative development

53. Teaching is good and provides varied opportunities for children to experiment with colour and texture. They learn to use a range of tools and materials to produce imaginative and colourful work. Children recognise and name the primary colours and some secondary colours. With good teaching that is based on high expectations and imaginative activities children make good progress towards work in art and design in the National Curriculum. In one lesson, the teacher made very good use of the work of artists by showing paintings by impressionists such as Monet to capture the children's interest and encourage them to create effective textile wraps. Children sing with energy and enjoyment. When the teacher taught them a new song they listened so attentively that they quickly learned the tune and words and sang the song in assembly the following day. When playing in the role play area, children are good at acting out stories based on their recent experiences. For example, they showed how observant they were when pretending to be Victorian people following a visit to Quarry Bank Mill

ENGLISH

54. Despite the small number of pupils in Years 2 and 6 in 2001, standards in English in national tests rose and were higher in Year 6 than at any time since the last inspection. As a result, the school exceeded its target for English. All pupils in both year groups reached the level expected for their age. A significant proportion of more able pupils reached a high level in writing in Year 2, while an above average proportion reached a high level in reading. This is due to the special emphasis teachers placed on writing in recent years. Similarly in Year 6, the proportion of more able pupils reaching a high standard in English was above that reached in most other schools. Although standards fluctuated from 1999 to 2001, pupils' performance in reading and writing in Year 2 and in English in Year 6 over the three years combined was better than the national average for their age group.
55. Since there are fewer more able pupils in this year's Year 2 than in 2001, standards in reading and writing are unlikely to exceed the national average in national tests. More pupils in Year 6 work at an above average level, although this year some attainment in English is slightly below average. However, pupil's individual achievements represent good progress in their learning. This results from good skilled teaching and lessons in the infants that are very good. Strong teaching stems from the successful use of the National Literacy Strategy. This has contributed over recent years to teachers' expertise and competence in providing pupils with a good basic grounding in the skills they need for reading and writing.

56. Standards in English have risen as a result of very effective leadership and efficient management of the subject. After identifying gaps in pupils' achievements, the school filled them by acting on the good advice and support of local education authority consultants. The co-ordinator for English also strengthened partnerships between teachers and parents by increasing parents' understanding of the importance of reading. Parents' efforts to add to their children's achievements have resulted in some parents becoming competent enough to support pupils' reading in school. Meetings for parents and playgroup leaders emphasised the value of early writing. This added to the success of teachers' efforts to encourage pupils in the infants to attempt their own spellings. Collections of pupils' written work at different levels of attainment improved teachers' expectations and understanding about standards.
57. Of particular help to pupils who have special educational needs for their difficulties with reading and spelling is the effective guidance they receive in Years 2 and 4 from trained classroom assistants. The strategies used to improve the learning of pupils with special educational needs are considered to be so valuable that teachers use them with other pupils who encounter occasional difficulties. Helpful advice from a *Reading Recovery* teacher employed by the local education authority is used very supportively for pupils in Year 4 who encounter weaknesses in their reading.
58. Accurate assessment of pupils' learning in classes with more than one age group is fundamental to the planning of work to meet the needs of different pupils. Awareness of some pupils' reluctance to voice their opinions before the whole class results from good assessment in the junior phase. As a result, the teacher in Years 4, 5 and 6 provides pupils with frequent opportunities to develop their confidence in speaking and listening by discussing their ideas in pairs and smaller groups. The teacher also encourages pupils to record their discussions on white boards. In this way when they settle down to write, most pupils' language is very descriptive in poems about a fictitious character, *IT*. Computers are also used effectively for writing when pupils in the juniors use them to transcribe their poems. However, writing is not extended in the juniors as well as in the infants in subjects such as religious education and science.
59. Very good teaching in Years 2 and 3 is supported by the teacher's calm and gentle approach. Because they are confident and secure, pupils bring the humour of the *Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig* into wanted posters to capture the pig. Comments such as, *He's a trickster, he's invincible*, enliven pupils' writing. Central to good progress in learning to read is the enjoyment that pupils gain from the beginning of the process. Almost without exception, pupils associate reading with pleasure. This happens when pupils read with adult help in the infants, or unaided and at spare moments in the juniors. One pupil of average ability in Year 6 explained that fiction is so enjoyable that he comes back to a book *as many times as possible on the same day*. With such enthusiasm, it is not surprising that most pupils use a good range of strategies to tackle new words and to understand the meaning of stories in Year 2. While pupils in the juniors are confident, fluent and accurate readers who tackle an adventurous range of poetry and fiction with good understanding of the texts. They read reference books about topics in different subjects but are unaware of the systems libraries use to classify information.
60. The way that standards are checked and monitored ensures that they will continue to rise in the future. Aiming for success with their individual targets encourages pupils, teachers and parents to improve pupils' achievements. Much of the school's recent training programme has been dedicated to improving standards in English. This has resulted not only from national initiatives but from the outcomes of the school's monitoring and development planning.

