

INSPECTION REPORT

HOLMES CHAPEL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Holmes Chapel

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111035

Headteacher: Philip Rowbotham

Reporting inspector: Brian Espiner
30600

Dates of inspection: 21 - 24 January 2002

Inspection number: 197446

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Middlewich Road Holmes Chapel Cheshire
Postcode:	CW4 7EB
Telephone number:	01477 533336
Fax number:	01477 544556
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Thompson
Date of previous inspection:	15 - 19 September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
30600	B Espiner	Registered inspector	Art and design Design and technology Music	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
14324	M Hudson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22831	C Lewis	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology	
04350	C Whittington	Team inspector	Mathematics Religious education	
03942	K Sanderson	Team inspector	Science Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
24027	B Kutty	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Special educational needs Equality opportunities Physical education	

The inspection contractor was:

Full Circle
The Brow
35, Trewartha Park
Weston-Super-Mare
North Somerset
BS23 2RT

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33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Holmes Chapel Primary School is a happy, mixed, Beacon community school in a pleasant, large Cheshire village. There are 411 pupils on roll, all of whom are of white European heritage. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average, and pupils enter the school with above average attainment generally. Forty pupils (9.7 per cent) are on the register of special educational needs (SEN), a below average proportion. Two pupils have Statements of SEN, an about average proportion.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school, providing pupils with everything they need to flourish. Teaching and learning are good and often very good, and standards are well above average. The school provides a very caring and supportive environment, expecting all pupils to do well. Pupils respond by caring for others and working hard. Leadership and management are very good overall, and excellent in the case of the senior management team. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are excellent.
- Teaching and learning are good throughout the school, so pupils' progress is good and standards are well above average.
- Personal development and relationships are very good.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school and attendance is well above average.
- The quality and range of learning opportunities are very good, as is the provision for moral and social development.
- The school provides very good educational and personal support and guidance.
- The governing body is very effective.
- The school's aims and values are reflected very well in its work.
- There is a genuine shared commitment to improve and an excellent capacity to succeed.

What could be improved

There are no major issues for improvement, an unusual situation that reflects how good the school is. However, the inspection team is asking the governing body to consider the following minor points:

- There should be more emphasis on education to equip pupils for living in a multicultural society.
- There is no comprehensive written finance policy.
- Although three members of staff have completed training in child protection, the headteacher, who is the school's child protection officer, has not.
- The school hall is too small.
- There are some minor omissions in the governors' information for parents.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in September 1997. There were six key issues for action, and all have been tackled well. Teaching and learning, curricular provision, and leadership and management have all improved since the last inspection. A measure of improvement can be seen in the fact that there are no key issues for action now. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good overall.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

'A*' indicates that the school was in the top five per cent of schools nationally. Standards now are well above average in English, mathematics, science and art. In geography, history and physical education, attainment is above the national expectation for Year 6 pupils, and in other subjects it is in line with expectations. Not enough music was seen to be able to make a judgement. In the Year 2 tests and tasks in 2001, standards were well above average in reading and mathematics, and broadly average in writing, although standards in writing are usually above average, as they are now. Inspection findings suggest that last year's Year 2 writing results were not accurate. Over time, standards are rising in line with national trends. The school sets challenging targets each year for the number reaching nationally expected levels for English and mathematics. This year the targets should be reached. All pupils, including those with SEN and those of high ability, make good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Attitudes are very good. Pupils like school and are eager to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good. No pupils have been excluded this year, although three were excluded for fixed periods last year.
Personal development and relationships	These are both very good. Pupils are given the opportunity to take responsibility, and do so willingly. Relationships are very good, between pupils and staff and amongst pupils themselves.
Attendance	Attendance is well above average, and punctuality is very good.

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.

Of 77 observed lessons, only one was unsatisfactory. Over four fifths were good or better, and a third were very good or excellent. Teaching and learning are strong in all areas, and very good in English and art. Particular strengths of teaching are teachers' knowledge and understanding, expectations of pupils, and the use of time, resources and support staff. Particular strengths in learning are pupils' productivity, interest, concentration and

independence. Pupils have a very good knowledge of what they are expected to learn. Those with SEN, and the more able, are taught well. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught very well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	These are good in reception and very good in the rest of the school. The curriculum is very well balanced, and supported by a good range of extra-curricular activities. The National Curriculum is covered very well.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is good throughout the school. Individual education plans (IEPs) are provided for all pupils who need them, and these plans are used extensively by staff.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is good overall. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory, and for moral and social development it is very good. The provision for cultural development is good, although there is not enough emphasis on other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are cherished, and their welfare is very important to staff. Assessment procedures are good, and used very well.

The school works well in partnership with parents. More parents help in the classroom than in most schools. Information for parents is good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	This is excellent. The headteacher has an unassuming way of quietly carrying everybody with him. The deputy headteacher has a catching enthusiasm. With the efficiency and experience of the assistant headteacher, they make an excellent senior management team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and its very few weaknesses, and fulfil their responsibilities very well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is very good. Test results are analysed. Lessons are observed by senior management and subject co-ordinators. All this is used very well in order to improve, under a very good system of performance management that has earned the school 'Investor in People' status.
The strategic use of resources	The school development plan is very good, and it is supported very well by financial planning. The principle of best value (competition, comparison, challenge and consultation) are applied well.

Staffing matches the demands of the curriculum very well. Learning resources are good in general. Accommodation is also good, with large grounds and attractive teaching areas, especially in reception to Year 3. However, the library is too small, and the hall is too small to contain the whole school.

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 teaching is good. • The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. • The school helps children to become mature and responsible. • Children like school. • Behaviour in the school is good. • Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. • Children make good progress. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school does not provide an interesting enough range of activities outside lessons. • Parents are not well enough informed about how their children are getting on.

The inspection team is happy to agree with parents' positive comments. Anything in this left-hand column has at least 85 per cent agreement from the parents' questionnaire, and most has over 90 per cent agreement. A minority of parents are concerned that there is no formal meeting with teachers from the middle of the autumn term until nearly the end of the summer term. Parents can request a meeting with a teacher at any time, and the team is suggesting to the school that they make this more explicit in their information about the open evening in the spring term. When parents were questioned at the parents' meeting about activities outside lessons, it became clear that they were quite happy with school productions, trips, visitors and so on, but a minority were unhappy with the provision of clubs. The inspection found that the provision of extra-curricular activities is good, but that only half a dozen parents actively support school clubs. A few parents were worried that the school's activities were adversely affected by the Beacon status of the school, in that one very good teacher in particular, ie the deputy headteacher, had had to be replaced by supply staff whilst carrying out Beacon activities. However, the school minimises any problems by employing a regular supply teacher who plans alongside the deputy headteacher and knows the class well. Some parents expressed concern about the adverse effect of pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties on the rest of the class they were in. No great effect was observed during the inspection, although one infant class was adversely affected at the end of one day when pupils were generally getting fractious.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In the 2001 national tests for Year 6 pupils, standards in science were above the national average, and standards in English and mathematics were well above it. Compared with school with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, attainment in English was above average, and in mathematics and science it was broadly average. In the 2001 tests and tasks for Year 2 pupils, standards in reading and mathematics were well above average, and in writing they were broadly average. Compared with similar schools, writing standards were below average, and attainment in reading and mathematics were above average. There is no difference in the attainment of girls and boys.
2. The 2001 Year 2 writing results were surprising, as the school usually gets results which are above the national average, and the writing seen in the inspection was above average in the present Year 3, ie of the pupils who took the test last year. For example, in one very good Year 3 English lesson, pupils were quick and accurate in turning a passage or separate sentences from singular to plural, with the attendant changes necessary in possessives, etc. The passage and sentences were chosen so that the plurals were not necessarily straightforward, but pupils coped very well, showing above average writing skills for their age. They were also very confident and accurate in explaining their reasoning. An analysis of their work also showed that their writing is above average. So inspection findings suggest that last year's test results were not accurate, and that pupils just had a bad day.
3. Standards in all aspects of English are well above national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils are very good listeners and confident speakers. They read widely and with enjoyment. In Year 2 the majority show an above average understanding of the use of capital letters and full stops. Vocabulary is very good and they spell short words correctly. Handwriting is neat throughout the school, and presentation generally very good. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils have a very good understanding of story structure and use technical terms correctly. Standards of spelling are variable, as would be expected, but generally they are above average. Pupils write for a wide range of audiences and purposes. The school uses the National Literacy Strategy very well, and this contributes very well to pupils' high standards.
4. Standards in mathematics are well above expectations in Year 2 and in Year 6. Pupils are generally very confident and relaxed. This allows them to enjoy the subject and think mathematically. The school places an appropriate emphasis on practical work and problem solving, with pupils being constantly encouraged to think about what they are doing, how, and why, and to explain their work using the correct technical terms. Consequently, standards in using and applying mathematics are very good, and literacy is also supported well. All areas of mathematics are equally strong, although little evidence was found of the use of ICT in data handling.
5. In science, standards are above average at the end of Year 2, and well above average at the end of Year 6. Again, an appropriate emphasis on practical work ensures that standards in scientific enquiry are well above average on leaving the school. As pupils get older, the emphasis on pupils' independence in experimental work is increased. The school is doing very well here, as this is not examined in national

tests and tends to be somewhat neglected in some other schools. Standards are above the national expectation in all aspects of the subject, with a high proportion of pupils showing knowledge, understanding and skills which are well above average. Numeracy skills are enhanced through collecting and interpreting data, and literacy skills by the insistence on correct use of technical terms.

