

INSPECTION REPORT

SS PETER AND PAUL'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mawdesley, Ormskirk

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119678

Headteacher: Mrs B Wood

Reporting inspector: Mr S O'Toole
20891

Dates of inspection: 27th February – 1st March 2001

Inspection number: 210900

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Ridley Lane
Mawdesley
Nr. Ormskirk
Lancashire

Postcode: L40 3TA

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr J Cobham

Date of previous inspection: 8th February 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20891	S O'Toole	Registered inspector	Foundation stage Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Music Physical education Equal Opportunities	The school's results and pupils' achievements. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
15181	M Hackney	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
24504	S Herring	Team Inspector	Special educational needs English Science Art Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ss Peter and Paul's Roman Catholic Primary School is a smaller than average school which draws pupils from Mawdesley and surrounding villages. Almost all pupils come from Roman Catholic families. A total of 71 pupils attend the school with 34 boys and 37 girls, a figure which is higher than at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils are aged from four to eleven. All pupils come from white ethnic backgrounds and live in area which is economically advantaged. No pupil has English as an additional language. One pupil is entitled to free school meals, a figure which is well below average. A lower than average proportion of pupils has special educational needs and one has a statement of special educational need, about average. Children are admitted to the school in the September of the academic year in which they are four and they work in a reception/Year 1 class. On admission to the school, most pupils have levels of attainment which are above those expected for their age. Since the previous inspection the governors have appointed a new headteacher and three other teachers.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school. All associated with the school share a common purpose and put the pupils and their success first. The teaching is very good and the pupils respond with enthusiasm and hard work leading to consistent progress. Pupils achieve well and attain well above average standards by the end of the juniors in English, mathematics and science. The leadership and management of the school are excellent. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The well above average standards in English, mathematics and science achieved by the end of the juniors.
- Very good teaching throughout the school.
- Excellent leadership and management.
- The pupils' excellent attitudes, behaviour, personal development and relationships.
- The rich and interesting curriculum and the excellent way in which the school promotes spiritual, moral and social development.
- The involvement of parents.
- The way in which the school cares for the pupils.

What could be improved

- The rate of the infants' progress in science.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made excellent improvement since the previous inspection in February 1999. One of the main reasons for the school's success in overcoming the serious weaknesses identified at that time is the outstanding and inspirational leadership and management by the headteacher, and the school is now providing a very good quality of education. The governors take an active and well-informed part in school improvement. There are useful and sharply focused plans for development, and priorities are carefully linked to spending. Standards have improved through rigorous monitoring and supportive training of the staff. The pupils' behaviour and attitudes are now excellent. There is effective delegation of responsibilities and this has led to a better-balanced curriculum. Teaching has improved and the provision for children in the foundation stage is much better than it was. There are now very effective systems for financial control and monitoring. The parents have much more positive views of the school.

STANDARDS

In the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000 the pupils attained standards which were well above average in English and science and above average in mathematics. Pupils aged seven attained well above average standards in reading, above average levels in mathematics and average standards in writing. These results vary slightly from year to year because of the small number of pupils taking the tests. However, trends over three years show that the school has steadily improved at a rate in line with the national trend. In the teacher assessments in science at the end of the infants, all pupils attained the expected level but none achieved the higher levels; this relative weakness in performance remains.

Inspection evidence shows that, by the end of the juniors, standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average. Standards at the end of the infants in reading are well above average and mathematics and writing are above average. This improvement is due to better teaching. The variation between inspection findings and test results is also due to the school's successful focus on improving writing and the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. Children in the foundation stage make very good progress and attain the early learning goals in all areas of their work and exceed them in communication, language and literacy, personal, social and emotional development, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. Their creative and physical skills are appropriate for their age.

Given the pupils' attainment on admission, standards are sufficiently high with the exception of science in the infants. Excellent progress is made in Years 5 and 6 because of outstanding teaching. Progress is mostly good in the rest of the school and very good in English and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. The more able make very good progress, with the exception of science in the infants. The school sets demanding targets in English and mathematics and is on course to achieve them. Throughout the school, standards in art and design and information and communication technology are above average. By the end of the juniors, standards in history, design and technology and geography are above those expected for eleven-year-olds. The infants achieve average levels in history, design and technology and geography. Standards are average in music and physical education throughout the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. The pupils are well-motivated learners who respond very well to the teaching and take a keen interest in all aspects of their work. They particularly enjoy homework. Children in the reception class quickly develop positive attitudes.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. The pupils contribute much to making the school a purposeful and vibrant place where all are valued and respected. There is no evidence of bullying. There have been no exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils are given and respond very well to responsibility. They show a mature and considerate understanding of each other and have very well developed social skills.
Attendance	Very good. The pupils love school and attendance is well above the national average. Punctuality is very good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching is very good overall. In the lessons seen, all of the teaching was satisfactory or better with 67% being very good or excellent and 29% good, 5% was satisfactory. The most effective teaching is in developing pupils' basic skills in reading, writing, number and information and communication technology; this teaching is often excellent. English and mathematics are taught very well and the teaching of these subjects in Years 5 and 6 is inspirational. There are many strengths in the teaching, including the excellent use of homework and the setting of tasks which are matched very well to the different needs, abilities and ages in each class. The teachers expertly manage behaviour and make consistent use of praise to encourage the pupils. Teachers' planning is very good and the support given to pupils with statements of special educational needs is excellent. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and the more able, are given rigorous challenges and as a result they learn effectively. Inspired by the teaching, the pupils work hard and productively, showing tenacity and a strong desire to do their best. They show high levels of interest, concentrate excellently and show independence and initiative. There is very good teaching of children in the foundation stage. The teachers are very skilful in meeting the needs of pupils in mixed aged classes. Support staff contribute much to the pupils' learning and support those with statements of special educational needs excellently. There is effective specialist teaching of music and art but there are some gaps in the teaching of science in the infants due partly to limited subject knowledge.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school has a rich and vibrant curriculum, including very good provision for the foundation stage. The strategies for developing literacy and numeracy skills are excellent. There is insufficient depth in the science curriculum in the infants. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The pupils benefit from well-focused individual education plans and much support. Those with physical disabilities are supported excellently.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent. The value of the individual and of their role in society, responsibility for others and selflessness are at the heart of the school's mission statement and reflect the school's Roman Catholic heritage. Very good provision is made for pupils' cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Excellent. The staff know the pupils very well and provide a safe and secure environment. Learning is enhanced through the very good way that the teachers plan work using the results of assessment.

The school has an excellent relationship with parents. The excellent provision for homework and weekly newsletters keep the parents fully involved in their children's education.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher is an outstanding leader who rigorously pursues higher standards, ably supported by staff and governors. There is a strong sense of teamwork and staff are very supportive and hardworking.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Excellent. The governors ensure that all requirements are met and they take an informed and constructive part in shaping the direction of the school. They have a clear understanding of how well the school is doing and set challenging targets for improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The monitoring of teaching and learning is very effective and is linked to the school's analysis of its performance. Individual targets for improvement are set for staff and pupils and they are pursued and measured rigorously. This has been particularly successful in raising standards in writing.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. Funds are used well to benefit the pupils, for example, in providing additional teaching staff for pupils in Year 2. Spending is linked to the school's plans and very effective use is made of specific funds for example for pupils with special educational needs.

The school has good staffing levels. Teachers and support staff have good expertise. There are sufficient and mainly good resources, particularly for English and information and communication technology, although there are shortages of science resources. The accommodation is satisfactory, although the lack of a hall hampers some opportunities for physical education. The school applies the principles of best value in purchasing supplies and services.

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 way in which the school is led and managed. • The quality of teaching and how it enables their children to make good progress. • The wide range of opportunities provided for the children. • The way in which the school helps their children to develop positive attitudes and to learn effectively. • The role that they play in the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents raised no issues of concern.

The inspection team fully endorses the very positive views of parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The results in national tests at the end of the infants and juniors vary slightly from year to year because of the small number of pupils taking the tests. In 2000 only six pupils took the end of Year 6 tests and four took the end of Year 2 tests. The results showed that infant pupils attained well above average standards in reading, average levels in writing and above average standards in mathematics. When compared with schools with similar intakes, standards were above average in reading and average in mathematics, but below average in writing. In the year 6 tests, the pupils attained well above average standards in English and science and above average standards in mathematics. Similar school comparisons showed that standards in English were above average, in mathematics standards were average and in science were well above average. These results should be treated with caution because of the small numbers taking the tests. Because of the outstanding teaching in Year 6, the pupils perform exceptionally well when taking into account their performance in the tests at the end of the infants.
2. The school has made much headway since the previous inspection in raising standards. Inspection evidence shows that the school is working hard and successfully to improve standards. This is due to better teaching, a well organised curriculum, very effective use of assessment to plan work and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of performance. The school has set challenging targets for performance in national tests and is on course to meet them. The trends in performance in national tests over the previous three years show a steady rise in standards. Predicted results for 2001 are that an increased proportion of pupils should attain the higher levels in English and mathematics in the tests for seven and eleven year olds. Although all Year 2 pupils are on track to attain average standards in science, very few will attain the higher level and this is a relative weakness given their competence in other subjects. It is due to insufficiently challenging scientific content in the curriculum, lack of confidence in the teaching and limited resources. The school has focused much on narrowing the gap in pupils' performance in reading and writing seen in the national tests results in 2000. There has been much success in raising attainment in writing whilst maintaining the pupils' reading skills. The school has devised a very successful approach to teaching basic skills and has excellent strategies to improve writing. They include setting sharply focused targets for pupils and teachers linked to performance in national tests, providing an excellent range of opportunities for the pupils to write extended passages in other subjects and improving the pupils' skills in editing and drafting their work. The school recognised that the results of national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2000 were disappointing and the governors and headteacher have remedied this weakness by employing an additional teacher to work with Year 2 pupils. This well-focused use of resources has had a very positive impact.
3. Given the pupils' attainment on admission, standards in almost all subjects are sufficiently high and the pupils achieve well. Excellent progress is made in Years 5 and 6 because of outstanding teaching and progress is mostly good in the rest of the school and very good in English and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. The more able and those who are gifted and talented make very good progress, except in science in the infants where progress is satisfactory. There is little difference between the performance of boys and girls. Although there are variations from year to

year because of the small number of pupils in each year group there is no discernible pattern.