MATHEMATICS

61. The results of national tests in 2001 showed that standards in mathematics were better than those achieved nationally and that all pupils in Year 6 reached the expected level. The school exceeded its target for attainment in mathematics although a smaller proportion of pupils reached the higher level than did nationally. This is because of absence at the time of the tests and, although the teaching in Year 6 is strong enough, several pupils just missed reaching the higher level. With a very small group of pupils, this had a marked effect on the results of tests. Taking the three years from 1999 to 2001 together, standards have risen at the same rate as the national trend. The performance of seven-year-olds in the national tests was well above that achieved nationally. Again, all pupils reached the expected level and a similar proportion reached the higher level as did nationally.
62. However, pupils in the current Years 2 and 6 reach standards that are close to average. Although not as strong in mathematics as last year, pupils in both groups have made good progress with their learning through the infants and juniors. This results because teaching has improved since the last inspection and is consistently good. Teachers also approach the methods and more structured curriculum of the National Numeracy Strategy with confidence and enthusiasm.
63. A strength of teaching in both the infant and juniors is the way that teachers check pupils' mathematical understanding and make effective use of this information to set tasks that meet pupils' needs. This enables teachers to meet the challenge of teaching more than one age group in the same class. In a lesson in Years 4, 5 and 6, the teacher planned work to match the needs of all pupils for the main part of the lesson. This meant that each pupil was stretched and because of good teaching achieved success with problems that involved the sequencing of both negative and positive numbers. As a result, more able pupils in Years 5 and 6 worked out the missing numbers in sequences such as ? -5.35 ? ? -5.59 ? ? ? Less able pupils in Year 4 correctly worked out sequences such as -5, -2, 1, 4, 7 with effective guidance from their teacher. The teacher showed good knowledge of the subject when helping pupils understand that -10 is less than -3. Although this part of the lesson matched pupils' needs, this was not the case during mental mathematics when the questions were too difficult for pupils in Year 4.
64. This was not so in mental mathematics in Years 2 and 3, when pupils enjoyed a challenge *to chase the target* when using a spinner to generate numbers. Pupils in Year 2 used counting boards to reach 30 before their partners, while pupils in Year 3 kept running totals as they aimed for a target of 130. Good organisational skills ensured that the teacher concentrated on each group separately during the main part of the lesson. Having given pupils in the Year 3 a task to prepare for the main written activity, the teacher gave good support to pupils in Year 2. Because of their very good attitudes to mathematics, pupils in Year 3 managed to work quietly in pairs to find key words in a mathematical problem in narrative form. As they shared their findings, the teacher skilfully intervened and helped pupils to solve the problem. A successful feature of teaching in the lesson was that pupils were encouraged to be methodical and to use their knowledge of patterns and relationships when solving problems with numbers. This enabled more able pupils in Year 3 to shorten their search for ways to make 100 by adding pairs of numbers that are multiples of 10. As they reached 50 + 50 one pupil realised that *the rest are just the other way round*.