6. The quality of pupils' work in art is well above national expectations in Year 2 and in Year 6. Pupils make excellent progress in Year 1, and never lose the benefits of this flying start. They are surrounded by art of a high quality, done by themselves and other pupils, and are expected to do as well as the best wherever possible. They are conversant with the work of many more famous artists than is usually the case, and use this as a stimulus to explore new forms and palettes. The art co-ordinators have a photographic record of pupils' work, and many examples are excellent. In every area, including three-dimensional work, printing, collage, fabric use and observational work, pupils' work is above expectations. The highest standards are reached in painting. This culminates in Year 6 work based on the paintings of Gustav Klimt, where pupils are rightly encouraged to take home their large paintings and frame them.
7. In history and geography, attainment is above expectations in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of ancient Egyptian, Roman, Tudor and Victorian times. They also have a good understanding of climate and physical features, and how they affect life in various parts of the world; for example, India and Venezuela. Standards are also above expectations in physical education, with some pupils reaching very high standards in gymnastics, and in design and technology (DT). Pupils have a good understanding of the design process. Work here demonstrates how numeracy skills are enhanced in the rest of the curriculum, with some very accurate measurement in Year 6.
8. Standards in other subjects are in line with national expectations. In religious education, pupils have a good knowledge of Christianity, but their understanding of other major religions is not as well developed, and this is an area for improvement. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are broadly in line with expectations throughout the school. Pupils learn the parts of the computer at an early stage. At Key Stage 2, they use the internet to find information, and a variety of programs; for example, in music and design, in the satisfactory support of the rest of the curriculum.
9. In music, no lessons were seen in juniors, so no judgement can be made on standards. Standards in Year 2 are broadly average in the use and understanding of untuned percussion instruments. Singing in assembly is enthusiastic, and broadly of the same standard as that seen in separate infant and junior schools. Infant pupils do not get the good model of junior singing, as the hall is too small to hold the whole school.
10. Children at the Foundation Stage make good progress in all areas. They are well on their way to exceed the expected standards by the end of the reception year in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, physical development and personal, social and emotional development. By the time they leave reception, they are set to achieve the Early Learning Goals (the standards expected of children of this age) in knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development.

11. Pupils enter the school with above average attainment generally. Progress is good in all three learning stages, and they leave the school with well above average attainment. The overall attainment of pupils with SEN is high in relation to their prior attainment, and they make good progress. Pupils are identified early and their progress towards the targets in their IEPs is monitored regularly by the class teachers and the co-ordinator. Higher ability pupils are extended well, and also make good progress, with high numbers reaching the higher levels of the National Curriculum. Over time, the rate of improvement of standards is in line with the national picture, but on leaving the school, pupils are consistently two or three months ahead of pupils in schools nationally.
12. In consultation with the local education authority, the school sets targets each year for the number of pupils reaching expected levels in English and mathematics. These are always challenging, and have so far been attained. The school should also reach its targets this year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils' attitudes are very good. Although deemed excellent at the last inspection, they remain a strength of the school. Pupils are very happy to learn, respond eagerly to challenge, sustain interest and enthusiasm, and remain fully attentive in classes and assemblies. They work very effectively both on their own as in silent reading, and in paired and group activities, as seen in a numeracy exercise in Year 2. Pupils are very well motivated, show a high degree of commitment and stay closely focused on task. They take pride in their efforts and are keen to share their pleasure in achievement. Pupils enjoy lesson activities, for instance learning Indian dance movements to heighten cultural understanding in Year 5. They offer very constructive ideas, listen carefully to what others have to say, and their contributions to discussions, for instance about improving lunch arrangements, are thoughtful and constructive. Parents confirm their children enjoy school and work hard. Pupils' very positive attitudes substantially enhance their learning.
14. Pupils' behaviour is good, having been very good at the last inspection. There are no exclusions and parents are happy with the standards achieved. The discipline policy and school rules are well understood by pupils and properly applied by staff. On entering school, pupils are taught to exercise self-discipline, and they respond willingly to what is expected of them. In lessons, the atmosphere is calm, orderly and purposeful. At playtimes and around the school, pupils behave well and respect property such as computers and displays. They help each other and are thanked for so doing. The dining area is congested and somewhat noisy, but pupils are nicely mannered and friendly, making lunch an enjoyable social occasion. Pupils are polite and pleasantly inquisitive with visitors. On outside visits, such as to the leisure centre, pupils' behaviour does them credit. During the inspection there were no signs of abuse, harassment or aggression. Pupils' good behaviour benefits their attainment and progress.
15. Pupils' personal development has improved since the last inspection and is now very good and a strength of the school. Most pupils are self-assured and have high personal esteem and the ability to organise themselves effectively. Those who lack confidence or are socially insecure profit from the personal advice and support they receive. In lessons, pupils show a marked degree of independent thought, for example when miming the erection of a tent in Year 5. Pupils enjoy responsibility and carry out any tasks they are given with great enthusiasm and pride. All pupils enhance their self-regard by doing classroom tasks, while older pupils increase their

self-confidence when undertaking more meaningful duties such as answering the school telephone at lunchtime ("It makes us feel important", they said). Discussion of everyday issues like friendship improves pupils' social awareness. They appreciate the purpose of charities, benefit from visits and local events, and have a strong sense of citizenship. Pupils noticeably mature as they progress through the school.

16. Relationships have also improved since the last inspection and are now very good and another strength of the school. Pupils are treated with respect and they flourish under the consistent and sensitive approach of staff. Pupils trust and have affinity with their teachers and readily confide in them when they are worried or upset. Relationships within peer groups are very positive and friendly, and in lessons genders interact comfortably. Pupils are caring and considerate and they cooperate very successfully. They have noticeable respect for the values and beliefs of others and a good understanding of peer group feelings. There are many constructive and harmonious relationships. Playtimes are lively but congenial. Although infants sit very happily together at lunch, mixed gender tables among juniors are less common. Relationships are enhanced during extra-curricular activities and educational visits. Pupils with SEN are fully integrated into the school community.
17. Attendance is very good. In the last school year it was well above the national average, while unauthorised absence in the same year was well below the average. Both rates are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. Punctuality is very good and lessons start on time. Registration is prompt and efficient, pupils answer politely and there is an orderly start to the daily sessions. Pupils' very good attendance and punctuality have a very positive impact on their learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. Teaching and learning are good, and often very good, throughout the school. Of 77 lessons observed, only one was unsatisfactory. Twelve (16 per cent) were satisfactory, 38 (49 per cent) were good, 25 (32 per cent) were very good and one was excellent. All teachers gave at least one good lesson, and almost all gave at least one very good lesson. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Almost all subjects are taught well, and English, science and art are taught very well. Not enough lessons were seen in history, ICT and DT to make a judgement, but the standard of work shows that teaching in history and DT is good over time, and in ICT it is at least satisfactory. Teaching and learning in music are satisfactory for infants, but no junior lessons were seen, so no judgement could be made. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught very well.
19. All aspects of teaching and learning are at least good. Teachers are enthusiastic, and their enthusiasm is catching. Pupils respond with interest and work hard. One of the very few lessons when this was not the case was the unsatisfactory lesson, an infant ICT lesson that took place at the end of the day when some pupils were fractious. Attention was generally unsatisfactory and too little was learned, with the teacher having to spend too much time keeping order.
20. The excellent lesson was observed in personal, social and health education (PSHE) with a Year 5 class, and it was a good illustration of the things teachers at the school generally do well. The teacher had an excellent understanding of, and relationship with, the class. The lesson moved at an excellent pace and the teacher made it great fun. Pupils were organised in mixed groups of four, and given one of four personality types - helpful, lazy, jealous or bad-tempered - to act in front of the class as they demonstrated, without speaking, how to erect a tent. The class had to recognise the

attribute. Without exception, pupils rose to the challenge with great enthusiasm and enjoyment. All groups took part fully, and a volunteer group repeated the exercise with words. Management of the class was excellent. This was followed by a free-speaking time, in which the class had to finish the sentence "I could do better if...". Typical answers were "...I smiled more" or "... I organised myself better". They then had to consider how people got on together, and the answers were extremely imaginative and sensitive: sharing; forgiveness; trust, etc. They then had to reflect on the day and consider if they had hurt anyone. The lesson ended by revisiting some of the earlier activities, and with the teacher telling the class what they had to think about before the following week's lesson. Altogether, it was an excellent lesson on citizenship and ethics. It included every member of the class. The teacher was kind, considerate and funny, and the whole thing demonstrated excellent planning and pitch. Pupils had to think hard. It strengthened already good relationships, and managed to combine drama, moral and social education, speaking and listening, and movement.

21. There are several aspects of teaching and learning that are very good overall. For example, the very good use of time, resources and support staff results in very good productivity and pace of working amongst pupils. Teachers have high expectations, not just of behaviour and work rate, but also of what pupils can achieve. Pupils are very confident and interested. They concentrate very well and work independently. This independence is noticeable in English and mathematics lessons in particular, where groups work very well on their own while the teacher leads one particular group almost entirely without interruption. There is a very good school policy of writing down the objectives of the lesson on the board, so that pupils know what they are trying to learn. These objectives are then revisited at the end of the lesson to see if they have been achieved. Sometimes teachers return to the objectives during the lesson so that pupils are reminded exactly what they are trying to achieve.
22. Teachers plan their lessons well as year groups. When it is relevant, they use the structure suggested by the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. They use their good knowledge of the pupils, gained through formal and informal assessment, to pitch their lessons at the right level for different groups and individuals, so pupils are extended well. Class management is good, and pupils make a good effort to please teachers and work hard. Homework is used well to consolidate and extend learning, a good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils know when they will get homework and when they have to hand it in or be tested. Marking is good, with helpful comments to suggest possible ways of improving.
23. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are good overall. Staff show a very good understanding of how young children learn. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are used effectively. Staff set high expectations of all children and as a result children make good progress, including those with SEN. More able children are also challenged effectively. Teachers and support staff work well together as a team. Resources are used well in lessons to engage young children's interest.
24. Pupils with SEN are well supported in lessons. Teachers use the support staff and resources well. The school uses the additional specialist teacher support to give targeted support for specific groups. Pupils' IEPs are clearly focused and they are linked well to the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. The more able are also well catered for, and the school has plans to extend them even further in collaboration with other schools in the Beacon group; for example, in extended writing.