4. Children in the foundation stage make very good progress and attain the early learning goals in all areas of their work and exceed them in communication, language and literacy, personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. The children become proficient readers who love books and respond very well to stories and poems. They write well and are already making sentences often including correct spelling of basic words and using capital letters and full stops appropriately. The children are good at counting and match numbers with objects. The more able correctly add and subtract numbers up to 10. They have a very good knowledge of shape. The children know much about the world around them and use simple scientific, historical and geographical vocabulary correctly. Their creative and physical skills are appropriate for their age.
5. Inspection evidence shows that standards are at least above average in English, mathematics, information and communication technology and art and design by the end of the infants and juniors. Standards in science are well above average at the end of the juniors but average at the end of the infants. Standards are above average in design and technology, history and geography at the end of the juniors but average at the end of the infants. Standards in music and physical education are average throughout the school. Overall this represents an improvement since the previous inspection.
6. Throughout the school, the pupils have well above average speaking and listening skills. They engage in purposeful and well-informed discussion and respond very well to opportunities for drama and role-play. The pupils have well above average reading skills. They know a good range of authors and express preference for types of reading from an early age. They are able to extract information from a variety of sources and synthesise the information using their findings to argue a case. Writing skills are well above average by the end of the infants and juniors. Pupils have very good levels of competence in spelling, grammar and punctuation. They write lively and imaginative prose and their poetic writing is sensitive and thoughtful. However, infant pupils and those in Years 3 and 4 have average skills in handwriting and few join letters and write fluently. The pupils apply their literacy skills very well in other subjects and produce high quality work in history and geography in the juniors because of their expertise in researching and collating.
7. Pupils at the end of the infants and juniors have well above average skills in mathematics. They apply their numeracy skills very well in subjects such as design and technology where they measure and cut accurately. Pupils have an excellent knowledge of mathematical vocabulary and are very confident in solving problems using several operations. They have well developed skills in using computers in their work on data. Skills in shape, space and measures are well above average. The pupils have an excellent knowledge of number bonds and multiplication facts which they recall quickly and accurately.
8. By the end of the infants the pupils attain average standards in science and by the time they leave the school the pupils attain well above average standards. Year 2 pupils have a basic knowledge of scientific terms and a secure knowledge of all aspects of the subject but they lack confidence in applying their knowledge well and understanding cause and effect. Year 6 pupils excel in the subject and benefit from excellent teaching. They are able to predict outcomes and draw conclusions from their experiments and

investigations. They have a deep knowledge of scientific facts and are able to apply their knowledge to designing their own experiments.

9. Throughout the school the pupils are good at art and design. They have a good range of skills and techniques which they apply well to creating imaginative pictures. They work effectively in the style of famous artists. Standards in information and communication technology have also improved since the previous inspection and are above those expected of seven and eleven year olds because of effective teaching and good opportunities to use computers in a wide range of subjects. In history and geography in the juniors, the pupils work very well independently and research information. They have a thorough knowledge of the sequence of key historical events and a good understanding of humankind's achievement through the ages. They successfully compare their locality with others in the world and have a deeply mature concern for the environment. Throughout the school, the pupils have good singing skills and enjoy performing in the school's many plays.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. The pupils' attitudes, behaviour, personal development and relationships are excellent and contribute much to the orderly and welcoming atmosphere in the school. The school is a hive of activity and there is a buzz of excitement about learning. These aspects of school life have improved since the previous inspection and have a significant impact on the progress and standards achieved by the pupils.
11. Children in the foundation stage make a very good start to school and the time they spend in "The Sunbeams", the school's pre-school group, prepares them well for formal education. The children settle quickly and soon adapt to the school's routines. They become very keen and interested learners and respond with much enthusiasm to the staff. They are good at sharing equipment and resources and work and play together very well. In lessons they listen attentively and have the confidence to answer questions clearly and to talk in front of a group. Their behaviour is excellent and they have a very good understanding of the needs of others.
12. Throughout the school pupils' behaviour is excellent. Pupils have a well-developed sense of fairness and understand the difference between right and wrong. They have been involved in devising the school's rules and have a clear understanding of why rulers are necessary. Their exemplary behaviour also includes an awareness of self-discipline. The pupils move around the school in an orderly and calm way for example when going to assembly or out to play. Playtimes are happy and lively occasions where the pupils get on well together, invent their own games and ensure that all have opportunities to join in. The pupils respond excitedly to the school's system of awards and show much appreciation of others' achievements by applauding spontaneously when their peers do something well. No evidence of bullying was seen during the inspection and the pupils say that incidents of rough play and unkindness are rare. Pupils identified as having behavioural difficulties respond very well to the school's high standards of behaviour. There have been no exclusions.
13. The pupils' attitudes to learning in all aspects of their work contribute much to progress. They respond excitedly to the teaching and are avid learners. The pupils think highly of their teachers. They respond enthusiastically to the challenges set for them and stick at tasks. The pupils are full of confidence and inspired by the high quality of the teaching. In a literacy lesson in Years 5 and 6 they devised imaginative questions for a highwayman showing much perception about the historical context and were able to look beyond the obvious to explore a mixture of feelings and emotions. In a

mathematics lesson in Year 1 the pupils speedily and correctly answered mental arithmetic questions, keenly competing to be the first to answer and they showed intense concentration as they designed symmetrical patterns, carefully positioning a variety of shapes in the correct place. Pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 responded very well in a lesson in information and communication technology showing much patience and perseverance in devising a program to control a system for switching lights on and off. The pupils enjoy taking part in the school's excellent extra-curricular activities and regularly attend them. They are keen to get as much out of the school as possible and also contribute much themselves. They show respect for the traditions and beliefs of others. They appreciate different viewpoints and through their support of charities around the world have a finely developed sense of justice and social responsibility.

14. The pupils form very effective relationships and develop personal and social skills which show a high level of maturity. The pupils have high levels of self-confidence and awareness of the needs of others. They form constructive relationships with their peers and adults. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility for the day-to-day routines of the school and are keen to help adults. They notice things that need to be done, for example, picking up any litter or tidying away resources and do not wait to be asked but use their initiative well. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are particularly skilful in organising their own work and in collaborating on projects. They come into the classroom and immediately settle to work without prompting. Their keenness is reflected in their enthusiasm for homework and their willingness to complete it on time and to put in much effort to ensure that their work is of a high standard. Pupils are very confident in welcoming visitors and talking about their school.
15. The pupils love coming to school and attendance is very good, being well above the national average. The pupils' enthusiasm for school contributes much to progress and attainment. Absence is rare and there is no unauthorised absence. Lessons start on time and the pupils waste no time in settling to work.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. Teaching is a significant strength of the school and is very good overall. During the inspection, the teaching was excellent in 24% of the lessons, very good in 43%, good in 29% and satisfactory in 5%. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Teaching has improved much since the previous inspection and has a beneficial impact on the pupils' learning. Teaching is at its best in Years 5 and 6 where it is often excellent. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good and those pupils with statements of special educational needs benefit from excellent teaching by the support staff. Children in the foundation stage are taught very well and there is excellent teaching of communication, language and literacy and the mathematical areas of learning. The improvement has been achieved through the inspirational leadership of the headteacher, much improvement in the use of assessment to plan work, a well-structured curriculum, effective monitoring and support and rigorous target setting for staff and pupils.
17. Children in the foundation stage are taught very well. The teachers and support staff plan work thoroughly, paying much attention to setting interesting and challenging tasks which enthuse the children. The work is matched exceptionally well to the needs of the individual and the excellent use of assessment means that children make very good progress through the stepping stones of learning. The focus on communication, language and literacy is excellent and the staff use a wide variety of methods to inspire the children's love of books and to develop their competence in writing. There is

effective teaching of the names and sounds of letters and regular practice in forming letters correctly. The staff have high expectations and the children rise enthusiastically to challenge. Learning is very rapid and the children make excellent progress in reading because of the opportunities to listen to and take part in stories, participate in role-play and to read individually and in small groups. The use of homework to support the development of basic skills in English and mathematics is excellent and parents say they feel fully involved in their children's learning. Mathematical development receives much attention and the children gain from opportunities to learn to use apparatus which helps their understanding. Very good records of progress are kept and the information is used to plan work. The involvement of support staff and parents is of the highest order. The teachers provide excellent guidance to other adults. The staff know the children well and are skilful in intervening in learning at just the right moment. They allow the children to experiment and investigate and also provide just the right level of guidance to accelerate learning through the use of well focused questions.

18. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good and the support provided for those with physical disabilities is excellent. Those with behavioural difficulties receive very good support and much is expected of them. As a result, these pupils respond by behaving very well and learn to collaborate and co-operate in the learning. The staff write sharply focused individual education plans and they share targets with the pupils and their parents. This ensures that the pupils clearly understand what is expected of them and they make very good progress. Support staff have high levels of expertise and work very well with the teachers to meet the needs of the pupils. They make excellent use of resources to support learning and use praise and reward effectively to encourage the pupils.
19. The school has a national award for the quality of its teaching of basic skills. This award is completely justified and reflects the often excellent teaching of literacy and numeracy. The teachers have an excellent understanding of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and much expertise in promoting effective learning of English and mathematics through stimulating and challenging lessons. They make very good use of the wide range of resources available to bring the subjects to life. In Years 5 and 6 the opportunities to visit the theatre to see the works of Shakespeare provide a stimulus to writing and help the pupils to gain a deep understanding of comedy and tragedy. The teachers know their pupils well and make regular assessments of their performance. They use this information to plan work and to set targets for the pupils. The pupils know their targets and how to improve because the marking is of high standard and provides effective guidance. The school has focused much on improving pupils' writing and the staff have benefited much from training in this aspect of teaching. Strong emphasis is given to developing the pupils' competence in reading. The school uses several methods including teaching new words, extending pupils' knowledge of the vocabulary for each subject, teaching how to build words from letter sounds and by providing excellent opportunities to read at home, in groups and as individuals. The teachers communicate their own love of books through story telling and poetry reading. The staff take every opportunity to use English to support other subjects and the pupils become avid learners who are always seeking ways of making their writing better. Spelling, grammar and punctuation are taught very well and the pupils apply these skills in their writing in subjects such as history and geography. However, there is insufficient emphasis on improving the pupils' handwriting in the infants and Years 3 and 4.
20. The teaching of mathematics is very good overall with several examples of excellent teaching. The teachers know the subject very well and the way in which they match work to the pupils' needs and set challenging targets stimulates learning. In a breathtaking lesson in Years 5 and 6 the teacher provided opportunities for the pupils to

learn multiplication facts, improve mathematical vocabulary and extend their knowledge of fractions and percentages. The rate of learning was excellent because of the time limits set for completing the work and the pupils were totally engaged in the activities. In a mathematics lesson in reception and Year 1, the teacher provided excellent guidance about symmetry focusing very well on developing the pupils' knowledge of mathematical vocabulary and then provided them with excellent resources to produce symmetrical pictures.