65. Strong teaching in the infants is based on good methods to teach numeracy and practical activities to ensure that pupils understand mathematical ideas. For example, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to estimate the weight of various objects and to check the difference between actual and estimated weights. Learning becomes fun when pupils play games to reinforce their understanding of addition or subtraction.
66. Pupils' very good attitudes to mathematics are closely linked to the very good relationships they have with their teachers. They are keen to take part in all activities and work together very well, sharing ideas and equipment. Pupils readily help one another during group activities. For example, while their teacher was busy with a pupil with special educational needs, two pupils in Year 2 helped another who had forgotten how to record his work. Pupils are willing to persevere when tasks are challenging, secure in the knowledge that they will be praised for their efforts and reassured if they make mistakes. They take pride in the recording work that is neatly presented and carefully organised. Pupils look forward to reading positive comments in their books from teachers and are helped by that mistakes are marked in their written work with helpful hints and correct methods of working.
67. Teachers make sure that pupils know how to improve their mathematical skills. Targets are discussed with pupils, shared with parents, reviewed regularly and changed as necessary. Although there are no pupils with special educational needs in mathematics, several pupils lack concentration or self-esteem. Teachers ensure that these pupils are fully involved in practical activities, discussions about the work and mental mathematics. Gentle prompting also helps them to complete their work. Pupils in Year 5, with special talents in mathematics, benefit from skilful teaching that moves their learning forward and working alongside more able pupils in Year 6. Teachers miss opportunities for pupils to improve their understanding of mathematics in subjects such as science, design and technology and geography. However, they develop pupils' mathematical skills effectively in ICT.
68. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator makes good use of tests and assessments to check for gaps in the curriculum and to predict the level pupils should attain by the time they leave school. By observing and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in lessons the co-ordinator identifies strengths and addresses weaknesses in teaching. One outcome is that teachers know that the most productive way to ensure that pupils do their best is to match the work to their individual needs. With the support the co-ordinator provides for teaching and a commitment to improving pupils' learning, the school is in a good position to raise standards in mathematics.

SCIENCE

69. Standards in science have improved in the juniors since the last inspection when the achievements of pupils in Year 6 were below the national average. This situation altered over recent years when both seven and 11-year-olds achieved the national average in assessments and National Curriculum tests. Although trends in attainment are not necessarily reliable when the results of national depend on the achievements of small groups of pupils, a pattern emerged from last year's tests that is currently evident in pupils' work in Years 2 and 6. Although every pupil in both year groups reached the expected level in 2001, a smaller proportion of more able pupils achieved higher levels in science than in most schools nationally. A more positive trend in the results of assessments by teachers and National Curriculum tests over the years 1999 to 2001 was that the proportion of pupils reaching the national average level in science in Year 2 and Year 6 was consistently higher than in most other schools.

70. When teachers in the infants and the juniors address the same scientific topic at the same time in the school's rolling programme of topics, pupils in Year 1 make a good start in learning about light. Through approaches that appeal to young pupils, the teacher developed their knowledge of the subject by asking them to label things in the classroom that were sources of light. In this way the teacher assessed the level of pupils' understanding, helped those who were unsure about the status of *shiny things* and moved their learning on at a satisfactory pace.
71. To address gaps in attainment identified by teachers, the school changed its programme for science to increase the amount of work covered and the pace of pupils' learning. By introducing pupils to a different scientific topic each half term teachers improved pupils' knowledge of the subject. The work of pupils in Year 2 shows that they have covered work on electricity, living things and materials in sufficient depth to reach the national average level when their achievements are assessed next term. Teachers also introduced pupils to a satisfactory range of ways of recording their learning through flow charts, graphs, diagrams, evaluations and predictions about the outcomes of investigations. What is missing from the teaching is evidence of the planning of experiments and extended investigations to give greater challenge to some pupils' thinking. As a result, all pupils in the class work at the same level and there are no opportunities to reach higher levels.
72. This lack of challenge for more able pupils is also apparent in teachers' planning in the juniors. Difficulties arise when teachers plan work for different year groups in a class but are unable to use information from assessment effectively enough to provide work for more able pupils. By seeking advice about teaching pupils from different year groups in the same class from a common starting point, pupils in Year 6 cover enough science to reach the average level for their age. With additional support before taking National Curriculum tests, some more able pupils reach a higher level in the subject. This level of attainment is not evident in the work of more able pupils in lessons or in their recorded work. A weakness in the achievements of pupils in Year 6 lies in the small amount of recorded work they produce and the lack of variety in ways to record their observations.
73. Although the co-ordinator manages the subject with satisfactory effect on standards, missing from the role are opportunities for the co-ordinator to check the quality of teaching and learning in lessons. Because the school has been involved in the implementation of new strategies for teaching English and mathematics, no time has been allocated for monitoring pupils' work in science. Although standards have improved at a satisfactory rate and teaching is mainly satisfactory, thorough assessment of pupils' learning to guide teachers' planning will not take place until pupils' progress is monitored with rigour.