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

25. Overall, the quality and range of opportunities offered to the pupils are very good and these make a significant contribution to the standards attained. At the Foundation Stage, the range of curricular opportunities is good. There is a good balance between child-initiated and adult directed activities. The school provides good opportunities for children to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
26. In the previous report, mention was made of the need to extend the teaching week to meet at least the minimum hours recommended, and also to complete schemes of work for all subjects. Both these issues have been vigorously addressed. The school has considerably extended its working week for pupils at both key stages. Also, all members of staff are involved in curriculum planning and development, and have worked extremely hard, as a team, to produce effective policies and planning guidelines. The strong 'team ethic' within the school leads to shared evaluation of planning and classroom practice. Consequently, the curriculum is constantly being developed and its delivery sharpened. The high quality displays of pupils' work around the school and the range of well thought through policies demonstrate well the breadth of the curriculum opportunities provided for pupils.
27. All pupils have access to a curriculum that is socially inclusive and meets all statutory requirements, including the provision of religious education. The balance of the curriculum is very good and is supported well by the allocation of time to subjects. Features of this 'balance' are, firstly, that the school maintains very high standards in literacy and numeracy without devoting disproportionate amounts of curriculum time to these areas. The school has developed a range of effective cross-curricular links where, for example, pupils receive good opportunities to develop their extended writing skills through topics in history and geography, and numeracy skills are developed well through recording results of science investigations and measuring and calculating in DT. Secondly, through the time allocated to all other areas of the curriculum, the school demonstrates a commitment to providing a richly diverse curriculum. In the majority of foundation subjects, standards have risen since the time of the previous inspection.
28. The provision for pupils with SEN is good. They receive an appropriate curriculum in accordance with their individual educational plans. The school has recently introduced the 'behaviour and learning to learn' curriculum to some classes. This is having a positive impact on the learning and behaviour of pupils. The support offered by the support staff and the specialist teacher is good in enabling pupils to make good progress towards their targets.
29. The school makes good provision for PSHE.
30. The governors have an agreed policy on sex education, and this provision, delivered through the science/health education programme, is suitable for the age and maturity of the pupils. Pupils are also made aware of the dangers and misuse of drugs. The school nurse supports the school in the development of these programmes. The school has held 'Drugs Education' evenings with parents as part of community initiatives. Policies for PSHE are good and they help ensure that support for pupils' personal development permeates the work of the school. Links with partner institutions, such as the local secondary school, are very good and pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

31. Provision for extra-curricular opportunities, including sport, is good. Activities include football, netball, chess, recorder groups, technology club and choir. There is a lunchtime club for pupils at Key Stage 1, run largely by parents, and the school would like to extend this to include junior pupils, but has difficulty in finding volunteers. Pupils have also achieved success in competitive games and inter-school competitions. The school encourages links with local artists, crafts people and musicians. There is an extensive programme of visits out to the theatre, the opera, and to places of interest such as Tatton Hall, Ford Green Hall, Styal Mill and the Deva Centre, linked to curriculum studies in history, geography and technology. There is a range of residential trips for every year group from Year 2. These opportunities make a significant contribution to pupils' academic and social development.
32. Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good, and very good at the Foundation Stage. This is a similar position to that at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. There is a regular pattern of collective worship within the school which meets statutory requirements. There are planned opportunities to discuss achievement and feelings within PSHE as well as in other lessons. One pupil, during an religious education lesson, reflecting on food connected with 'special events' said, "Milk - because that was the last drink before my Grandad died". Pupils are encouraged to appreciate that people, nature and 'the arts' can all provide 'special experiences' but opportunities for reflection on the 'awe and wonder' in the world are not always planned into lessons.
33. Development of moral and social education is very good and is a strength of the school. The school's aims and values, its 'rules' and the ethos promoted in classrooms and around the school, all promote a sense of fair play. There is a strong emphasis on learning the difference between right and wrong, and the school provides many opportunities for pupils to consider moral values such as caring for others. This is typified by the efforts of the Children's Committee in organising fund-raising activities for a variety of charities.
34. The school is rightly proud of the social development of its pupils, which is very good. Many pupils have the opportunity to take responsibility within their class as monitors. Older pupils are given additional responsibilities, such as telephone duties at lunchtime and looking after playground games boxes. Pupils from Year 2 upwards have the opportunity to elect representatives for the Children's Committee. Here, they discuss school issues and propose improvements in the quality of the school's provision, for example in improving dinner-time arrangements. Pupils from Year 2 onwards have the opportunity to take part in residential visits, where the emphasis is on sharing, helping and supporting each other and living in a community.
35. Pupils' cultural development is good overall. They have many opportunities to listen to and take part in music and drama. They visit the theatre, opera, museums and local places of cultural interest. Visitors into school such as authors, poets, dance groups and artists create valuable opportunities to explore, experience and be creative. Opportunities arise to enable pupils to experience other cultures, such as the visits of dance groups from India, and a Nigerian sculptor. However, provision for multicultural development needs to be extended to give pupils a clearer understanding of what it is to live in a society embracing many cultures and beliefs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. Procedures for child protection and pupils' welfare are good overall, as they were at the last inspection. Staff know pupils very well and pastoral care has a high priority. Pupils feel safe, nurtured and secure. Arrangements covering accidents, illnesses and medicines are good and sufficient staff have up-to-date first aid qualifications. The accident book is being redesigned. The school has a purpose-related medical room. The child protection co-ordinator is presently untrained and the child protection policy does not say how signs of child abuse can be recognised. However, in-school procedures are satisfactory and good links are established with the requisite agencies.
37. Health and safety procedures are good. Health and safety and related policies are very well documented, albeit with some responsibilities needing clarifying. Staff have a good awareness of health and safety matters; for example, when travelling in coaches on visits or using the hall when the floor has been washed after lunch. Cleanliness and hygiene within the school are good and hazardous substances are well managed. All equipment and appliance inspections are up to date. Risk inspections are carried out and emergency evacuations practised. The retention of attendance registers in classrooms is to change. The school has no emergency lighting in the hall. Security arrangements are regularly reviewed.
38. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. Circle time, during which pupils express themselves freely, is used to develop their confidence and self-image, while class discussions on topics such as bullying broaden their worldly understanding. Although staff are well aware of pupils who have personal or social difficulties, there is no formal inter-class monitoring of such pupils as they move through the school except the passing on of IEPs. To help younger pupils become more responsible and mature they undertake classroom duties such as tidying books and taking dinner registers to the kitchen. Pupils from Year 2 upwards have more challenging tasks, like membership of the Children's Committee, which exercise their personal and collective responsibility. In Years 5 and 6 pupils are given further tasks that enable them to play an important role in the life of the school, paired artwork with infants and play area environmental patrols being examples. Older pupils go on residential visits and assist with charitable collections.
39. Since the last inspection the school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance have been strengthened and are now very good. The attendance policy is succinct. The school actively promotes very good attendance and pupils' absences and punctuality are closely checked. Most parents observe the absence procedure and ensure their children arrive at school on time. The school makes first-day contact with parents who do not follow the proper procedures. The educational disadvantages of pupils taking holidays in term time are explained in the governors' annual report to parents and applications for such holidays have to be approved by the school. Some attendance registers do not clearly distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absences.
40. Since the last inspection procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour have continued to be very good. The discipline policy, which has pupil input, suitably defines standards and expectations and reinforces the importance of positive behaviour. It includes a balanced range of rewards and sanctions, which are implemented with consistency and common sense. School rules are prominently displayed. Instances of unacceptable behaviour are discussed with the pupils concerned. Playtimes are well supervised and wet weather arrangements are very

good. The school's procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good and no groups or individuals are unfairly treated or disadvantaged. The anti-bullying policy is very good and the equal opportunities policy properly inclusive. Pupils are fully aware that any signs of abuse, harassment or aggression will be dealt with firmly.

41. Assessment has improved since the previous inspection, which found it to be inconsistent. A key issue following that inspection was 'to improve the assessment, marking and correction of pupils' work in order to show pupils more consistently how to improve their work and to inform the planning of the next stage of the work, particularly for high attaining pupils'. This key issue has been addressed fully in the core subjects.
42. The school has an effective policy for assessment and all staff are working hard to put this into practice. Teachers know their pupils well, and assessment is used very effectively to guide curricular planning, both on a day-to-day and longer-term basis. As a result of this continual assessment, planned lessons are adapted when necessary. Test results are analysed and the information gained is beginning to be used to monitor and evaluate each pupil's progress. This is then used to develop relevant individual and group targets. Assessment is developing well across the foundation subjects, although this is not yet fully in place.
43. Assessment within the Foundation Stage is good. Staff use observation sheets in sessions to record what children can do. Assessment is used effectively to support planning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. Parents' views of the school are good. Attendance at the parents' meeting and response to parents' questionnaires was above average. Opinions expressed at the meeting, through questionnaires and during the inspection show that parents support the school's provision for their children. Parents say the school is well led and managed, teaching is good, and their children work hard and make good progress. Parents confirm that their children enjoy school, they are becoming more responsible and mature and their behaviour is good. Parents further aver they are generally happy with home/school links and they find it easy to approach staff with questions and problems. They support the amount of homework their children are given. Evidence gained during the inspection upheld these views.
45. A significant number of parents who responded to the questionnaire expressed concerns about two aspects of the school's provision. They are unhappy with the information they receive about their children's progress and dissatisfied with the range of school activities outside lessons. Inspection evidence did not endorse these views, finding both the information on children's progress and extra-curricular activities to be good.
46. Since the last inspection the school's close partnership with parents has continued. The good links benefit pupils' attainment and learning. The school has addressed the key issue from the last inspection and the quality of information provided for parents, including that on pupils' progress, is now good. Parents receive regular newsletters and notices keep them up to date with school activities. The school is reviewing the format of one of the three termly parents' evenings. Curriculum workshops are held and staff are readily available to speak to parents. The school has addressed the key