21. Teachers have good subject knowledge of almost all subjects. However, there is a lack of expertise in the teaching of science in the infants and this results in a slower pace of learning and insufficient challenge for the more able. Information and communication technology is taught well and the staff have benefited much from training and the support of a visiting teacher in developing computer skills. The staff teach basic computer skills effectively and provide very good opportunities for the pupils to use computers in other subjects. Teachers have good subject knowledge of history and geography and develop the pupils' knowledge and understanding well through using visits, visitors and resources very well. As a result the pupils are keen learners who engage in research, use their initiative and work independently. This is seen to good effect in the pupils' homework. Homework is very well organised and makes an excellent contribution to pupils' progress. In a physical education lesson in Years 2, 3 and 4 the teacher's good knowledge of the subject resulted in good gains in the pupils' skills of control. The school makes good use of specialist teaching in art and design, information and communication technology and music.
22. The support staff make a very good contribution to learning. They are briefed well and focus sharply on tasks, providing much support and encouragement. Lessons are prepared thoroughly. The teachers make sure that the resources are readily available and the pupils confidently select them and use them with care. The staff have the ability to inspire the pupils through imaginative teaching. Lessons are well structured and include a wide variety of methods. Most lessons begin with a brisk introduction in which objectives are made clear to the pupils. Lessons in Years 5 and 6 proceed at a blistering pace and pupils waste no time. They work at speed and produce large quantities of work. The teachers use questions very well to check on the pupils' understanding. They are particularly skilful in identifying any gaps in the pupils' learning and remedying them. The pupils have a very good understanding of their own achievements and of what is expected of them.

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

23. The school has a rich and vibrant curriculum, including very good provision for the foundation stage. The curriculum is very broad and balanced, meets the needs of all the pupils, and is well planned to ensure equality of access and opportunity for all. The school's curriculum and the provision for the foundation stage in particular, has improved since the previous inspection. The school meets all the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and also fulfils the requirement for a daily act of collective worship
24. Each subject area is allocated an appropriate amount of teaching time, with due emphasis on the teaching of English, mathematics and science. Pupils also have very good opportunities to develop their information and communication technology skills. The school has responded promptly and effectively to the recent changes in the National Curriculum, and in the provision for children in the foundation stage. Teachers

successfully incorporate these new initiatives into their planning. The planning of the curriculum to take full account of the different age groups in each class is particularly impressive and ensures that pupils cover all aspects of the programmes of study over a two-year cycle at a level appropriate to their stage of development. The school has recognised in its development plan the need to review the planning of science in the infants to fully utilise the time allocated to the teaching of science to focus more clearly on the development of scientific skills and enquiry. The curriculum is well supported by good quality schemes of work in all subjects and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Consistency, progress and continuity in each subject are overseen by the headteacher and co-ordinators when they regularly monitor teaching and planning and evaluate their effect.

25. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has been positively managed and has contributed to pupils' very high standards of literacy. The National Numeracy Strategy has also been effectively introduced and has been readily implemented by staff to very good effect. The school provides very well for pupils' personal, social and health education through the science curriculum and through its caring, family ethos. The school makes very good use of outside expertise to advise the pupils on healthy living and on sex education. The dangers of the misuse of drugs are also fully discussed.
26. Provision for pupils identified as having special educational needs is very good throughout the school and these pupils are enabled to take a full part in all activities and make very good progress. The requirements of the national Code of Practice are in place and the progress of these pupils is regularly reviewed. The class teachers draw up individual education plans, and the clear targets that are set are part of everyday learning and assessment. Support staff provide very effective classroom assistance; pupils with statements of special educational needs receive exceptional support, enabling them to develop independence and to participate fully in all areas of learning.
27. Staff give very generously of their time to enable the school to offer an excellent range of out of school activities and these are well attended by the pupils. Clubs include music, sport, drama; French, computing and gardening and they make a significant contribution to developing the pupils' love of learning. The curriculum is enriched by an extensive range of visitors to the school. Theatre groups and storytellers contribute well to pupils' work in a wide range of subjects including science, literacy and music. Visits are made out of school to support the curriculum, for example, when pupils follow up their study of the Victorians by visiting Wigan Pier. Older pupils also benefit from annual residential trips to improve their computer skills and also to experience a wide range of outdoor adventure activities, such as, canoeing.
28. The school has developed successful links with the community, which contribute well to pupils' learning. Employees of the electricity board run workshops for older pupils in science lessons. Pupils performed an African Extravaganza in the village during the Millennium celebrations, they sang for residents in a retirement home and there are strong links with the parish. The school is involved in an extended musical project with the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. The school welcomes students from several colleges who are completing their teacher training qualification and there are good links with the local high school. The school supplements its own extensive range of books by participating in a book loan scheme and pupils exchange book reviews with other schools by e-mail.
29. The school promotes pupils' personal development extremely well. Excellent opportunities are given for pupils to develop spiritual awareness and the pervading Catholic ethos ensures a strong spiritual element guides the work of the school. Pupils develop a sense of spirituality in assemblies where candles are lit to provide a focus for

pupils' thoughts. In one excellent assembly seen to celebrate World Book Day and also St. David's Day children are moved by a poem in which a sufferer from Alzheimer's Disease remembers the Wordsworth poem about daffodils learned in his childhood, and children consider what it must be like to lose their memory. The pupils have excellent opportunities to explore emotions and feelings in their studies of Shakespeare and other authors. They engage in imaginative and creative role-play and drama which enables them to develop an appreciation of others and to gain insight into the wonders of creation. They are given opportunities to reflect on the difference that strong convictions or faith can make in people's lives by studying people such as Martin Luther King. Younger pupils reflect on their own emotions, one child saying that she was happy because she was going to a Christening and another writing that he was worried about his swimming test.

30. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is excellent. Differences between right and wrong are discussed and a strong emphasis is given to promoting self discipline. The school has very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to others and this is exemplified in the excellent role models provided by adults who treat each other and the pupils with great respect. Through specific assembly themes and throughout the school day, the value of telling the truth is reinforced. For example, if there is an incident, perhaps some belongings being hidden for a practical joke, the school emphasises that it is more interested in finding out the truth than laying blame and encourages pupils to own up. The ten-point code of behaviour is used as a focus for choosing the stars of the week and during the week of the inspection the theme was respect; one young child was chosen for noticing another struggling with her coat and helping her to hang it up on the correct peg, and another was selected by a lunchtime supervisor who had noticed the way she had treated others in the playground. Pupils are given opportunities to take responsibility from the earliest age, tidying away equipment they have used. Older pupils are appointed as monitors each term and their duties include looking after younger ones in the playground and setting a good example. It is a strong feature of the school that pupils are taught that they are responsible for their own actions, whether this is completing and handing in homework on time or remembering their kit for games or swimming. An exceptional sense of community is fostered as the school starts each day and finishes the week together. Pupils also participate in a good range of activities as a whole school, such as, listening to the storyteller, going to the theatre and attending parish events. Relationships are excellent throughout the school and this emanates from the exceptional interpersonal skills and sense of humour of the headteacher which transmits itself to all members of the school community. A sense of responsibility is extended to the wider community as pupils and parents raise money for Macmillan Nurses by staging the "biggest coffee morning in the world".
31. The school makes very good provision for pupils' cultural development and this is a good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils experience the cultural traditions of their own area as they participate in the May processions and attend the parish garden party. They also planted bulbs in the Millennium field. They celebrate the ethnic and cultural diversity of our society through a range of visitors and activities in school. The African storyteller is a regular and valued visitor to school. In a huge extravaganza, pupils participated in African art workshops and used puppets on stilts in role-play. On another occasion a Zimbabwean band played traditional music on thumb pianos made from gourds and pupils learned an African dance. Pupils' art-work is inspired by studying a range of artists such as Monet and Van Gogh.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. The high level of pastoral care and support which is provided for all pupils are strengths of the school and have been successfully improved since the previous inspection. Parents speak highly of the exceptional care their children receive, including the provision made for those with special educational needs. The strong Mission Statement, which is firmly linked to the Roman Catholic ethos, is reflected in all areas of the school. Pupils learn in a very warm and happy Christian environment from a committed staff team who regard the safety, support and welfare of pupils as paramount to the school's work. All staff and adults in the school know pupils well, and respond very positively to their individual, physical and emotional needs. This has a very positive effect on pupils' progress and achievement. Through a strong focus on personal and social education, pupils are made aware of the need to take care of themselves and others. Good arrangements are made through religious and moral education for pupils in Year 6 to receive a well-organised programme of sex education and drugs awareness.
33. Procedures for monitoring child protection are very good and are in accordance with the school's policy. The headteacher, who has attended a training course, and a named governor take overall responsibility for this important area of pupils' welfare. All staff are fully aware of the formal procedures. Good and up-to-date personal records are kept for all pupils and these are regularly well monitored and amended. The health and safety policy is followed closely, with all staff being vigilant in their informal monitoring of potential safety hazards which are well recorded. A governor and the caretaker complete a formal risk assessment of the site regularly. Staff ensure that pupils are alerted to safe practices during lessons and whilst outside in the playground. Good procedures are followed for first aid with a number of qualified first aiders on site. Regular fire drills are held when the building is evacuated.
34. Very good procedures are followed for monitoring and recording attendance. The school speaks highly of the quick response from parents in the event of pupils being absent, and any unexplained absence is followed up by the school without delay. Excellent procedures are followed consistently for monitoring and promoting good behaviour, and the high expectations of all staff result in a very impressive and orderly learning environment. Pupils are rewarded regularly with certificates, stickers and verbal praise for good work, behaving well and showing concern for others. The school places strong emphasis on the personal and social development of pupils and through excellent procedures has achieved an environment where bullying or oppressive behaviour of any kind are not tolerated. All pupils, including those in the foundation stage, are supervised well in the playground and good procedures are followed to ensure their safety and welfare on school visits. Induction arrangements are very good through the school's close liaison with the Sunbeam pre-school group, and children are well prepared for starting school. Year 6 pupils are very well supported and prepared prior to their transfer to secondary education, with a variety of visits and an opportunity to take part in a number of joint activities.
35. Assessment has improved very much since the previous inspection. The school has very good procedures for assessing pupils' progress and these are used very effectively throughout the school, except in science in the infants, to ensure pupils are set challenging work. A clear programme of annual tests in English and mathematics is used very well to assess progress and the results are rigorously analysed to identify areas for development. For example, writing was identified as a relative area of weakness and became the focus for development in the current year, to very good effect. Similarly, progress in science has been identified as the next area for attention. The school is very realistic in concentrating on one major area at a time. Individual