ART AND DESIGN

74. As a result of specialist teaching and good leadership, standards in art and design have improved since the last inspection and are well above those typical of most pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. By working with the co-ordinator, pupils in the infants have acquired the knowledge and understanding of art that was previously missing from their achievements. Standards in the subject are high because teachers provide an usually wide range of experiences and materials, and plan work for pupils in a very interesting range of textures and scales. Art and design makes a strong contribution to pupils' cultural development. Teachers make very good use of the school's resources, visits to the locality and places of historical interest to introduce a much wider variety of techniques than is normally available to primary pupils. Observational drawing is an especially good feature of pupils' work. As part of a topic that incorporated work on materials in science and old-fashioned bicycles in history, pupils in Years 2 and 3 produced very competent, closely observed drawings of bicycles in charcoal. The task that made the work outstanding was the teacher's expertise and high expectation that pupils could make accurate three-dimensional miniature bicycles by twisting fine wire.
75. The strong creative influence of the co-ordinator for art and design is evident in the range of work that teachers plan with textiles. This area of expertise is evident in the juniors in the attractively coloured and embroidered wall hangings pupils made when producing large-scale pieces of felt. Pupils worked together in small groups to make the felt and had the satisfaction of seeing their work admired by visitors as part of the school's impressive display. Pupils' pride in their work is boosted when as members of a local primary schools' arts' association they take part in workshops and see their own work exhibited at a nearby arts' centre. As in 1997, the school draws on the skills of artists such as the African artist, Misoshi, whose influence on pupils' creativity was observed at the last inspection. The very good work that resulted from her visit in 1997 and the techniques the artist introduced are now part of the repertoire of teachers in the school. At the latest workshop provided by Misoshi, pupils in the juniors designed colourful patterns for highly effective African-style wall hangings that they printed with a variety of blocks on red fabric.
76. Pupils in the juniors produced more high-quality three-dimensional work during a two-day workshop led by a willow artist. By assembling the different sections in groups of two and three, pupils had the opportunity to work with exciting materials that when combined, resulted in a large-scale model of *Willow the elephant* for permanent display in the school's grounds. Co-operative work that is a strong feature of pupils' social development, was also the technique used when pupils made a fabric wall hanging from individual panels that contain letters of the alphabet. When the school was decimated by sickness recently, the art co-ordinator made the best of the situation by introducing every remaining pupil to the techniques employed in batik. This meant that children in the reception class and pupils in the infants had the opportunity to contribute to work that is normally experienced by older pupils. The chance to be involved in such a successful whole-school project gives pupils a strong interest in the subject and a sense of achievement.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

77. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 produce work in design and technology that is typical for their age. Standards in the subject are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. By adopting a nationally approved programme of work, teachers provide pupils with an interesting range of activities that involve the use of a satisfactory range of materials, tools and techniques.
78. By linking learning in subjects such as history, ICT and science to design and technology, teachers provide good starting points for pupils to approach the work. This is because pupils bring their previous experiences to bear when carrying out current projects. For example, as part of a recent topic about the Romans, pupils in Year 2 made frames for portraits of Roman soldiers from card. After cutting, measuring and gluing their frames, pupils strengthened them with art straws and added to their attractiveness with patterns, Roman numerals and drawings of soldiers. A weakness with the finished products was that the materials used lacked sufficient strength to provide rigid frames. They also lacked the creativity and individuality of approach that seven-year-olds are capable of achieving when given the opportunity.
79. When pupils in the junior phase constructed sturdy, well planned vehicles from a construction kit, the task of powering the vehicles was made easier because they were competent both at constructing the vehicles and at building electrical circuits with more than one switch. In this part of a series of lessons, the teacher demonstrated clear understanding of the subject and how to motivate pupils and gain their interest. However, when the initial task moved on to using gears to change the speed and direction of moving vehicles, pupils in Year 4 found the work too hard. They became interested spectators when pupils in Years 5 and 6 experimented with different gears and techniques to control the motion of an engine. This weakness in planning slows the progress of pupils in Year 4. Although they were very attentive to the suggestions and modifications that older pupils made to the gears, their main involvement in the work was listening and making occasional suggestions.
80. Clear guidance from recently adopted programmes of work places teachers in a satisfactory position to raise standards in the subject. While teaching is mainly satisfactory, weaknesses exist in providing work that meets the needs of all pupils in classes with three different year groups. Too little attention is paid to using skilled support staff to guide the learning of different groups of pupils.

GEOGRAPHY

81. Teachers' planning indicates that pupils in Years 2 and 6 are provided with sound opportunities to develop geographical knowledge and understanding that are satisfactory for their age. The school has maintained satisfactory standards in geography since the last inspection. Teaching is satisfactory in both the infants and the juniors. Teachers plan lessons in the form of topics and promote pupils' enthusiasm for geography by selecting interesting localities for them to study. Teachers use fieldwork well to develop pupils' knowledge of their own locality. Through visits to places such as Frodsham Hill, Llangollen, Conway and Spike Island, pupils learn about different geographical features and how and why people use land for different purposes.
82. Much of the work provided for pupils in the infants centres on the area closest to the school. By the age of seven, pupils have sound understanding of the purpose of maps. They know that a map is essentially a *bird's eye view* and create their own maps of the

locality after walking round Alvanley looking at different buildings and features. They use maps to identify places in Great Britain and the world, noting places where they have been on holiday or where relatives live.

83. By the end of Year 6, pupils' learning is extended at a satisfactory rate to wider knowledge of places and environments. They learn to compare different localities, identifying similarities and differences between their own village and places such as the coastal town of Conway. Pupils also learn about the geographical features of different countries. They know something of how people live in these lands and of the types of industries or agriculture that are important to the inhabitants. For example, when studying the Caribbean, pupils become aware of the importance of bananas to the economy. When studying Benin in Africa, they begin to understand the difficulties experienced in less economically developed countries. Teachers create close links between history and geography. As a result, pupils' knowledge of Greece as a tourist resort is used to compare aspects of modern life with life in ancient Greece.
84. Pupils in Year 6 develop sound understanding of physical processes that shape the landscape, such as, glaciation and the erosion caused by rivers. While teachers provide them with an appropriate range of geographical skills, the way that the topics are arranged does not allow pupils to practise these skills often or consistently enough to consolidate the skills as well as they should. For example, they are not confident enough when using grid references because they do not use them regularly. However, the way that geography is managed is sound enough to ensure that the curriculum is covered and that standards are maintained.