- issue from the last inspection and parents are now encouraged to become actively involved in homework. Home learning guidelines are issued.
47. School reports give a good commentary on pupils' efforts and achievements, and include pupils' and parents' comments. The reports do not give individual targets for improvement. The prospectus is attractively presented and imparts useful information. The governors' annual report is well structured and easy to read. Both are sent to parents of pupils new to the school, but there are two statutory omissions. Action taken by governors on previous resolutions is not mentioned and, more importantly, insufficient information is given about the arrangements for pupils with SEN. Parents of these pupils are well informed about their children's needs. They are involved in the reviews. This is an area identified by the co-ordinator for further development.
48. The impact of parents' involvement in the work of the school is good. The school values the part parents play in pupils' education and welcomes their interest in all aspects of school life. Many parents assist in classes, accompany educational visits and support school occasions such as concerts. Some parents attend assemblies and others, though not many, take part in extra-curricular activities. Homework diaries are kept, but not all parents use them. Parents of pupils with SEN work closely with staff in drawing up and implementing their individual plans. The parent-teacher association is active and attracts good support for its fund-raising and social events. The home-school agreement is good and properly emphasises mutual commitment. Most parents comply with their undertakings. Parents understand the importance of their role in reinforcing the school's education of their children. Although some parents do not fully involve themselves, the majority are happy to contribute both to the learning process and to the life of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. Leadership and management are very good overall. In the case of the headteacher and key staff, leadership and management are excellent. The headteacher quietly inspires great loyalty in his staff and governors. The senior management team, consisting of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, forms a highly effective unit, providing clear educational direction. Staff in general form a very good team. Subject co-ordinators are efficient and effective. The overall management of SEN is good. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator sets very clear educational direction. She is clear about strengths and weakness, such as the need to develop planning for play further.
50. The headteacher was appointed just after the last inspection, and has overseen the very good progress the school has made since. All the key issues of that inspection have been acted on and improvement has been very good. The period has also seen the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and the school has done this very well.
51. Since the present headteacher was appointed, the school has been re-invested with the Investor in People standard and given Beacon School status. As a Beacon school, they are involved in leading other local schools in a number of projects, including literacy for the more able. This has caused the deputy headteacher, herself a very good classroom teacher and excellent manager, to be away from her class sometimes, her place being taken by a supply teacher. Consequently it has caused some concern with parents about possible disruption in the education of her class, simply because it is difficult to find teachers of her high quality. However, the supply teacher is fully conversant with the curriculum requirements and quality of work

expected of the class, is familiar with the children, and plans carefully with the deputy headteacher to cover her absence.

52. As an Investor in People, the school was in a very good position to respond to the government's initiative in performance management, which is embedded very well in the life of the school. The professional development of staff is linked well to annual appraisal and to the very good school development plan. Lessons are observed by the senior management team in order to provide information for appraisal. There is also a timetable for co-ordinators to observe the teaching and learning of their subject in order to improve provision. The school is constantly striving for improvement, and succeeding. Its aims and values are reflected very well in its work.
53. Staffing matches the demands of the curriculum very well. Teachers are knowledgeable and work very well as a team, with each other and with teaching assistants. The induction of new staff is good, with each new member given a mentor. Every year, the school has a large number of initial teacher training students from the Crewe and Alsager campus of Manchester Metropolitan University, to the benefit of everybody concerned.
54. The governing body works hard and is very effective at fulfilling its responsibilities. There is an efficient system of committees and working parties and minutes are kept well and distributed in good time for consideration by the whole body. Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and its very few weaknesses. Each governor has responsibility for a subject and a class, and they are in school on a regular basis.
55. The school's use of strategic resources is good overall with the governing body properly involved in all financial matters. Financial planning is of a high quality, as it was at the last inspection. The school development plan clearly identifies action to be taken to raise standards and improve the quality of pupils' education over a three-year period. It includes costing, resources and success criteria. A contingency fund is being accumulated for support staff and premises improvements. The school receives no specific grant, but any additional funding is used effectively. Budget expenditure is monitored. Financial management and control are satisfactory. The school has had no external audit since the last inspection and it has no finance policy. Although financial procedures are understood, documentation covering responsibilities, invoices, petty cash, banking, data security and business interests is not in place. The school is addressing these issues.
56. The school fund is well managed. Aspects of administration other than finance are very good. Procedures are sensibly organised, efficient and unobtrusive, allowing teachers and support staff to focus fully on their teaching and pastoral duties.
57. The school's use of new technology is satisfactory. Improved computer software is awaited, for example attendance and SEN programs. Office computers are due to be upgraded to link them both internally and with the local authority. Facilities such as library book scanners are being considered.
58. The efficiency of financial control is good. The school understands and applies the principles of best value, for instance when drawing up the school development plan. Purchasing guidelines for obtaining contract quotations and incorporating value for money into spending decisions are being prepared.

59. Accommodation is good, and this assists the effective delivery of the curriculum. The premises consist of a two-storey building and a two-class mobile block set in attractive grounds. The temporary block has no lavatories. There are extensive hard and grassed areas for physical education, games and play. The areas include quiet corners for use at playtimes, and a wild life garden for use in science. Foundation Stage pupils have a separate play area, which is not marked for play activities and has no overhead cover. The school has improved the accommodation for outdoor play since the last inspection and has plans to develop it further. The interior of the main building is airy, bright and cheerful and has several very good features. The classrooms are of good size, the infant and Year 3 activity area is spacious and attractive, and there are designated music and medical rooms and two small computer suites. However, the library is inadequate for the number of pupils using it and the hall cannot accommodate the whole school for assemblies or lunches, which necessarily become an exercise in logistics every day. The school ambience is purposeful but friendly. Classrooms are interesting and colourful and there is a wide range of imaginative and exciting displays, mobiles and paintings, some of them with a multicultural theme. The balance between teaching aids, topic materials and the celebration of pupils' work is good. There is some vandalism of school property by teenagers.
60. Learning resources are good and used effectively to support the curriculum. Resources are very good for physical education and good or satisfactory for all other subjects. The range and quality of fiction library books are very good, while non-fiction library books and multicultural resources are satisfactory. Classroom displays and teacher packs are good. A well-planned programme of incoming visitors and educational visits, for example by artists and to museums, further enriches pupils' learning and contributes positively to the standards they achieve.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. There are no key issues for action. However, the school should consider the following minor issues:

Place more emphasis on education to equip pupils for living in a multicultural society.
(para 35)

Improve financial management and control by producing a formal and comprehensive finance policy.
(para 55)

Ensure that the child protection officer has training in child protection, and that this knowledge and understanding are passed on to all staff.
(para 36)

When finance permits, increase the size of the school hall so that all pupils can be accommodated for assemblies, and lunchtimes are less crowded and hurried.
(para 59)

Ensure that the governors' information to parents meets all statutory requirements.
(para 47)

At the time of the open evening, make it more explicit to parents that they can seek appointments with teachers.

(para 46)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	77
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	100

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	25	38	12	1	0	0
Percentage	1	32	49	16	1	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

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	411
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	14

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	40

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	2.8
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	33	28	61

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	32	30	32
	Girls	28	28	28
	Total	60	58	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (100)	95 (100)	98 (96)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	32	33	33
	Girls	28	28	28
	Total	60	61	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	37	29	66

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	34	33	36
	Girls	27	26	27
	Total	61	59	63
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (93)	89 (84)	95 (88)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	34	33	35
	Girls	27	26	27
	Total	61	59	62
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (93)	89 (83)	94 (90)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	411
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	4	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.7
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	162

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	713,676
Total expenditure	690,514
Expenditure per pupil	1,681
Balance brought forward from previous year	48,673
Balance carried forward to next year	71,835

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	411
Number of questionnaires returned	155

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	32	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	41	6	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	25	70	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	50	17	0	0
The teaching is good.	55	44	1	1	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	50	21	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	37	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	39	2	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	25	55	17	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	30	57	11	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	52	3	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	47	23	3	10

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

62. Children in the Foundation Stage are admitted to school in September of the year in which they are five. They are taught in two reception classes. Two assistants effectively support the two teachers. Together they provide a good start to children's early learning and development. At the time of the inspection there were 52 children at the Foundation Stage. A significant number of these were under-fives. Their attainment on entry to school is generally high in most areas of learning. The staff in the Foundation Stage work well together as a team to ensure that children's skills are consolidated and extended in reception classes. As a result, they make good progress, and many are well on their way to achieving beyond the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning.
63. The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The provision for outdoor play has been generally improved. Children are now given the opportunity to use wheeled toys (within temporary markings using cones) to extend their physical skills through outdoor play. The school has plans to develop this provision further to offer more permanent marking and large equipment whereby children can extend and explore their skills and interests freely. The school has made good links with the local private and voluntary early years providers and other schools. This has helped to share good practices and made the transition to school much easier for young children.

Personal, social and emotional development

64. The majority of children start school with levels of personal, social and emotional skills higher than those expected for their age. Teaching in this area is very good. As a result, children make very good progress and the majority should be exceeding the Early Learning Goals in this area by the time they leave the reception classes. Staff provide good role models for children, always treating each other and children with respect and care. They offer children opportunities to talk about their feelings and those of others through stories and discussions in circle times. For example, in a class assembly the teacher, through her very good questioning strategies, was able to offer children the opportunity to talk about how the boy in the story would have felt when the tiger roared at him, showing sharp teeth. Children in this instance were able to talk about the boy's feeling and then related this to their own similar experiences. They know what is expected of them in lessons. Children are always enthusiastic about their learning, whether it is joining in with actions of a 'noisy letter' starter in literacy lesson or helping the puppet giraffe to count. They show confidence in selecting and using activities independently. They negotiate roles and responsibilities in role play situations. Their behaviour in and outside class is always very good. Children establish good relationships with adults and peers.

Communication, language and literacy

65. Teaching and learning in communication, language and literacy is good. Children make good progress in all aspects of communication, language and literacy. They are introduced to aspects of the National Literacy Strategy gradually. A range of opportunities is offered to children to extend their speaking and listening skills. They

speaking clearly and showing an awareness of listeners in small group and whole-class situations.