targets are set for all pupils and these are regularly reviewed. Literacy and numeracy targets are set each term for all pupils. Good records are kept for each National Curriculum subject and these are regularly updated. The annual reports to parents are comprehensive and contain detailed information about pupils' academic and personal performance. However, the school does not report to parents of children in the foundation stage by writing about the areas of learning. Portfolios of pupils' work have been compiled in writing, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and art and there are plans to include other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs are identified at a very early stage so that very good help, including support from outside agencies, can be given. Very clear records are kept to monitor their progress and the specific targets in their individual education plans become the focus of their day-to-day work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

36. The school has developed an excellent partnership with parents who are genuinely welcomed and encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. This is a major strength and represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection. The school is open and friendly, and truly accountable to parents, who speak very highly of the education provided and their children's progress. A significant number of parents and a grandparent provide regular valued help in classrooms, listening to pupils read, sorting resources and assisting with practical activities. Parental help is very well monitored by class teachers, and helpers are provided with a well structured guidance sheet for each lesson. Many more parents help when pupils go out on visits, and in organising some extra-curricular activities and supporting fund raising social events
37. The impact of parental involvement on the work of the school is excellent, and most make a very strong contribution to their children's progress and achievements at school and at home. Many parents support the school by listening to their children read at home, and they readily assist very positively with homework topics and special projects. Parents feel comfortable to approach the school with any problems and they are always encouraged to do so quickly. Parents whose children have special educational needs are involved well in their individual education plans, and invited to attend all review and assessment meetings. The school is very well supported by an active Parent Teacher Association which raises considerable funds each year through social events. The efforts of the group provide the school with a variety of additional valuable learning resources.
38. The quality of information which the school provides for parents is very good and most parents speak highly of the way the school keeps them well informed. The headteacher sends out a friendly newsletter every week with information about organisational issues and arrangements for school events and activities. In addition, class teachers provide parents with helpful information about the topics being taught in classrooms, and this promotes the home/school partnership well. Parents assist by completing questionnaires regularly to support the school's decisions on a variety of issues, and their views are taken seriously and included in the school's development plan. All pupils have a reading record and homework folder containing tasks and activities for the week, and these are well used as a communication between home and school. A number of helpful and informative booklets and guidelines are provided for parents, including assistance in helping their children at home. A number of parents attend the regular workshops organised by the school and these have included sessions on spelling, reading, numeracy and preparing for Holy Communion. Parents' consultation evenings are very well attended and are held three times a year, with additional

information evenings for parents of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Reports for parents are good with clear and helpful information about progress in all subjects of the curriculum. They also include clear guidelines to assist parents in helping their children to reach their personal targets. At present, insufficient structured information is provided about progress for children in the foundation stage. The prospectus meets the statutory requirements and is attractively presented containing good information about the organisation of the school and the curriculum.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

39. The school has overcome the serious weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report and the leadership and management of the school are now excellent. This remarkable achievement is the result of establishing a dedicated, hard-working and enthusiastic team inspired by an outstanding headteacher who leads by example in her teaching and energetic enthusiasm to do the best for all pupils. The headteacher successfully balances a large class teaching commitment with her management role. Other issues raised in the previous inspection report have been tackled rigorously and many of the weaknesses are now strengths of the school. The teachers have clearly defined roles and responsibilities for specific subjects and have improved their own teaching and standards in the subjects. Assessment is now used very well to plan work and set targets for the pupils and this has helped to accelerate progress. The provision for the youngest children is managed very well. The governors' role in shaping the direction of the school is now excellent. The school has made excellent improvement since the previous inspection and is poised to build upon its significant achievements.
40. The school is rigorous in monitoring and evaluating its performance. The headteacher analyses data about the pupils' performance thoroughly and uses the information to set challenging targets for staff and pupils. Good use is made of the expertise of some staff in the teaching of art and design, information and communication technology and music. The headteacher ensures that her colleagues are able to work alongside each other to develop an understanding of best practice. The excellent support given to newly qualified teachers and those recently appointed to the school ensures that there is consistency in the teaching between classes.
41. The headteacher delegates responsibility very well and provides time for the subject leaders to develop policies and schemes of work and to monitor teaching, planning and learning. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved. The effective schemes of work and detailed planning underpin the consistent development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in the subjects. The school has been particularly successful in managing the introduction of the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies and this has resulted in improved teaching and higher standards. Governors are extensively involved in monitoring these aspects of the school's work and have a clear understanding of how well the school is doing. The school has a prestigious award for the teaching of basic skills. All staff have opportunities to be involved in training and they share their new knowledge with colleagues. There are regular staff meetings to plan the curriculum, monitor performance and review initiatives. There are well-advanced systems to appraise teachers and the performance management reviews are on track. Many of the targets are linked to improving the pupils' performance in national tests. All staff feel valued and appreciated and show high levels of motivation. Because of the high quality of teaching, the school is an ideal provider for initial teacher training.

42. The school has a good number of staff with much expertise and they add much to the quality of learning. The support staff make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and are very much a part of the school team. Support staff working with pupils with special educational needs make an excellent contribution. The secretary is very supportive and her particular skills are used very well which frees time for the headteacher to carry out her role. The way in which the staff relate to one another and work together provide excellent examples to the pupils. The school has well-focused aims and a clear mission statement. These aims are met very well and they provide a focal point for school improvement. They underpin the work of the school and help to promote effective learning and excellent attitudes among the pupils. The headteacher provides clear educational direction and has led the school through many changes, won back the confidence of parents and the respect of staff, governors and pupils. This is a happy, vibrant and purposeful school in which all are encouraged to do their best and the success is attributable to the high standards of leadership and management.
43. The governors are well-informed and knowledgeable about the school. They have well-structured committees who meet regularly. They monitor all aspects of the school's work and have much influence in setting objects, reviewing progress and providing additional support where it is needed. The governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met and keep up-to-date on all new initiatives. The governor for pupils with special educational needs and those for literacy and numeracy regularly visit the school to monitor its work. The governors are also involved in producing and monitoring the school's future plans. They set tight but achievable deadlines which are met and have very effective ways of ensuring that finances are used well.
44. The school's finances are in good order with a healthy surplus which is being used very well to provide additional teaching support for Year 2. Having identified some concerns about previous performance in national tests at the end of Year 2, the governors and headteacher have provided an additional teacher who works with this group of pupils. As a result standards have improved. This represents very effective use of funds. The school was commended in the latest auditors' report for its excellent financial control. The governors pursue best value by ensuring that supplies and services are purchased at a competitive price, an example being the new computers. The school has also reviewed its teaching of information and communication technology and wisely used funds to buy in expertise and to change the way in which computer skills are taught with a resultant rise in standards throughout the school.
45. The management of the provision for children with special educational needs is excellent and the very effective links with outside agencies ensure that the children benefit from specialist support as needed. All statutory requirements regarding the provision for special educational needs are met and parents are involved very well. Links with the wider community and other schools are also managed very well and contribute to the enrichment of the school's curriculum through sharing resources.
46. The school's accommodation is satisfactory. The staff make effective use of it by displaying the pupils' work effectively. There is a small outdoor play area and sufficient opportunities for the children in the foundation stage to take part in outdoor play. The limited accommodation inhibits opportunities for physical education, although the school uses the parish centre for dance and the school yard and field for games. Most subjects have good resources. There is a good number of computers and the school has an adequate library. Resources for music are satisfactory. The resources to support the teaching of English are excellent. There are insufficient resources for science and very limited physical education apparatus. The school makes good use of resources provided by visits and visitors to add interest to the curriculum.

47. In view of;
- the above average levels of attainment on admission to the school;
 - the above average costs of educating the pupils;
 - the well above average standards achieved at the end of the juniors in English, mathematics and science;
 - the very good teaching;
 - the rich and interesting curriculum;
 - the excellent leadership and management:
- The school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

48. **In order to build on the very good quality of education provided the headteacher, staff and governors should *accelerate the infants' progress in science by:**

- Providing more challenging activities which include opportunities for pupils to investigate more deeply;
- Providing training for the teachers to improve their subject knowledge;
- Making better use of the time allocated to science with activities more focused on developing pupils' scientific knowledge:
- Improving resources.