HISTORY

85. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 reach standards in history that are typical for their age and similar to those at the last inspection. Teaching is good. Lessons provide pupils with experiences that promote their knowledge and understanding of history and ability to find out about the past. As a result, pupils can recall facts and compare some aspects of life in the past with their own experiences. Following a trip to Quarry Bank Mill, for example, pupils in both the infants and juniors discussed the life styles of children who worked in Victorian mills. Pupils in Year 2 made simple comparisons between the harsh regimes of nineteenth century schools with their own experiences of school. While in Year 6, pupils compared the daily routines of children who worked in factories with their own routines. This activity made a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development by making them think about the feelings of child workers. It supported the cultural development of pupils in the juniors, as they became increasingly aware of social changes over a period of time.
86. Teachers' commitment to making history interesting encourages pupils in Year 2 as they learn about famous people and simple features of life in Roman and Victorian times. Pupils re-tell stories from the past and place events in Florence Nightingale's life in the order in which they happened. Teachers ensure that pupils have access to materials that provide them with different ways of finding out about the past. In Year 6, these include interesting artefacts, information books, the Internet and historical documents, such as school logbooks. Teachers demonstrate when different historical events took place by providing time lines for pupils to record important happenings and inventions. They introduce pupils to terms and vocabulary such as BC, AD, century and decade.

87. The work in history is well established and managed. It is based on visits to places of historical interest that bring the past to life. Through a programme that uses different approaches to the same period of history, pupils in different year groups visit Chester to learn about the Romans, Speke Hall when studying the Tudors and Quarry Bank Mill to study features of the Victorian era. Teachers' enthusiasm for the subject has a good effect on pupils' attitudes towards the subject. Pupils are enthusiastic about history and are keen to find out about what life was like in the past. To extend pupils' learning, teachers link the work in history with subjects such as art and ICT. Teachers make good use of computers for pupils to carry out research through the Internet.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

88. The school has maintained standards in ICT since the previous inspection that are typical of those achieved by most seven-year-olds and 11-year-olds. However, since the last inspection, the school has moved on in terms of resources and expertise. Recent funding enabled the school to update its hardware so that it has the facilities to teach the latest requirements and to keep abreast of rapid national changes in provision. The co-ordinator, who joined the school after the previous inspection, has used considerable expertise to help other members of staff become competent with resources for the subject.
89. Teachers' planning benefits from the adoption of a new programme of work based on national guidelines. This ensures that pupils learn essential skills in a logical order and cover all parts of the curriculum. Teaching in Years 2 and 3 is satisfactory. By the time they are seven, pupils confidently change the colour, size and style of the text as they write stories and poems. They save and retrieve their work and use menus and tool bars when creating pictures with paint programs. They also know how to program a robot to move in a sequence. By the age of 11, pupils use ICT to combine different forms of information. For example, a *Talking Book*, intended for younger children, combined text, graphics and sound. Pupils create newsletters by adding text boxes to pictures and a digital camera to combine images and text. They confidently use web sites to collect information and understand the need to match the phrasing of the question to the information being sought.
90. Pupils make good use of ICT in other subjects. Pupils in Year 2 drafted their favourite part of Roald Dahl's story *George's Marvellous Medicine*, while in pupils in Year 5 created a publicity pamphlet for a *fab feast*. Pupils in Year 6 used a digital camera to add images to thank you letters to a residential centre. In mathematics, pupils in Year 3 created pictures with two lines of symmetry and in Year 4, pupils used bar charts to show the frequency of different totals when two dice are rolled together. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 produced spreadsheet models to calculate the profit margins of a music shop. In art, pupils in Year 2 created pictures in the style of *Van Gogh*, while in Year 6, they created symmetrical repeating patterns in the style of *William Morris*. In religious education, pupils used the Internet to find examples of Hindu *rangoli* patterns and sent e-mails to a local Jewish school to thank them for *Rosh Hashanah* cards. They also used the Internet to find out about famous Victorians such as *Emily Pankhurst*. However, there are few examples of ICT in science, geography or music.
91. Pupils have very good attitudes to ICT. They enjoy using computers and are proud of their work, particularly when combining different forms of information. Pupils understand the advantages of using ICT to gather and store information. They think that it is much quicker than using books, that more information is available and that it can be stored until needed.