66. Carefully organised continuous provision such as Granddad Pot's home, wet and dry sand and the market stall enable children to use language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences. For example, a group of children in the role-play area were able to take on the characters of the 'Granddad Pot' story and developed their play situation. These areas offer children the opportunity to write for different purposes. However, there are missed opportunities to use these areas to further enhance children's learning and assess their skills and knowledge through carefully planned adult interaction.
67. Teachers extend children's vocabulary and their interest in reading by making appropriate use of the National Literacy Strategy. Children show enthusiasm and interest in reading the big book with the teacher. They show confidence in identifying the rhyming words in the poem. The more able children can identify the author and title of books. They can read a range of familiar and common words and simple sentences independently. Most children can identify initial sounds of letters and use this knowledge in their reading. They know that print carries meaning. They can identify the beginning and end sounds of words. The more able children can identify the initial, middle and end sounds of three letter words. The majority are working on the Early Learning Goal related to reading. The children are given homework in reading. They are encouraged to take books home to share with their parents and carers.
68. Children can write for different purposes. They use their knowledge about initial sounds to write simple words to convey the meaning. Most children can copy with good pencil control. Teachers and support assistants act as scribes and develop children's interest in writing. This is further enhanced through careful organisation of resources in continuous provision. The more able can write simple sentences. They are beginning to show an understanding of the use of full stops and capital letters in their writing. They are beginning to learn that a sentence needs to convey meaning. The less able children are showing an understanding of the difference between text and pictures. They are beginning to show an understanding of writing through simple marks. The majority of children in reception classes are well on their way to achieve the Early Learning Goal related to writing.

Mathematical development

69. Children enter reception classes with knowledge and understanding of mathematics above those expected of their age. Teaching in this area is good overall. Some very good mathematics sessions were observed where the teacher used the National Numeracy Strategy effectively to develop pupils' mathematical skills. The teacher and support staff work effectively as a team and make learning about mathematics fun through puppets, rhymes and games. Although there is a good balance between child-initiated and adult-directed activities, there are missed opportunities where carefully planned adult interaction in sand and other play situations would help staff to enhance further the good strategies already in place to assess and extend children's learning.
70. Most children can count up to ten and the more able are beginning to count in twos and tens. They can talk about the methods they have used to find answers when counting in twos and working out the position of numbers. Children are given opportunity to compare weight and size. They show a good understanding of length,

weight and shape through activities such as finding objects longer than the string, sorting clothing according to size and working out which shape to use to make the chimney for the magic castle they made with wet sand. Children are well on their way to achieving beyond the Early Learning Goal by the time they leave reception classes.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

71. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good. Well-planned activities encourage them to use their senses to make sense of the world around them. For example, through the topic of 'ourselves' children are given the opportunity find out the external parts of the human body and their purposes. A scrutiny of children's work indicates that they can observe similarities and specific features of objects and artefacts. For example, they can sort the class into groups according to the colour of their eyes. Children show curiosity and interest when discussing the significance of the statue of the 'Beautiful Lady' with the support assistant. They can talk about the importance of the cross and who Mary is. They are offered opportunity to learn about cultures and beliefs of their own and others such as learning about the importance of Christening and Hanukkah. Through their work on constructing different shapes children show an awareness of how to interpret the information to create different three-dimensional shapes. Children show confidence in using the mouse when playing different games on the computer. The good teaching in this area of learning enables the children to make good progress and the majority are well on their way to achieve the Early Learning Goals by end of the reception year.

Physical development

72. The provision for children's physical development is good. The school has improved the provision for outdoor play since the last inspection. Children are now given the opportunity to develop their sense of space and mobility skills using wheeled toys, temporary marking and large apparatus. Good strategies are used in the physical education lessons such as those observed in developing children's awareness of different ways of moving around and making different body shapes. This shows children's confidence in trying out new movements and shapes using different parts of the body. They show due regard for safety and work together well, following teachers' instructions. Most children have good co-ordination, manipulating tools such as pencils, scissors and glue sticks. Teachers and support staff work together very well to offer the less confident children support and guidance. Children are well on their way to attaining the Early Learning Goals.

Creative development

73. Children are encouraged to develop their creative development through art, role play and music. Children's painting in the lesson observed about their favourite characters of Granddad Pot's story and their painting and collages around the classes show that they can explore colours, textures and shapes well. They communicate ideas and use the resources available to create props to support and develop their roles when playing in the market stall and in Granddad Pot's home. They sing with confidence. The good teaching in this area enables the pupils to make good progress. Although the planning for role-play areas is effective there are missed opportunities where the staff could enhance these areas to assess and extend children's learning.
74. The good and sometimes very good teaching is having a positive impact on the progress children make in the Foundation Stage. Staff are knowledgeable about how children young children learn and they provide a good balance between child-initiated

and adult-directed activities. Staff use the assessment and recording sheets systematically to record children's knowledge and understanding of different areas of learning.

75. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator sets very good educational direction for the staff and pupils. She has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development. She has established good systems to monitor and support children's learning. The staff in the Foundation Stage work together as team to support and extend children's learning. Good links are established between the staff, parents, the Foundation Stage governor and other early years providers.

ENGLISH

76. By the end of Key Stage 1, a significant minority of pupils achieve well above national expectations for pupils at the age of seven, and overall attainment in English is well above national expectations. Overall attainment by the end of Key Stage 2, at the age of 11, is, similarly, well above national expectations.
77. At Key Stage 1, pupils have well above average speaking and listening skills. They are encouraged to talk and put forward their ideas during lessons and in almost all instances pupils listen appropriately to others, without the need for teachers to issue constant reminders to do so. The great majority of pupils speak confidently and understand the importance of taking turns to make spoken contributions. This was illustrated very effectively in a Year 2 circle time activity in a religious education lesson where pupils confidently offered a very good range of words to describe the behaviour of the 'Prodigal Son' towards his father. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils demonstrate very good speaking and listening skills. They listen attentively to their teachers, concentrating well and confidently answering the teachers' questions. They speak clearly and audibly and, at the end of a number of lessons observed, reflected confidently on what they had learned and shared their learning in a straightforward way with the rest of the class.
78. In reading, a significant proportion of Year 2 pupils are achieving very well and demonstrate reading skills at a level well above those expected for pupils of their age. Overall attainment is well above national expectations for pupils at the age of seven. Pupils read a wide variety of texts appropriate for their age and ability and show a developing enthusiasm for books, encouraged effectively by the daily literacy hour 'Big Book' whole-class reading activities. The great majority of pupils take reading books home each night and return them regularly and 'Reading Record' books are used to record pupils' progress effectively and serve as a useful home-school link. At Key Stage 2, as they progress through the school, pupils acquire a love of books and a range of strategies and skills to enable them to tackle new words and understand text so that overall reading standards are well above expectations for pupils at the age of 11. For example, an above average Year 6 pupil confidently and maturely discussed the plot and characters of a favourite Whitbread Prize-winning book with an inspector.
79. By the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils have made good progress in writing and overall attainment is well above expectations for pupils aged seven. Pupils make a good start in writing in the reception classes, learning the letter shapes and sounds, learning to form their letters, initially guided by their teacher's handwriting and quickly beginning to make their own independent efforts. The writing of the majority of pupils in Year 2 shows an above average understanding of the use of capital letters and full stops and of sentence structure. Pupils use a good range of vocabulary and spell most short words correctly. For example, in one Year 2 lesson, pupils were re-

reading their own writing and checking for coherence and agreement, taking care to check 'The Three S's' – sense, sentences and spellings. Throughout Key Stage 2, there are examples of very good writing across the curriculum and overall attainment is well above expectations for pupils at the age of 11. For example, in one Year 4 lesson observed, pupils were writing descriptions of settings and demonstrated a very good understanding of how writers use details to create imaginary worlds in science fiction and fantasy stories. A small but significant proportion of pupils were using words chosen adventurously, for effect, attainment more typical of pupils at the age of 11. In Year 6, pupils understand the concept of 'flashbacks' in text, they understand and use confidently such terminology as 'narrator', 'first and third person', 'climax' and 'resolution' when talking about story structure. They revise their own writing produced in the previous lesson and make alterations by adding or changing words or word order.

80. The use of literacy across the curriculum is a strength of English teaching in the school. Very good use is made of pupils' literacy skills in other curriculum areas, notably history and religious education lessons where there are many examples of extended writing, frequently of a very good standard. Pupils have the opportunity to write for a wide range of purposes; they show an appropriate sense of audience in their writing and adapt their writing to suit. A particular feature of English in the school is pupils' keen sense of authorship which is encouraged effectively by pupils being given the opportunity to make their own books at both key stages.
81. At Key Stage 1, standards of handwriting are above expectations. Letters are usually clearly shaped and positioned on the line and a number of pupils are successfully joining their letters. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards of handwriting are good overall and, in their 'best work', frequently well above expectations. Most pupils are able to form their letters correctly and write in a satisfactory cursive handwriting style and the majority of pupils have begun to develop a neat, cursive style of writing by the end of the key stage. The standard of pupils' presentation of their work is generally above that expected for pupils of a similar age. At Key Stage 1, although standards of spelling understandably vary considerably, the standards of spelling in the written work seen is above national expectations for pupils' age. Pupils at Key Stage 1 learn spellings taken from the 'Key Words' list from the National Literacy Strategy Programme of Study and vocabulary taken from books studied in literacy lessons. At Key Stage 2, where pupils have regular spelling tests, the standard of spelling is above expectations.
82. Pupils' response in English lessons ranges from excellent - in two Key Stage 2 lessons - to good and is very good overall at both key stages. Pupils enjoy their work and most are eager to learn. They respond enthusiastically to their teachers, contribute constructively to lessons and answer questions willingly and appropriately. Teaching in lessons observed during the inspection ranged from very good to good at Key Stage 1 and from very good to satisfactory at Key Stage 2, and was very good overall at both key stages. In the great majority of lessons, the teachers' frequently very good subject knowledge, good planning and particularly good understanding of the National Literacy Strategy enable them to teach the subject very effectively. Teachers have adopted the National Literacy Strategy wholeheartedly and enthusiastically, and literacy lessons are very well planned and organised in detail, with resources readily available for pupils to use. Teachers use skilful questioning techniques to consolidate and direct pupils' learning effectively, planning appropriate work for pupils of different levels of ability. Pupils with SEN make good progress in English due to well-focused support, and well-targeted group 'booster' activities. Throughout the school, teachers have high expectations of pupils and provision for

higher attaining pupils is consistently good at both key stages. Marking of pupils' work is up to date and, in the best instances, offers pupils positive encouragement and suggestions on ways to improve their work. The quality of learning in lessons is linked closely to the quality of teaching and was very good at both key stages, reflecting the very good teaching throughout the school which is very successful in developing pupils' enthusiasm for literature.