(Paragraphs 2, 3, 5, 8, 21, 24, 35, 46, 70, 71, 77)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Improve the pupils' handwriting in the infants and Years 3 and 4.

(Paragraphs 6, 19, 61)

- *Ensure that the annual progress reports for children in the foundation stage are reported correctly.

(Paragraphs 35, 38, 49)

*The school has identified these issues in its development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	21
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
24	43	29	5	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	71
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	6

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.3
National comparative data	5.2

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

Key Stage 1 results for 2000 are not published as there were fewer than ten children in the year group.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Key Stage 2 results for 2000 are not published as there were fewer than ten children in the year group.

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	0
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	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	23.6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	48.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	151,451
Total expenditure	149,695
Expenditure per pupil	2,376
Balance brought forward from previous year	20,874
Balance carried forward to next year	22,630

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	71
Number of questionnaires returned	55

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	22	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	82	18	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	78	20	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	58	38	4	0	0
The teaching is good.	85	15	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	87	9	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	85	13	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	93	7	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	78	20	2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	89	11	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	82	18	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	84	13	3	0	0

Other issues raised by parents

Parents expressed much confidence in all aspects of the school's work. They spoke highly of the improvement at the school since the previous inspection and raised no issues of concern.

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

49. Children start school in the September of the year in which they are five. For most of their time in the foundation stage they work in the same class as Year 1 and have very good opportunities to work with a nursery nurse on other occasions. The children start school with above average levels of skill in most areas of their development. By the end of the reception year, they attain all of the early learning goals expected for their age and exceed them in their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. Their attainment in the creative and physical areas of development is appropriate for their age. Overall the teaching is very good with some excellent teaching of the mathematical area of development and communication, language and literacy. No children in the foundation stage have been identified as having special educational needs. The provision for and teaching in the foundation stage have improved since the previous inspection. There is now a much better curriculum which takes account of the needs of young children. These improvements contribute much to the children's attainment and progress and enable them to make a very good start to formal education. However, when reporting to parents the school does not give information about the children's performance in the areas of learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

50. The children make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and by the time they start in Year 1 they have exceeded the early learning goals for their age and are well-equipped and interested learners. The teaching of this aspect of the children's development is very effective as there is a strong focus on encouraging independence. The staff have a very good knowledge of the children and their needs and prepare work which includes an effective balance between adult directed and child chosen tasks. Because of the range of approaches, the children gain in confidence and learn how to collaborate effectively. The children's behaviour is excellent. They are very conscious of others' needs and willingly share equipment. They play together very well and co-operate effectively, for example, in using the computer. The children are good-natured and kind to one another. They respond very well to adults and show an enthusiasm for learning. They take a keen interest in everything and particularly enjoy reading and writing. In assemblies, the children listen carefully and join in appropriately. They have a good understanding of their own faith and show appreciation for the traditions of others.

Communication, language and literacy

51. By the end of the reception year, the children have exceeded the early learning goals for their age and are confident in reading, writing and speaking and listening. They benefit from outstanding teaching in this area of learning and make excellent progress, because of the wide variety of methods used to stimulate learning. The children love stories and respond enthusiastically, joining in at suitable times and showing good understanding of basic vocabulary. They have a good vocabulary and their skills in correctly building new words, based on their knowledge of letter sounds, are well advanced for their age. The children read regularly to the staff and are keen to take books home and share them with their parents. The children write their own

names correctly and are beginning to form letters correctly. They use picture clues in stories to guess the meaning of new words. The more able children already write short sentences and use capital letters and full stops correctly. In role-play, they realistically act out the parts of the waitress in the café, speaking clearly and with expression.

Mathematical development

52. By the end of reception year, the standards children attain in their mathematical development exceed the early learning goals. The children make excellent progress, spurred on by teaching of the highest quality and the excellent support provided by the nursery nurse. The children count confidently beyond 10 and have a good understanding of the value of numbers. The more able accurately add and subtract numbers to five. All children recognise a variety of patterns and name shapes such as circles, squares and rectangles. They respond very well to the teaching and are keen to do their best. In a lesson about symmetry the children carefully positioned coloured shapes within a “butterfly” to produce stunning and accurate symmetrical patterns. Their mathematical vocabulary is well advanced and they are beginning to solve simple problems by adding and taking away small numbers.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

53. The children make very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world and, by the end of the foundation stage, they exceed the early learning goals expected of them. The teaching is very good and work is challenging and matched very well to the children’s needs and abilities. The children gain much from engaging in practical activities, such as, playing in sand and water to improve their knowledge of physical properties. They explore the activities on offer, maintaining high levels of interest. Activities are based around the stepping stones of the early learning goals and are linked to the children’s own experiences and aimed at improving their knowledge of the wider world. The children learn about the passage of time by comparing how they have changed as they have grown. They correctly sequence the members of their family by age and size. They know that in the past there were famous people who contributed much to the development of Britain as we know it. Their work on Florence Nightingale and the Great Fire of London is particularly good and included opportunities for the children to research information using a variety of books. The children make very good gains in using computers and they confidently control the mouse, move pictures around the screen and write sequences of numbers. Some know how to save and print their work. The children accurately describe their journey to school and discuss a variety of modes of transport. They know that villages and towns differ not only in size but often in the facilities available to them. They have a good knowledge of geographical vocabulary. The children have good opportunities to construct vehicles and tracks from construction kits and then apply these skills well in making models using a variety of materials. In their science work, the children know that travelling on different surfaces may alter a vehicle’s speed. They use words such as “push” and “pull” correctly and understand that when carrying out tests they need to take care to ensure that what they are doing is consistent, for example, in rolling toy cars down a slope.

Physical development

54. The children make good progress in their physical development and achieve the early learning goals for their age by the end of the reception year. They make very good progress in dance and move imaginatively to a variety of music. Overall, teaching is

good. Despite the lack of indoor facilities for movement, the staff make good use of the parish centre for dance and use the outdoor play area to develop the children's movement skills. There is a suitable range of outdoor equipment to encourage imaginative play and to challenge the children. In dance lessons, the children move imaginatively in time to music and respond well when the pace and rhythm changes. They concentrate very well and improve their skills and control by copying others' movements and applying much effort. The teacher intervenes very well and guides the children through effective questions and comments. She makes good use of demonstration to pinpoint effective sequences of movements and through discussion gets the children to identify what is imaginative. The children know that exercise is good for them and they talk confidently about how energetic movement affects their heartbeat. The children have good skills of co-ordination and in their play they move around with confidence. Other physical skills are developing well. The children improve their skills in controlling small apparatus. They hold pencils correctly, use a variety of tools such as scissors well and improve their dexterity by modelling with materials such as clay.

Creative development

55. By the end of the foundation stage the children attain the early learning goals expected for their age. They make good progress. The teaching is good and the staff provide a wide range of interesting activities to stimulate imaginative play. The staff focus well on improving skills and techniques and the children gain much from this effective teaching and, as a result, are able to apply basic skills imaginatively. The teachers and support staff plan a wide and interesting curriculum and the children participate with a great deal of enthusiasm. They experiment with paint and know that some colours go well together. They mix paint carefully and when painting show care in keeping colours clean. They produce some very good self-portraits in a variety of styles and use ideas gained from studying the work of famous artists. The children understand the importance of observing what they are drawing closely and produce accurate representations of objects. They competently use a wide range of media. They make bold and colourful patterns and this helps them to develop an awareness of shape and space. The staff provide good opportunities for the children to make music and to play instruments together. The children are good singers and know a wide range of rhymes and songs. The parents expressed much delight about their performance at Christmas.

ENGLISH

56. In the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000, pupils attained standards which were well above average in English. Pupils aged seven attained well above average standards in reading and average standards in writing. These results vary from year to year because of the small number of pupils taking the tests. However, trends over several years show that the school has improved steadily since the previous inspection. Inspection evidence shows that standards in English at the age of eleven are well above average. Standards at the end of the infants are well above average in reading and above average in writing.
57. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve as well as they can and there is no appreciable difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Resources are very well adapted to cater for the needs of the visually impaired. Regular assessments of pupils' work enable teachers to plan activities which are closely matched to the pupils' stage of development and good account is taken of the

needs of all pupils in mixed age classes to enable all to make good progress. Lower attaining pupils are supported well by the class teachers and support staff, where available, whilst higher attaining pupils are suitably challenged.

58. By the end of the infants, pupils' speaking and listening skills are very advanced. Pupils enter Year 1 with communication skills ahead of those expected for their age. Throughout the school, all pupils have good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. The ethos of the school, with its emphasis on mutual respect, gives pupils the confidence to offer their opinions, secure in the knowledge that others will listen, and there is very good communication between teachers and pupils. A consistent feature of all lessons is the two-way discussions between staff and pupils and this dialogue moves learning on at a good pace. There are also good opportunities for pupils to discuss their work together in groups. A good example of this was seen in a science lesson in Year 1 when pupils make suggestions as to how different materials might slow down the speed of the car on the ramp. Pupils listen avidly to stories and they make very perceptive predictions as to what might happen next.
59. Speaking and listening skills continue to develop at a good pace throughout the juniors and, by the age of eleven, pupils' communication skills are very high. A strong feature of lessons in the lower juniors is the regular opportunities in all lessons to discuss particular problems and issues with a partner. This was seen in a literacy lesson when pupils worked together for just a few minutes to arrive at several synonyms for the word "good", for example, "breathtaking" and "fantastic". Pupils articulate their ideas well, one pupil suggesting that the shared story should take place, "On a planet similar to earth in a galaxy far away!" They also listen well to evaluate one another's stories at the end of the lesson, and offer sensible suggestions for improvement. For example, one pupil suggested that "Big rock" could be replaced by "Meteorite" to improve the story. Pupils extend these skills in the upper juniors as pupils pick up on questions raised by their classmates when discussing the poem of the Highwayman. They are able to call on their knowledge of other poems to support their opinions. In the very secure atmosphere of the classroom, they discuss emotions such as love and self-sacrifice in a very mature way. These opportunities extend to other areas of the curriculum as they work in groups in science to devise activities for the Sound Factory.
60. Standards of reading are very high at the end of both the infants and the juniors. There is a very good concentration on reading throughout the school, which promotes a love of books. Pupils take home their books regularly from the earliest age and older juniors are expected to read for 20 minutes each night in addition to any other homework. Discussions with pupils indicate that this is not a chore but that they look forward to discovering what will happen next in the story. Some pupils cannot wait until the next lesson to find out what happens next in their shared text and read extra pages of the Secret Garden independently. Teachers have very high expectations of all pupils, who respond well. Pupils in Year 1 can distinguish between fiction and non-fiction books and can identify the index and glossary. Pupils in Year 2 speak confidently about their books, appreciate the humour in the books they are reading and tackle new texts with ease. Higher attaining pupils can discuss the similarities between books and give reasons for preferring one to another. Lower attaining pupils read at a level expected nationally for children of their age and talk enthusiastically about books, one pupil stating a preference for books about dogs but still enjoying "Crosby Crocodile's Disguise." This very good progress in reading continues in the juniors where higher attaining pupils in Year 4 are reading at a level expected of a thirteen year old. They tackle words such as aquarium and citizenship with ease and