92. The management of ICT is good. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and determined to raise the profile of ICT across the school. He gives practical advice to colleagues but has not been allocated time to observe the quality of teaching in the classroom. He is aware that teachers have a sound knowledge of basic computer skills but lack sufficient training to use more advanced skills or to introduce computer programs across all subjects. This training is imminent and when completed, will place the school in a good position to raise standards.

MUSIC

93. As at the last inspection, standards in music are similar to those achieved by most seven-year-olds and 11-year-olds nationally. As a result of the work of a specialist teacher, lessons are planned carefully and have clear and appropriate objectives for pupils' learning.
94. Because teachers provide regular opportunities for singing, pupils in Years 1 and 2 know a good number of songs by heart and sing them in a tuneful way. They particularly enjoy accompanying their singing with percussion instruments such as tambourines, triangles and chime bars. When pupils in Year 1 sang a new song, *This Little Light of Mine*, in assembly, good support from their teacher helped them to gain confidence. By the second verse pupils were singing tunefully and performing actions to the words. Opportunities to listen to music ensure that pupils know the names of many instruments and can discuss the effects instruments create when representing different animals. Pupils in Year 2 use percussion instruments to play rhythm patterns that their teacher has put on the board. Although familiar with notation, pupils are unaware of the names of notes but know that they last for different amounts of time. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to compose and rehearse rhythm patterns and to gain satisfaction from performing them for others.
95. All pupils make steady progress in music. In Year 6, they appreciate the opportunities teachers provide for them to listen to music and to discuss the feelings it arouses. They readily discuss their preferences and experiences. One pupil in Year 6 enjoys African music *because of the changes in rhythm on the drums*. Teachers also provide opportunities for pupils to compose their own music. They practise and refine their compositions until they are ready to be performed for the rest of the class. As a result, pupils use musical notation with confidence and understand the meaning of *pitch*, *tempo*, *rhythm* and *dynamics*.
96. Music makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. This is because teachers select different styles and traditions of music for listening and discussion in assemblies. They provide a variety of orchestral and modern music, and music from countries such as Africa and India. Teachers invite visitors to the school such as *Caliche*, musicians from South America, African drummers and a local string quintet to enhance pupils' appreciation of music. They arrange visits to a local secondary school for older pupils to gain experience of music played by a brass band.
97. Pupils have very positive attitudes to music. By emphasising practical activities that include everyone, teachers maintain pupils' interest and enjoyment of lessons. Pupils' look forward to the regular visits from the *Keyboard Academy* because they all have a chance to use a keyboard. Teachers encourage pupils who receive instrumental tuition from visiting brass or woodwind teachers and pupils in the recorder clubs to perform in

assemblies and at school concerts. Pupils enjoy joining other schools in a local arts group for musical events such as singing carols at Christmas.

98. The management of music is satisfactory. The co-ordinator, who is employed for one afternoon each week, provides advice for other teachers in the limited time available. She assesses pupils' achievements to ensure that work in the subject is challenging enough. Plans to link music to other subjects place the school in a sound position to improve standards.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