83. Overall resources for the subject are very good. Books and texts used for shared and class reading in literacy lessons include a very good range of fiction with stories from a range of cultures, traditional stories, poetry and factual books. However, although the school library is a valuable resource for research stocked with a good range of attractive new books, it cannot be fully utilised as a class resource because of its position in a school corridor which makes class library lessons difficult to organise and manage. The co-ordinator is well aware of the need to make the library more accessible and has well-thought out plans to make changes to provision in the near future. The subject co-ordinator is extremely well informed, hard working and enthusiastic. She considers her key role is to celebrate children's achievement in English and promote a love of literature. Her excellent co-ordination is the driving force behind the school's great success in teaching the subject and resulting very high standards which are a strength of the school.

MATHEMATICS

84. Pupils enter the school with standards in mathematics which are above the expected level for five year olds. By the time they are seven, and when they leave the school at 11, these standards are well above the levels expected for this age. This is an improvement from the previous inspection, where standards were well above national expectations only at the end of Key Stage 2. This is a direct result of good, and often very good, teaching and of pupils who enjoy their lessons and are keen to learn. This is very noticeable in the effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy, which gives pupils a carefully structured session of mental and written mathematics each day. The school groups the older pupils according to their ability and ensures that those with SEN make good progress towards their mathematical targets. A 'booster group' in Year 5 makes a positive contribution to progress. Work in all classes is matched effectively to the pupils' identified abilities and extends the learning of all, including higher attaining pupils. In a number of lessons observed, pupils were able to think mathematically, handling number problems in a natural, confident manner. The great strength in mathematics is this confidence which, coupled with the lively enthusiasm observed in most lessons, builds very successfully on what the pupils already know. There is no noticeable difference in attainment between boys and girls.
85. Results of the 2001 national tests for seven year olds show that standards are continuing to rise, with pupils achieving highly in comparison with both national and similar schools. The 2001 tests for 11 year olds show a similar picture with pupils, again, achieving well.
86. Most pupils enter the school with an above average skill in number. They develop this effectively in the reception class and achieve well, so that they are still above average when they enter Year 1. All teachers ensure that pupils build well on their early work. They develop the use of accurate mathematical language effectively and work practically to solve problems. The high value placed on different strategies is a priority throughout the school, and as a result the majority of pupils are confident in explaining the reasons for their answers.

87. A number of lessons seen during the inspection illustrate that teachers' good questioning helps to ensure good progress. Questions such as "Why?", "How can we check?", "What strategies have we been using?" and "What have we learned today?" reinforce the different methods pupils use to reach an answer. A Year 6 class were repeatedly reminded to "Start with what you know" and asked "How did you do that?". Pupils respond very well to this and are enthusiastic learners. Some lessons buzzed with excitement.
88. All attainment targets are covered effectively through both key stages, although there was less work seen involving the use of ICT. Wherever possible mathematical concepts are taught through practical and investigative methods. This makes learning more relevant and enjoyable.
89. Most classrooms have displays which value and extend work done by pupils. These include number puzzles in Year 2, garden plans (developing area and perimeter) in Year 4 and mini reference books written by the pupils as 'Handy Guides to Fractions' in Year 6. Links with other subjects include graphs in science and logo in ICT.
90. The effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy provides a clear structure for the teaching of mathematics. All lessons begin with a short mental arithmetic session and end with a structured summing-up session. This enables pupils to understand what they have learnt. It also gives teachers a good knowledge of what the pupils understand. They use this knowledge effectively to reinforce their teaching and improve pupils' standards. The school constantly seeks ways to increase further pupils' confidence and ability in decision making, mathematical investigation and problem solving.
91. The quality of learning and achievement in mathematics reflects the high quality of the teaching. This is good throughout the school, with a high proportion of lessons which are very good. This reflects the quality of provision for pupils across the whole ability range. A direct result of the teaching is the speed with which pupils acquire new skills and their ability to consolidate previous skills. All teachers use questions carefully to ensure that pupils give logical reasons for the problem-solving strategies they use. This was a strength in all lessons seen. The ability grouping for older pupils has a positive effect on learning and standards. Ongoing assessment is used effectively to evaluate progress during lessons and planning is adapted when necessary. The quality of marking is generally good, with comments which help the pupils improve. During the inspection, pupils said that they found these comments helpful.
92. Teachers provide good role models in the way they value pupils' contributions. This increases pupils' self-respect, respect for each other's contributions and co-operation skills. It ensures that pupils behave well in lessons, concentrate hard and enjoy their work. All teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject. They plan work carefully and use questions effectively to extend pupils' thinking. All teachers make good use of formal and informal opportunities for pupils to practise their number skills. This makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning and achievement. Homework is set and marked regularly, and it provides useful reinforcement and extension to the work covered in class.
93. The co-ordinators' effective subject management helps to ensure that teachers are confident and that all parts of the subject are covered successfully. All staff work closely, sharing and developing together. Lesson planning and outcomes are monitored, and some lessons observed. A governor with an interest in numeracy

makes a positive contribution through developing a shared understanding of the subject. The quality and quantity of resources are very good. These are used effectively and pupils treat them with respect.

SCIENCE

94. Standards across the school are generally above average because of good, and often very good, teaching, very good subject leadership and the clear, systematic development of knowledge, skills and understanding as pupils move through the school. By the time they reach Year 6, a significant minority of pupils are achieving well above average standards. Inspection evidence confirms recent national test results. For 11 year olds, results have consistently been above national averages since the time of the previous inspection. There are no significant differences between the performance of boys and girls, and pupils with SEN are supported well and make good progress.
95. Standards at Key Stage 1 are above average. In their work on materials many Year 2 pupils demonstrate understanding of principles that they would be expected to know by the end of the school year. Investigations to find out 'The best materials for mopping up water' and 'The best material to mend a hole in Sam's trousers' show good understanding of the reasons why certain materials are suited to different tasks. Some pupils are able to use past learning to say why a bulb lights up. Analysis of pupils' work shows that they make good progress overall. They achieve well in their knowledge of life processes and living things. Through well-planned practical investigations, many are developing skills of scientific enquiry and of recording findings in a variety of ways using charts, tables and graphs.
96. By the time pupils are 11 standards are above average in all aspects of science, and a significant minority achieve standards that are well above average. This is a direct result of good and very good teaching, and an increasing emphasis being placed on pupils undertaking their own experiments and investigating for themselves. Teachers display confidence and enthusiasm and as a consequence pupils' attitudes to the subject are very positive. Their learning is generally very good. Throughout, teachers place an emphasis on developing a wide body of knowledge and understanding, and pupils learn progressively through a series of well thought out topics. Year 3 pupils use their knowledge of circuits to investigate 'bulb brightness'. Pupils in Year 4 experiment with 'bubbles' to prove the existence of 'air'. Year 5 pupils set up an experiment to create 'micro-organisms' whilst in Year 6, pupils investigate which materials will 'grip' or 'slip', writing up detailed results and conclusions and evaluating the 'reliability' of their results. Pupils develop their literacy skills through extending their scientific vocabulary, and confidently discuss 'transparent' and 'opaque' in Year 2, 'mineral' and 'molecule' in Year 3, with Year 6 pupils familiar with 'low density polythene'.
97. In all of the lessons seen, teaching was never less than good and in over half of lessons it was very good. Teachers consistently introduce pupils to the learning objectives at the beginning of lessons, often re-iterate them during the lesson, and revisit them during the lesson's conclusion. Consequently, pupils are very clear what it is they are trying to learn and teachers are well placed to judge how far this has been achieved. Teachers generally demonstrate good, perceptive questioning skills with lots of 'why' questions encouraging pupils to think more deeply. Relationships are also very good between pupils and adults and pupils have the confidence to answer, knowing that what they want to say will be valued, and not ridiculed if they are wrong. Teachers are adept at utilising opportunities that occur in lessons to develop pupils'

learning further. During the course of one lesson with Year 2 pupils, looking at how light can be blocked/what will let light through, one pupil said, "That piece of cloth tricked me". "Why?" asked the teacher. "Because it has small holes in it and it let some tiny dots of light through". The teacher immediately used the opportunity to develop the terminology to describe what the pupils were finding, 'transparent', 'translucent' and 'opaque'. Pupils then confidently proceeded to use these terms when grouping their materials.

98. The management of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and is able to support and guide colleagues very well. Much thought has gone into developing a school planning framework which links effectively with the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines on planning. The co-ordinator supports and monitors teachers' planning and is beginning to have opportunities to monitor teaching. This 'input' and support are helping to increase confidence and levels of expertise amongst staff and are contributing significantly to the high quality teaching now being delivered. Procedures for monitoring of attainment are being developed, and resources to enable teachers to deliver varied, challenging and appropriate lessons are good. The time allocated to the subject is very appropriate and is well used.