are able to make a good attempt at explaining the meaning. Pupils have a good understanding of genre and can make comparisons between similar authors. They are reluctant to commit themselves to a favourite author at this stage, saying they want to read books by as many different authors as they can. Higher attaining pupils cope with very demanding material, including some Shakespeare, very well. The lower attaining pupils are reading at a level at least in line with that expected for their age and have a good understanding of the difference between the contents and the index. All pupils use their reading skills to maximum effect when conducting research into other curriculum areas, such as, history and geography. The school is a literacy rich environment, with a very good range of books of exceptionally high quality, which encourages pupils to develop a love of books.

61. By the end of Year 2, the standard of writing is now above average, because of the school's rigorous approach to developing writing skills. Whilst handwriting is taught in specific lessons, the pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 are not yet sufficiently confident in using joined up writing throughout their work. Pupils in Year 1 make good progress in writing sentences because they are taught how to structure sentences, and are developing confidence in using capital letters and full stops appropriately. Higher attaining pupils are using language well in writing poems, for example, "Pop into the shop, Can't stop!" Pupils in Year 2 write effectively for a range of purposes. They devise very persuasive wanted posters, one pupil writing "Please find him as he is the love of my life." Pupils make regular entries in their writing journal, which shows good progress over the year. Good use is made of different writing frames for writing letters, describing characters and developing extended stories. Higher attaining pupils use a good sentence structure, for example "Eventually he met a lady who wanted to take his picture." The majority of pupils punctuate their work correctly and lower attaining pupils can write simple sentences. Pupils develop their writing skills in other subjects, such as history, when they write letters from the Crimea to explain the appalling conditions to the people back at home.
62. By the end of the juniors the standard of writing is well above average. A tremendous amount of work is covered in the upper juniors and the range of writing is very wide. Work is well punctuated with very good use of paragraphs. Language is used very well in reporting events, "During the Christmas period we have a get together in the parish hall," or in writing in Macbeth's journal, "I am so depressed!" Pupils respond well to inspirational teaching, producing mature and sensitive poetry, "Alone in the tomb where Juliet lay!" or writing with great affection about grandparents, "Sometimes he is grumpy, but I guess that is because he is tired." Writing is improved by studying a good range of authors and analysing their work. For example, they study the techniques of C.S.Lewis in the Narnia books to write their own poems about the death of Aslan. Writing is developed well in other areas of the curriculum. For example, in history pupils devise a set of questions to ask their parents and grandparents about life in the fifties and sixties and also advise Ann Frank to try to get on better with her mother. Pupils evaluate their own work at the end of each term to pinpoint areas for improvement, and together with excellent marking and suggestions from the teacher, this has a good effect on improving their work. Pupils make good use of computers to support their work in English.
63. Teaching and learning are excellent overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection and is due to staff training and the full implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Some excellent lessons were seen in Year 1 and Year 6 which were inspirational, motivating pupils to achieve very high standards. All teachers make good use of praise and this gives pupils confidence. For example, pupils in Year 1 can earn the accolade of being the literacy worker of the morning. Work is well marked

and individual targets are set to help pupils improve. All teachers give very clear instructions so that pupils understand what is expected and can get on with their work straight away. Lessons are imaginative, well prepared and proceed at a good pace to ensure that all pupils are actively involved throughout. After the initial session pupils generally work in ability groups with work well matched to the needs of the group. Teachers circulate well to support individuals or to provide additional challenge. Classroom support is very well deployed and makes a valuable contribution to pupils' progress. Very good use is made of the final section of the lesson for pupils to evaluate their learning and to judge whether they have achieved their objectives. The pupils have a very clear understanding of what they have been taught and how they have learned. Excellent relationships provide a secure learning environment in which pupils want to do their best. Behaviour is excellent and the staff reward the pupils with well focused praise and encouragement. Regular marking of work is used well to assess pupils' understanding and good records are kept to track pupils' progress. Computers are used very effectively to support learning, for example, in drafting their work or in producing the final version for publishing. The pupils work hard to improve their skills. They concentrate exceptionally well and work productively and with care. They are avid learners who are keen to complete homework and to do their best.

MATHEMATICS

64. Results of national tests in 2000 showed that standards were above average at the end of the infants and juniors. The small numbers of pupils taking the tests causes some variation from year to year in overall performance, but trends over three years show that standards are rising at a rate consistent with the national trend. Pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 are on target to achieve very well in the national tests and inspection evidence shows that standards are well above average. Standards in mathematics have improved since the previous inspection. The variation in test and inspection results are due to differences in the natural ability of the groups of pupils taking the tests, the impact of the National Numeracy Strategy, improved teaching and learning and the additional provision made for pupils currently in Year 2. As a result of these improvements, increased proportions of pupils are on track to achieve the higher levels 3 and 5 in the national tests in 2001. Progress is very good overall with excellent progress made in Years 5 and 6 because of the outstanding and inspirational teaching. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in meeting the targets in their individual education plans and those with statements of special educational needs make excellent progress because of the high level of support provided. Pupils make very good use of their mathematical skills in a variety of subjects. In art and design they produce attractive repeated patterns. In design and technology they measure accurately when making musical instruments and the oldest pupils use scale in their designs and plans.
65. By the end of Year 2, the pupils have very good skills in calculating mentally. They have very good knowledge of number facts and apply this well to solving problems. Through regular practice of multiplication facts, in school and at home, the pupils become confident in recalling quickly and accurately their two, three, five and ten times tables. The pupils know the four rules of number and the more able understand the relationship between multiplication and division. The pupils' progress is helped by their teachers' thorough knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy and the strong emphasis given to developing mathematical vocabulary. This effective teaching enables pupils to cope well different types of problems and to use appropriate number operations. The pupils explain very clearly strategies they have used to solve problems. The pupils have a very good understanding of shape, space and

measures; they have good skills in measuring using metres and centimetres and know about different ways of weighing. The pupils have a secure knowledge of graphs and charts, and they collect data which they represent in bar charts and pictograms. The pupils make good use of computers to record data and print out their own graphs.

66. By the end of Year 6 the pupils' mathematical skills are well above average. They have exceptional skills of using a variety of number operations to solve complex problems and their excellent understanding of mathematical terms and vocabulary equips them well to use a wide variety of strategies. They work well with large numbers and convert fractions into decimals and use their knowledge of numbers to work in a variety of scales. They have very good knowledge of shape, space and measures and use algebraic formulae very well to find the area of shapes. Pupils have very good skills in using data effectively. They present their work in a variety of graphs and use tallying, frequency charts and their information and communication technology skills very well to present their work. Pupils are keen to explain how they have found an answer and use mathematical terms with confidence.
67. Pupils enjoy mathematics. They are keen to answer questions and to explain how they have arrived at an answer. They respond very well to homework which contributes much to their understanding of mathematical skills. The pupils work hard during lessons and produce a good quantity of work, presenting it well. The teachers encourage co-operation very well by organising groups effectively so that the different ability groups work alongside each other. Pupils collaborate excellently, sharing ideas and making effective use of mathematical apparatus. They are independent and self-assured, willingly tackling problems.
68. The quality of teaching and learning ranges from very good to excellent and is excellent overall. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and also have benefited much from training in the National Numeracy Strategy. They focus very well on planning lessons which are stimulating and challenging, taking account of the needs of all groups of pupils. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson the teacher gave several activities based on the pupils' targets, set sharply defined time limits and asked challenging questions to move the lesson on at speed. The pace of learning is often blistering, with pupils totally absorbed in the activity. The pupils learn avidly, keenly producing work of high quality with much attention to accuracy. When introducing lessons, the teachers explain very clearly what is to be learned and during the lesson refer to these objectives so that pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Pupils waste no time in settling to work. In the excellent lessons in Year 1, the teachers skilfully moved learning on at a brisk pace, asked sharply focused questions to ensure that the pupils knew what was expected and then provided a range of challenging tasks which enthused the pupils. Relationships are excellent and help to foster outstanding behaviour and attitudes. The teachers, support staff and parent helpers focus very well on supporting the less confident pupils and provide apparatus to support understanding. They use praise and encouragement very effectively to promote learning.
69. The teaching of mathematics has improved since the previous inspection. There is a well structured scheme of work and a consistent approach between classes. The subject leader is very involved in monitoring pupils' progress and by checking on planning ensures a consistent approach to teaching. The subject has good resources, and information and communication technology is used regularly to support and enhance learning. Assessment is a particular strength. The headteacher analyses tests results and the teachers use the information to plan work