99. Standards in physical education are similar to those reached by most seven and 11-year-olds nationally and teaching is mainly satisfactory. With very good teaching, pupils in Year 2 reach high standards in gymnastics. The school has maintained sound standards since the last inspection and through careful management, overcomes difficulties to its provision. Use of the village hall and a reasonable range of resources make up for a lack of space for dance and gymnastics. Recent improvements to the playground and the use of a spacious field ensure that pupils have sufficient space for outdoor games. By planning a more intensive programme for games in the summer term, the school ensures that best use is made of these facilities.
100. Teachers also use contacts with other small schools effectively to provide opportunities for pupils to take part in team sports. With a small group of older pupils this would not be possible if games took place in the confines of the school. However, pupils add to existing skills and techniques in football through occasional matches with other village schools. They compare their skills at running and their fitness with that of competitors in an annual cross-country run that is part of a county challenge for junior pupils. Teachers use the facilities and expertise offered during a residential visit to extend pupils' experience of a range of games. By learning the basic skills of archery and rock climbing, pupils gain interest in a wider range of sporting activities. The good support of enthusiastic parents ensures that pupils in the juniors experience activities such as football, rugby and netball out of school time. Almost every pupil leaves the school using different strokes and swimming at least 25 metres.
101. The school introduces pupils to the music and dance of cultures such as Africa and provides opportunities for them to take part in a local festival of dance. As a result, small groups of junior pupils make satisfactory progress when devising and performing sequences of dance in response to music. Pupils also acquire and develop the skills needed for games that involve the use of balls. They throw and catch balls with over and under hand movements to gain increasing control. Pupils in the juniors work together effectively to improve their performance in gymnastics. They use their bodies with growing skill when rolling on mats in different shapes, balancing on different parts of their bodies and transferring the weight of their bodies through cartwheels and somersaults.
102. All pupils understand the effects of exercise on their bodies. In a very good lesson in Years 2 and 3, the teacher made pupils think about what they wanted to achieve. Not only did pupils get the opportunity to observe the good practice of others but they were also made aware of the purpose of exemplary work in improving their own performance. Pupils were so keen to develop their skills that when one of them made sudden strong progress, they broke into spontaneous applause without being prompted by their teacher. Very good behaviour was evident throughout the lesson. It allowed

pupils to follow instructions with care, manage their own equipment and broaden their skills in a vigorous and creative way.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

103. The school has maintained satisfactory standards in religious education since the previous inspection that are in line with those established for seven and 11-year-olds in the locally agreed syllabus. The school develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity and Hinduism throughout the school and also teaches pupils in the juniors about Judaism. Pupils are given opportunities to consider religious, moral and social issues and to link them to their own views and actions. By celebrating some of the major festivals of different world faiths, including Christmas, Divali and Hanukkah, pupils learn to respect other beliefs and customs and this enables them in turn to reflect upon their own beliefs.
104. Teachers make good use of stories that focus on values, relationships or religious teachings so that pupils can consider the relevance of these to their own lives. In Years 2 and 3, for instance, pupils know that storytelling was the way that Jesus taught about God. After listening to *The Good Samaritan*, they empathised with the injured traveller as they wrote a thank you letter to the Samaritan. Pupils in Year 3 showed good understanding when looking for meaning in the parable of *The Sower*. One pupil wrote, *the seed that fell on the path is about people who look as though they are listening but are not really*. Pupils learn about important human values, such as friendship and helping one another when sharing examples of occasions when they have been helped. As they study Hinduism, they learn of the importance of *Ramayana* to Hindus and that *Divali* is a time to start afresh.
105. By the age of 11, most pupils have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism. They compare religions and the festivals of different faiths. Pupils are aware that features such as places of worship, special books and festivals are shared by more than one religion. They also recognise and respect the right to hold different views and beliefs. A pupil in Year 6 commented, *they are not hurting you...different points of view should be respected*. As they reflect on the persecution of the Jews during World War Two, pupils consider the social and moral implications of such suffering. Pupils attend services in the local church where they learn about the main features and objects inside the church and their significance for worship. Regular visits to school by the local priest and the Methodist minister develop pupils' knowledge of local churches and their place in the community. However, pupils do not have opportunities to visit places of worship, such as temples or synagogues.
106. Teachers in Years 2 and 3 provide opportunities for pupils to develop their writing in religious education. Pupils take an obvious pride in their work, which is neatly presented and enhanced by detailed drawings. They have very good attitudes to religious education, especially in Year 6 when they use the Internet to search for information about Hindu *Rangoli* patterns or use computers to produce newspaper articles about how Jesus turned water into wine.
107. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator, who is only in school for one day a week, gives helpful practical advice and support to colleagues. Although there are no opportunities to check the quality of teaching, the co-ordinator checks that pupils' knowledge and understanding of religion are developed in a logical way and that targets for improvement are noted in their Year Diaries. This places the school in a satisfactory position to raise standards even further.