ART AND DESIGN

99. Art is a strength of the school. The buildings are full of examples of pupils' very good and excellent art, making the atmosphere very colourful and happy. The best examples are collaborative ones. For example, there is an excellent 8ft x 4ft picture of 'Pond Dipping' done by 11 Year 1 pupils. The school is not afraid of scale, and pupils are actively encouraged to make large statements.
100. Standards are well above national expectations throughout the school. Year 1 pupils make excellent progress, and standards are high from then on. From the beginning, pupils are exposed to the work of a high number of celebrated artists, which they use as inspiration and as a way to try different techniques in style, use of colour and representation of form. On leaving school, pupils have a much greater knowledge and understanding of artists than is normally found in 11 year olds, and they have used this familiarity to produce work of high quality in a wider than usual range of media. Photographs kept by the art co-ordinators show several examples of a very high standard, much of it excellent. Year 1 pupils produce excellent work; for example, on 'lines and marks' inspired by Klee, a collaborative picture of a tiger inspired by Rousseau, and a wonderful giraffe collage. They make some excellent bas-relief salt-dough houses with thatching made by pressing the dough through a garlic press, painted with 'Brusho' (a paint-on ink). Pupils in Year 2 are introduced to various types of shading in pencil, charcoal and graphite drawing. They paint high quality posters based on 'Little Red Riding Hood' – 'Wanted' posters of the wolf, 'Lost' posters for grandmama.
101. The good use of the work of famous artists continues at Key Stage 2. Year 3 pupils produce human forms based on, and showing a very good representation of, the work of Matisse. They use their study of ancient Egypt in history as a spur for their art work, making clay cartouches and pictures made of paint, glue and sand. They also print wallpaper patterns using expanded polystyrene as press-print blocks, based on the work of Morris. This technique of press-printing is introduced in Year 1 and built on through the school. In Year 4, pupils paint landscapes with trees and study different types of African masks and representations of facial parts. Their drawings of snails in science are accurate and very good. Pupils in Year 5 make some very

impressive Tudor house pictures from black marker, wax crayon and colour washes. Again, wax-resist techniques are introduced in Year 1 and revisited throughout the school. The Year 5 pupils' well above average draughtsmanship skills are evident in still life drawings and paintings, where some investigate *chiaroscuro* by using only black and white paint. There is also some very good textile work in Year 5 - printing, appliqué, and weaving from observational drawings of nature. There is other science-related work in the form of sculptures of body parts in paper. Using a variety of colouring agents, Year 6 pupils produce very good pictures of the view through their bedroom windows, inspired by Bonnard. They produce very good illustrations of poems in gold and silver ink on black paper, thus connecting with literacy. Their excellent Klimt-inspired large paintings are good enough to take home and frame, and they are encouraged to do just this. When talking to Year 6 pupils and looking through sketchbooks, it became apparent that they knew the work of artists other than those mentioned specifically in this section, including Turner, Braque, Van Gogh, Lowry and Gwen Johns.

102. The teaching and learning seen in the inspection ranged from satisfactory to very good. However, from the scrutiny of work it can be concluded that they are very good overall. The school has a policy (unwritten) of introducing the work of different artists every year and, partly as a result of this, teachers' knowledge and understanding are excellent. This is particularly effective in Year 1, where one teaching assistant is art trained, and her knowledge and understanding are used to the full. Another excellent feature is what teachers expect pupils can achieve. In a good Year 3 lesson, pupils were using the internet to find information on Matisse. This knowledge was used in simplifying their collages, the original design of which had generally been too 'busy'. The teacher expected the final result to be very like the older Matisse, and this was very successful. Pupils worked hard, not only because the teacher expected it, but also that they themselves expected nothing else. The whole school expects pupils to produce very good art work, and pupils respond to this ethos very well. In a very good Year 6 lesson, pupils were using the work of Hockney as a stimulus to making collages, a medium they are introduced to in Year 1, where they overlay tissue paper to make landscapes, and which is developed through the school. The objectives of the lesson were explained very clearly, so pupils knew exactly what they had to do. They were reminded that they were all artists and, as such, they had to look really carefully, and they responded to this positively and produced some very good work, making drawings of what they finally wanted, and using their thumbs and pencils to gauge proportion.
103. Pupils really enjoy art. It has a high profile in the school. Pupils know they do well, are proud of their achievements, and speak enthusiastically and knowledgeably about it. For many, it is their favourite subject. The school uses the Cheshire Scheme of Work, which is very good, and enables pupils to flourish. The only disappointing feature of art in the school is the Picasso-inspired work in Year 5. Although the paintings are technically well executed and attractive, pupils go over the top in painting weird alien-like creatures, using a primary colour palette that is far from Picasso, who is not as easy to use as an inspiration as the considerable list of other artists the school uses. Three-dimensional work is restricted by the school's not having a kiln and, although a relative weakness compared with the very good two-dimensional provision, is still good. The school recognises three-dimensional work as an area for improvement. Co-ordination is shared between two teachers who also share their class teaching. This works well, as both are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and dedicated, and they do a good job between them. The school has a timetable for their observations of art lessons, but this has not yet started. The subject is well supported by having artists in school on a regular basis - about two a year - and by

clubs. An art club meets for two terms in the year, and the lunchtime club for infants has many art-based activities. Resources are good, and used very well, although the school sometimes has difficulty in finding information on the less-well-known artists suggested in the Cheshire scheme.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

104. Standards in DT are good, an improvement since the last inspection. Only two lessons were seen, one at Key Stage 1, where attainment was in line with national expectations, and one at Key Stage 2, where attainment was above expectations. In common with other schools, pupils take home their work in DT, so there was little evidence available of completed work. However, the co-ordinator provided photographic evidence of finished products, most of which were of a high standard, and some of a very high standard. By also taking into consideration teachers' planning and discussion with staff and pupils, it can be concluded that standards are above the national expectation. The work actually seen confirms this, as much was above expectations; for example, Year 6 conveyor belts, made of cardboard, paper and straws, showed an above average attainment in measurement, consideration of the final product, and joining skills. Discussion with Year 6 pupils showed that they have a good understanding of the plan-do-review nature of the design process, including testing of the product. Year 2 pupils showed a good understanding of this, too. They spoke knowledgeably about box corners and making simple polyhedra from pipe-cleaners and art-straws. They also demonstrated a good knowledge, for their age, of food; for example, making chocolate cake and icing.
105. With so few lessons seen, no firm judgement can be made on teaching from lesson observations. However, since standards are above average, it can be concluded that overall, teaching and learning are good. Both observed lessons were good. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher had planned to include art very well, without confusing the two subjects at all. Designs were taken from other cultures in the making of puppets. In the other lesson, Year 5 pupils were designing and making musical instruments in papier mache and other materials. Pupils worked hard and with interest, and there were some good designs. Several were using balloons as formers to make maraccas from papier mache. Others were using cardboard to make drums. Some were making stringed instruments. One pupil was making a combined drum/shaker using a plastic bowl as a former for papier mache. They were constantly evaluating their work, with timely reminders from the teacher - have they done it right? Will it work? What are the weak points?
106. The co-ordinator is hard working, knowledgeable and very competent. The curriculum, based on the nationally recommended scheme of work with input from other published schemes, is good, and focuses well on the design-make-review process and the acquisition of skills in making. There are good links with other subjects across the curriculum; for example, with science and history in Year 6. Literacy and numeracy are well supported. Pupils also make a number of books in which to present their work. Parents help a great deal in the delivery of the subject, particularly in textile work and food technology. The Year 6 trip to Styal Mill gives pupils good, first-hand experience of technology in action. Resources are generally good, although the school needs a set of fabric scissors and snippers.

GEOGRAPHY

107. Standards in geography are above national expectations at the ages of seven and 11. This is an improvement since the time of the previous inspection.

108. A good feature of the school's provision in geography is the emphasis that is placed on practical experience. Only one lesson was observed at Key Stage 1, so no overall judgements can be made about teaching. However, this lesson was very good. After some initial work on 'the wind' as part of a topic on 'Weather', carried out in the classroom, pupils then had the opportunity to go outside and experience 'the wind'. They talked animatedly about how it felt. They measured its strength through holding streamers out and they worked out its direction using the school's weather vane. On returning to the classroom they made accurate observations about the strength of the wind and related these to the Beaufort wind scale. Very good learning took place as a result of skilful, purposeful well-planned teaching. Additional evidence on standards was gained from examination of past work and through discussions with staff and pupils. By the end of Year 2, pupils have developed a good knowledge of places local to the school, through planned walks and visits. They demonstrate a good understanding of route planning and map making. Study of the physical features of the school now compared with 30 years ago illustrates the links with history which the school is developing.
109. In Years 3 to 6, pupils develop a good understanding of the influence of climate and physical features upon lifestyles, agriculture and 'industry' in different areas of the world. Study of Chembakolli village in India, and of tribes living by the River Orinoco in Venezuela, helps pupils recognise that as a result of climatic and physical conditions, the local population experience difficulties and hardships in their daily living conditions far removed from their own. Pupils come to know that the style of diet, houses and of 'daily routine' are very different from their own experiences. Pupils make good progress in developing technical vocabulary and mapping skills as an integral part of topics they undertake. Use of sources such as aerial photographs and Ordnance Survey maps reveals above average understanding.
110. Teaching seen at Key Stage 2 was never less than good and often very good. Teachers display enthusiasm and good subject knowledge, and constantly encourage pupils to talk about their work and develop the skills of comparing and contrasting. They expect reasons for answers. They ensure, through questioning, that all pupils are involved and are continually challenged to explain their answers. Teachers plan carefully with a clear idea of what they want pupils to learn. Pupils respond well. Conversations with pupils revealed interest and enthusiasm, and in lessons, pupils revealed a clear understanding of what they were learning and why.