SCIENCE

70. In the 2000 tests for eleven-year-olds, pupils attained standards which were well above average. The school does very well in comparison to similar schools. At the end of the infants, at time of the last inspection, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level in science was below average and the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level was well below average. Teacher assessments in 2000 show an improvement with all pupils achieving the expected level but no pupil achieving the higher level. Inspection evidence indicates that this relative weakness in science remains at the end of the infants.
71. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve as well as they can in the infants. However, work for more able pupils is insufficiently challenging to enable them to achieve the higher levels. The school is aware of this and has identified science as a focus for the school and the area for staff development in the coming academic year. All pupils in the juniors achieve as well as they can, and there is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Science topics are successfully covered over a two-year cycle to take account of mixed age classes.
72. The previous inspection report identified lack of opportunity for pupils to experiment and investigate in the infants. There has been some improvement in this area, but experiments in Year 2 are insufficiently challenging for the more able. Pupils in Year 1 are developing an understanding of a fair test as they investigate which material is most successful in slowing down the car on a ramp and they can record their results on a simple chart. By the end of the infants pupils can measure which torch gives off the most light and relate this to the size of the torch. However, more able pupils are aware that they have not considered the size of the battery or bulb.
73. Pupils make very good progress in using and applying their scientific knowledge in the juniors through a good range of opportunities for scientific enquiry. Pupils in the lower junior class test the strength of different papers using weights and paper clips and record their results clearly. Pupils in the upper juniors are able to draw appropriate conclusions from their investigations and use these to generalise their findings. For example, after experimenting with magnets and paper clips, they conclude that the thicker the paper covering the magnet, the fewer paper clips it will hold. The very good range of experiments undertaken is a significant factor in developing pupils' high level of scientific knowledge and understanding.
74. By the end of the infants most pupils have a secure knowledge of living things. They understand the importance of healthy eating and know which foods belong to the different food groups. They learn how to keep their body healthy through regular exercise and also how to look after their teeth. They also know that blood cells play a part in fighting off germs. In the summer they study plants and animals in the local environment. By the end of the juniors pupils have a very good understanding of healthy living and of the changes which occur in their body as they grow up. They understand the function of different parts of a flowering plant and that, unlike humans, plants take in carbon dioxide and give off oxygen and are able to discuss the synergy between plants and animals. They have a very good understanding of the meaning of a food chain and can give examples.
75. By the age of seven pupils have a satisfactory understanding of materials and can classify them into soft, hard and spiky. They also understand that certain materials covering a surface can reduce or increase friction. By the end of the juniors, pupils

have a good understanding of the properties of materials. They benefit from a very good range of activities during a visiting science show to discover the differences between solids, liquids and gases. In class they melt chocolate and toast marshmallows to discover that some changes are reversible whilst others are not. They also learn which materials provide good insulation and which are best for conducting electricity. They mix bicarbonate of soda and vinegar to produce a fizzy liquid and liken this reaction to the eruption of a volcano.

76. By the end of the infants most pupils have a basic understanding of physical processes. In Year 1 they can draw and label those things which give off light. They draw very good pictures using pastels on black paper to show different light sources at night. They also construct Rapunzel's Tower, to illustrate the forces of pushing and pulling. Pupils in Year 2 identify uses of electricity in the home and also the dangers. Planning indicates that they will develop their understanding of electricity and construct simple circuits. Pupils in the juniors develop a very good understanding of physical forces. Lower juniors examine the effect of gravity as they drop different sized balls and different sized lumps of clay from the same height. They use their understanding of magnets to design and make a magnetic fishing game. Upper juniors have a very good understanding of electricity and can explain the effects of static electricity. They know that light travels in a straight line and why this causes shadows to be cast. They use their knowledge of light to make a simple camera. They demonstrate a good understanding of sound as they devise interesting experiments to be included in a sound factory, to amuse and educate other pupils. After devising a good range of experiments, pupils give very clear explanations of the sound proofing qualities of different materials. They use a sound sensor to plot the graph of the patterns created by different sounds and give very good suggestions for the resultant peaks and troughs.
77. Teaching is satisfactory in the infants. It is very good in the juniors with one excellent lesson observed in Years 5 and 6. In the last inspection report some concern was expressed about teaching in Years 3 and 4. This has been fully resolved with the appointment of a new teacher, and shows that teaching of science is good in the lower junior class. Basic skills are taught satisfactorily in the infants. However, teachers' subject knowledge is insufficiently secure to devise suitable activities required for pupils to attain the higher level. Time is not always fully utilised in infant science lessons to develop scientific skills. Some activities, such as writing letters to Professor Lightbulb about their torch experiment, whilst valuable and interesting in themselves, are more relevant to developing literacy skills. Throughout the juniors, work is well planned to develop science skills through experimenting and investigating, demonstrating teachers' very secure subject knowledge. One lesson observed in the older junior class was exceptional. It was extremely well organised, with all possible resources readily to hand for pupils to use in their activities, encouraging a high level of independence. Very clear explanations enabled pupils to get on straight away and the lesson proceeded at a brisk pace with timely reminders and encouragement to keep pupils on task. The teacher's great enthusiasm and high expectations motivated the pupils to produce work of high quality. Good use is made of information and communication technology to aid learning by encouraging pupils to use the Internet to find information. Numeracy skills are used well in measuring and in drawing graphs and tables to display information. However, there are shortages of resources to support the teaching of science.

ART AND DESIGN

78. Standards in art and design have improved since the previous inspection and are now above those expected by the end of Years 2 and 6. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in all aspects of their work and make significant improvements in developing skills, techniques and applying them creatively. Both teaching and learning are good and have improved since the previous inspection because of rigorous analysis of the pupils' work, more effective planning and consistency in developing skills and techniques. The school has a good portfolio of pupils' work and this provides a good measure for the teachers to assess the pupils' work. It also provides good guidance for the staff in planning work which builds on pupils' previous learning and consistently develops their skills. Art and design makes a very good contribution to the pupils' cultural development through their work on famous artists and the opportunities to take part in a range of activities linked to African culture.
79. By the end of the infants, standards are above those expected of seven-year-olds. Teachers provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to create imaginative and individual pieces of work from the same stimulus. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 1, the pupils used a variety of papers to good effect to produce stunning pictures inspired by the poem "The Daffodils". Pupils worked imaginatively and with good skill to create colourful and attractive pictures which were then used by the teacher to develop the pupils' awareness of tints, blends and shades. Teachers make good links with other subjects enabling pupils to use their knowledge in art and design projects. The pupils have a very good understanding of light and dark and the pictures linked to their work in science show good levels of maturity. The pupils competently make repeated patterns and talk knowledgeably about the shapes they have used and how this links to their work in mathematics. They make good models of animals using clay and effectively use a variety of tools to enhance their work and add detail.
80. By the end of the juniors, the pupils have a good knowledge and appreciation of the work of several famous artists and they use this knowledge to produce very effective pictures in a variety of styles. The pupils successfully combine painting and printing techniques and then add detail using pen or pencil. Their sketchbooks show that their observational skills are well developed. The drawings of objects such as shoes and cartons show good skill and effective use of shading. The teachers make very good links with other subjects. In Years 5 and 6 the pupils produce very good work in the style of the Aztecs. They show much control in brushwork and an excellent eye for detail and the use of colour. Pupils make good use of computers to support their work in art and design.
81. The pupils' effective work is the result of much encouragement by the subject leader in improving her colleagues' confidence in art and design, monitoring planning and analysing pupils' work. Teachers prepare lessons well and often use literature and works of art to stimulate the pupils' imaginations. They have a good knowledge of the subject and use it well to plan lessons which include a balance between the direct teaching of skills and techniques and providing opportunities for pupils to experiment. The pupils are keen to do their best and work with care, pay attention to detail and show a willingness to explore ideas and techniques. They work together very effectively and offer constructive criticism about how their work might be improved. The school makes good use of specialist teaching to promote the pupils' knowledge and skills in art.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

82. Standards in design and technology have been maintained well since the previous inspection and are in line with national expectations for pupils aged seven and above those expected for eleven-year-olds. The range of opportunities for pupils has been improved since the previous inspection as the school now follows national guidance for the subject. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress and the juniors make good progress because of effective teaching. All aspects of the subject are covered and the school makes good use of national guidelines to ensure the consistent development of skills. The quality of teaching and learning are good.
83. By the end of the infants, the pupils have appropriate skills in designing and making a variety of models. They make puppets using a variety of materials. The teachers provide them with opportunities to use the puppets in plays and help to improve speaking and listening skills. The pupils make good gains in food technology by learning about a variety of foods and preparing them. They use their numeracy skills well to draw graphs of their favourite foods. In using fabrics, the pupils show appropriate skills in stitching and learn how to fasten a variety of materials using several different techniques.
84. By the end of the juniors, the pupils successfully combine a good range of techniques to produce attractive and functional musical instruments. Their designs are good and the teachers encourage them to experiment and use a variety of tools and materials to refine their models. The teachers challenge the pupils well and encourage them to apply their imagination and skills. The pupils respond well to this and often use their initiative by taking their designs home and working on projects with their parents. In Years 3 and 4 the teacher combines some of the work in design and technology with scientific principles. The pupils use their knowledge of pneumatics to make moving models and experiment with a range of techniques to improve them. They also make good use of computers to control a series of events, such as, switching lights on and off in a model house. The pupils benefit much from the good subject knowledge of their teachers who use technical terms and expect the pupils to use them in their designs and labelled drawings. In Years 5 and 6 the pupils make up their own board games, trial their success and adapt them if necessary.
85. The pupils enjoy design and technology and work hard. They take good care of resources and tools. The teachers plan work effectively and the monitoring of the subject ensures that pupils' skills and techniques are developed consistently. The teachers assess the pupils' progress and keep simple but effective records of progress and then use the information to plan the next step in learning. The school uses national guidelines well and has built up a good range of resources and tools to support the teaching of design and technology. The teachers have high expectations and insist that the pupils think carefully about their work. As a result the pupils are keen to modify and improve their work and evaluate it critically. There are good links made with information and communication technology and pupils use the computers to experiment with a variety of designs.

GEOGRAPHY

86. Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations at the end of the infants. Attainment is above expectations at the end of the juniors. The previous inspection report noted that although teaching was satisfactory, there was an overuse of worksheets and insufficient emphasis on extended pieces of work. Both of these issues have been fully dealt with and teaching in the juniors is now good. The

achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory and there is no difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Work is well planned on a two-year cycle to take account of the mixed age classes.