HISTORY

111. No lessons were observed during the inspection and overall judgements about teaching are not possible. However, evidence from teachers' planning, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with staff and pupils indicate that standards are above average. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
112. Teachers' planning indicates that the required Programmes of Study are taught. These are well thought out and skills and concepts are systematically developed through the school. Teachers make good use of local resources and artefacts to bring aspects of the past to life. Through visits to Tatton Hall, pupils come to a better understanding of Victorian 'culture' and social conditions of the time when they experience a re-creation of life 'below stairs'. Drama workshops and role play help create aspects of life in Egypt, and the 'Deva experience', led by a Roman 'centurion' help pupils appreciate something of the qualities and differences of the Egyptian and Roman civilisations. Teachers promote literacy skills well by requiring pupils to write

in different styles, through taking notes, making lists, writing letters and stories, and opportunities for extended writing are well used.

113. Scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with groups of pupils revealed that standards are above average. Presentation and organisation of work are generally very good and pupils obviously take some pride in this. Comments from teachers such as "Excellent work. You used the resources well to extract facts" or "You've included some good facts and opinions" indicate appropriately high expectations from teachers and very good responses from pupils. Older pupils display enthusiasm, and good knowledge and understanding of aspects of their work in history. They were able to talk at length about the changes that had taken place in Britain during Queen Victoria's reign. They understood the changes brought about by industrialisation, the effect this had on the growth of towns, and the movements in the rural population. They could discuss these changes and the reasons. They had had access to a good range of primary and secondary sources.
114. The subject has an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator, who, although new to the role, has a clear idea of strengths of the subject and areas for development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

115. Two lessons were observed at Key Stage 1 during the inspection but no lessons were observed at Key Stage 2, making judgements on the overall quality of teaching and learning impossible. However, a survey of work undertaken during the current and previous school year, observations of pupils working at computers during lessons and discussions with pupils indicate that, by the end of both key stages, pupils' achievement in ICT is equivalent to national expectations for their age and pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Pupils use the internet to research topics, and there is satisfactory cross-curricular use of ICT in other curriculum areas such as English and geography.
116. At Key Stage 1, Year 1 pupils have produced instructions to get to Piglet's house using the programmable floor turtle or 'Roamer'. In the two ICT lessons observed, pupils in Year 2 were following instructions to enter a computer program. Pupils understand basic computer terminology such as 'mouse', 'icon' and 'cursor' although limited further evidence of pupils' attainment was available because these lessons were essentially 'demonstration' lessons given by the teachers as an introduction to the task. At Key Stage 2, Year 3 pupils have manipulated sound, recording a song made up on the computer. Year 4 pupils have jointly made a 'newspaper' - 'The Roman Times' - an example of writing for different audiences of very good quality for Year 4 pupils. Year 5 pupils have undertaken internet research, 'morphed' faces, planned rooms using a design program called 'Specs' and have begun to learn how to design and use a spreadsheet. Year 6 pupils have used the programming language 'Logo' to design mathematical patterns and have looked at a range of media as an introduction to a project leading eventually to their producing their own multi-media page.
117. Although it is not possible to give an overall judgement on the quality of pupils' learning in ICT lessons, where computers are used during lessons in other curriculum areas, pupils are keen to work with the computers, work together appropriately, taking turns and working independently where required. No overall judgement on the quality of teaching is possible although teaching in the two lessons observed was broadly satisfactory.

118. All classes have at least one computer and the school has two 'mini-suites' of five multi-media computers in the Year 5 and Year 6 areas with an internet connection. In addition, the school has eight 'laptop' computers, a digital camera and two programmable floor computers. Government funding has been used to purchase a number of new computers and equipment and all teachers were undergoing, and had almost completed, related in-service training at the time of inspection.
119. The two subject co-ordinators provide good support for colleagues and have introduced a whole-school scheme of work based on the government-recommended scheme of work for the subject.

MUSIC

120. No lessons were seen at Key Stage 2, so no judgement can be made about overall standards or teaching. Three lessons were seen at Key Stage 1, and standards there are in line with the national expectation. This was the case at the time of the last inspection. The quality of singing in Key Stage 2 assemblies is similar to that found in most junior schools. In Key Stage 1 assemblies, the quality of singing is similar to that found in most infant schools. Key Stage 1 pupils do not have the benefit of hearing juniors singing every day.
121. Teaching and learning are satisfactory at Key Stage 1. In the two Year 2 lessons, pupils were using untuned percussion instruments to accompany a poem on weather previously considered in a geography lesson, showing good links with other subjects and support for literacy. Pupils considered what instruments would be apt to suggest the sun rising, rainfall, thunder, etc. They had some difficulty in leaving their instruments alone. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of rhythm. In a good Year 1 lesson, pupils were using untuned percussion instruments to make sounds with a variety of combinations of different qualities, ie, slow/fast, long/short, and loud/quiet. They were familiar with most of the instruments but some, such as the wood block, were new to them. In contrast with the Year 2 pupils, they were much better at touching their instruments only when they had to use them. They concentrated and listened well to others, waiting their turn patiently. Everybody had a turn, and they were learning well through listening and doing.
122. Music is ably led by a specialist who plays the piano in Key Stage 2 assemblies with much gusto and enthusiasm. The curriculum, largely based on the nationally recommended scheme of work, is good, with influences from several publications, radio and television programmes. ICT is used satisfactorily, and the subject enhances pupils' cultural development well. The long-term illness of a teacher has resulted in there being no pianist at Key Stage 1, so compact discs are used in assemblies. A parent kindly volunteered to play in the infant Christmas production. There are two music clubs, one for recorders and a choir, and these enhance provision and help to raise standards. There was no choir at the time of the last inspection. Resources are satisfactory, although some percussion instruments are wearing out.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

123. Standards are good and above the national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, with some pupils achieving very high standards in gymnastics. All pupils, including those with SEN, make good progress. The school has maintained the high standards since the last inspection with examples of good teaching and learning seen throughout the school. The school has already drawn up plans to improve the

accommodation in the hall to offer more space for older pupils to explore their movements in gymnastics.

124. In Year 2, standards are good and pupils respond eagerly to lessons. They show good control of their bodies as they explore travelling around using different parts of the body and curved pathways. They move around imaginatively, responding to the mood of the music to create the desired effect whether it is the slow moving snowflakes or the jagged growing bush as observed in the dance lesson about 'Sleeping Beauty'. In Year 1, pupils use their knowledge about points and patches to create different positions. Teaching is never less than good at Key Stage 1. Teachers' high expectations, use of humour and appraisal of pupils' performance led to clear improvement and enjoyment during lessons.
125. The standards of work seen in Year 6 lessons were high, particularly in gymnastics. Pupils combine skills, techniques and ideas to link a sequence of actions very confidently. They evaluate the effectiveness of their techniques and suggest what they could do to improve. In Year 3, pupils are developing their skills about how to control the ball and how to keep it on the ground. They are learning about the rules of the games such as the role of defender and attacker. During a discussion with a group of Year 6 boys and girls it was evident how pupils' understanding of these skills have progressed. They could explain in detail the rules and tactics of games such as cricket, football and netball. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is good and sometimes very good. Teacher's knowledge about the subject, and the way they offer support and challenge in sessions, enable pupils to make good progress and attainment by the end of Year 6 is set to exceed expectations in most aspects of physical education. Pupils attitudes and behaviour in lessons, and as they get ready for games, are good. Pupils in both key stages show due regard for safety as they engage in various activities. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the importance of warm and cooling sessions and how they affect the heart and muscles.
126. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and uses his expertise to support and monitor both staff and pupils to give very good provision throughout the school. He has recently developed a curriculum guide for extra-curricular activities, linking this to the guidance for personal, social, health and citizenship education. Pupils are given opportunities to learn about other cultures through dance; for example, the Year 5 lesson observed on Indian dance. The school provides very good extra-curricular activities for older pupils. These include football (including girls' football), Kwik cricket, gymnastics, netball, tennis, rounders and chess. The school has established good links with other agencies. Pupils are given the opportunity to enter for competitions at local and county levels. Resources for the subject are very good. The co-ordinator is very clear about strengths and areas for improvement. There is a very good capacity for continued improvement.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

127. By the ages of seven and 11, most pupils achieve standards that are in line with the requirements of both attainment targets within the locally agreed syllabus. The school ensures that all pupils have equal access to the religious education curriculum. Within this subject, there are strengths and areas for further development.
128. Pupils know that religions have rules for people to follow and many consider the feelings of others. In one very good lesson in Year 3, the teacher used a Seder Plate as an example of foods which are used to remember something special. The pupils responded very well to this in a variety of ways. For example; one pupil chose a bottle

of fizzy orange to remind her of holidays in Greece, one chose a glass of milk as the last thing he had drunk before his granddad died, and another a carrot "to remind us of vegetables growing in the garden to make us healthy". Pupils listened sensitively when others spoke of their memories.

129. Throughout the school, pupils develop a good understanding of Christianity. During one good lesson observed, pupils used a painting by Fra Filippo Lippi as a stimulus to consider Mary's feelings at being told she was to have a baby. Pupils empathised with this and a sensitive discussion followed.
130. By the age of seven, pupils have learned a number of Bible stories, which are used effectively to teach a moral code. Pupils relate this to 'people we depend on' and 'special gifts'. Some details of Judaism are learned.
131. By the age of 11, pupils' knowledge and understanding of non-Christian religions is less well developed. Although the curriculum is covered, pupils do not remember much of what they have learned. During one lesson observed, pupils laughed when given details of the ceremony where a baby is welcomed into the Muslim community. Awareness of living in a multicultural society, where people practise a variety of religions, is not reinforced effectively.
132. During most of the lessons observed, pupils were interested, contributing thoughtfully and sensitively to discussions. The overall quality of teaching is good throughout the school, although in some cases teachers' knowledge and understanding of non-Christian religions is insufficient to ensure confident teaching of these areas. Most lessons observed were interesting and pupils enjoyed them. Teachers make effective links with literacy by encouraging pupils to read, write carefully and take part in discussions.
133. The subject co-ordinator works effectively to promote the values of the subject. Religious education is due for further whole-school development and this will concentrate on the weaker areas of the curriculum. The school has a good range of books and is building a useful collection of artefacts to illustrate the different religions studied.