87. By the end of the infants, pupils have an appropriate understanding of maps and can draw a map of their route to school. Pupils draw diagrams of houses and use a key to show the location of the doors and windows. In Year 1 good use is made of the Katie Morag stories to compare life in Struay with their own village. They learn about the world as they follow the travels of Barnaby Bear and understand that they need a passport to go to New Zealand.
88. By the end of the juniors, pupils have a good understanding of major physical features. They describe different parts of the river such as the source and the estuary and can name local rivers. They understand the effect that humans have had on the land in terms of building and construction and also discuss the effects of pollution. In investigating coastal features they compile a chart of the relative merits of different beaches visited by members of the class, noting that Rhyl is clean, Fuerteventura has black sand and Cornwall is good for surfing. They have a good understanding of factors causing coastal erosion, such as, rough seas and the roots of plants enlarging crevices. A visit from a seaman was invaluable in enriching their understanding of physical features of the coastline and they speak with great confidence about stacks, caves and blow-holes, making good progress in their understanding and use of a wide range of geographical vocabulary.
89. Teaching is satisfactory overall and is good in the juniors. Activities are interesting and well-planned. Good use is made of visits, including a residential trip to Robin Wood, and visitors, such as the seaman, to enrich the curriculum. The teachers encourage pupils to use their numeracy skills effectively when using co-ordinates and in measuring scale. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development as next term pupils in the lower juniors study life in an Indian village and contrast it with their own. Good use is made of correct geographical terms to extend pupils' knowledge and upper juniors build up a glossary for each topic. The pupils' make good use of computers to research geographical topics.

HISTORY

90. Pupils' attainment in history is in line with national expectations at the end of the infants. Attainment is above expectations at the end of the juniors. This maintains the standards identified in the last inspection. Work is well planned on a two-year programme, to take full account of mixed age groups. Achievement of all pupils, including those with special needs, is satisfactory, and there is no difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
91. By the end of the infants, pupils have a secure understanding of the past through stories, factual accounts and through looking at pictures. They know that Florence Nightingale was a famous nurse who helped soldiers in the Crimean War. They look at pictures to pick out the differences in uniforms between then and now. They show a good understanding of some of the difficulties in war when they write letters from Florence to people back home explaining the appalling conditions in Scutari with no beds and dirty bandages. They know about the Great Fire of London and compare the fire fighting equipment available then with current day appliances. They show a good understanding of chronology as they put pictures of different houses in order from a thatched cottage to their own house.
92. Pupils extend their knowledge and make good progress in the juniors. The older pupils show they have a good understanding of the major periods in British history.

They have a good knowledge of Tudor times and know that the Romans had a great influence on Britain. The pupils accurately recall many facts about the civilisations of the Greeks, the Egyptians and the Aztecs and understand how we know about their lives. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have a good understanding of life in Victorian Britain and publish a newspaper in which the fate of a young chimney sweep is described. They also compare their own time in school with Victorian children. Pupils in the upper juniors develop good research skills as they find out about the Aztecs. They discuss the reasons for the Aztecs' defeat at the hands of the Spanish, who had superior weapons and horses. They construct good arguments to suggest that Cortez was a pirate rather than a hero; they think he stole from the Aztecs and "Could have traded not raided." In their study of the second half of the twentieth century they devise very good interviews with their parents, asking about man's first landing on the moon and the conflict in Northern Ireland. They use their information and communication technology skills well and access the Internet to find out about the end of rationing.

93. Teaching is satisfactory in the infants and is good in the juniors. Teachers prepare interesting and well-planned activities and make good use of pupils' literacy and information technology skills to extend learning. In a very good lesson seen in the lower juniors, the teacher made very effective use of objects from the past for pupils to try and identify the era the owner might have belonged to and what might have been their occupation. Teaching is very strong in the older junior class. The high expectations of the teacher encourages advanced independent research and evaluation of pupils' own learning. The curriculum is enriched by visits to places of interest, and for living history days, such as at Wigan Pier.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

94. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved much since the previous inspection and are now above those expected by the end of Years 2 and 6. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in all aspects of their work on computers. They make very good progress in using computers to support their work in other subjects for historical and geographical research and in doing topics for homework. This rapid improvement has been achieved through better teaching, effective leadership of the subject, more opportunities to use computers in lessons, direct teaching of ICT skills and improved resources.
95. By the end of Year 2, the pupils have good skills in ICT. They use a wide variety of programs to support their work in other subjects. They have benefited much from the direct teaching of skills in using computers and now apply these skills very well in word processing. They know how to change fonts, use a number of the computer's tools to enhance their work and are skilful in editing their work through using the spell checker. They load, save and retrieve their work confidently. The pupils make good progress in using computers to collate and present data. They know how to print graphs and charts. They have a good understanding of how the computer can be used to control a series of events such as setting of a burglar alarm.
96. By the end of Year 6, the pupils' computer skills are above those expected for their age. They have a good working knowledge of several operations to produce a multi-media presentation combining, graphics, text, photographs and moving pictures. They use the computers at home to research topics in history and geography and benefit much from specialist teaching which is challenging and well informed. The pupils use computers very well to edit and refine their writing and create attractive and forceful presentations of their stories and poetry. In mathematics, they collect and collate a

variety of data and then convert the information into graphs and charts using correct labels and titles. The pupils are always willing to experiment and explore the potential of the software available. In Years 3 and 4 they use control technology very well to create a series of actions, such as switching lights on and off to a given signal. They have a very secure knowledge of the terms and vocabulary used in computers as the teachers insist on their correct use. Throughout the school the pupils are enthusiastic about ICT and work hard to improve their skills. They co-operate well and take turns.

97. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff have good subject knowledge, which has improved much since the previous inspection through the support given by specialist teachers and training. Lessons are very well planned and the step-by-step approach to building pupils' competence has begun to pay dividends. Pupils are enthusiastic learners inspired by the challenge to produce well-finished and accurate work. In Years 5 and 6 the teacher demonstrated the use of a scanner and through rigorous questions ensured that the pupils had a good understanding of the process. The pupils contributed much to the lesson through perceptive questions and by making suggestions of alternative ways of scanning photographs and importing them into their work. The school follows national guidelines for the subject and has built up a good range of resources to support the teaching. Pupils have now become confident in using the digital camera and they discuss different ways of making use of it to enhance their work. The teachers encourage this robust approach and are always willing to allow the pupils opportunities to experiment. This increases the pupils' thirst for knowledge. The staff manage the pupils' behaviour very well and through well-timed comments or praise draw pupils' attention to the task in hand. The pupils respond well to the teaching and are productive and well focused workers. They are very clear about their own achievements. The teachers have a good system of record keeping and use assessment very well to plan work which challenges all abilities. As a result learning is brisk and purposeful. The subject leader has helped to improve standards in the subject by providing excellent guidance for the staff, leading training and ensuring that the school has good resources.

MUSIC

98. The school has maintained the standards reported at the time of the previous inspection. Standards at the end of the infants and juniors are in line with those expected for the age of the pupils. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in singing. The school makes good use of a range of visitors to stimulate the pupils' interest in music making. A music group introduced the pupils to traditional African music and instruments and helped to develop the pupils' cultural understanding. A professional percussionist has visited the school. The school provides good opportunities for pupils in the juniors to learn to play brass instruments and keyboards. The pupils respond well to these opportunities and practise regularly and perform competently.
99. Little teaching of music was seen during the inspection but analysis of planning, discussions with pupils and staff show that both teaching and learning are at least satisfactory and often good. The staff have good subject knowledge and use national guidelines and some specialist teaching to guide their approach to developing music in the school. Throughout the school the pupils sing well. Pupils in the infants know and obviously enjoy a wide range of songs and rhymes. They sing with gusto and cope well with the change of mood and tempo in the music. They keep together and follow instructions from the teacher effectively. In the juniors, the pupils learn to sing in parts and are able to hold a tune well. They know about several composers and comment about their favourite styles of music. Pupils have good opportunities to

listen to a range of music including popular and classical and also enjoy learning about the musical traditions of other countries. Pupils have a good knowledge of the influence and development of music through history. For example, they know about Tudor music and the changes brought about to popular music in the sixties. Pupils compose simple tunes and put music to rhymes and poems. They perform well in front of an audience and show good appreciation of the need to follow a conductor and to keep together.

100. The school has an adequate range and number of musical instruments. The pupils know the names of the instruments and play them with care. In a lesson in the infants they kept the beat using tambours and tambourines and responded well to the conductor. The more able infant pupils lead their classmates and conduct skilfully. The school participates in several out of school activities and the pupils particularly enjoy playing the recorder. They also go to concerts at the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

101. The school has limited facilities for physical education but makes good use of available resources, including the parish centre for dance, the local swimming pool and the hard play area. The lack of a suitable hall restricts the pupils in attaining above average standards. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress overall and very good gains in swimming. Standards are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection and are appropriate for pupils aged seven and eleven. Pupils achieve well in swimming with all achieving beyond the expected levels by the time they leave the school. The pupils swim at least 25 metres using a variety of strokes. They have a good knowledge of water safety.
102. The teaching is good and promotes effective learning throughout the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use their skills to plan effective lessons. Lessons include good opportunities for the pupils to practise and refine their skills and to learn about the effects of exercise on their health and bodies. The pupils thoroughly enjoy physical education and apply themselves well to tasks. They concentrate well and are always seeking ways to improve. Lessons have a good structure and start with a vigorous warm-up and clear explanations of what is to be taught. In a very good dance lesson in the infants, the teacher used different types of music to promote the pupils' knowledge of rhythm and pace. The pupils achieved well and by the end of the lesson they had successfully combined a sequence of movements about the day in the life of a cat. They had good balance, poise and awareness of change of pace. Pupils have a good knowledge of how exercise affects their bodies and talked confidently about healthy eating as a contributory factor in keeping well.
103. In the juniors the pupils make good progress in learning about a variety of games. Their skills are about average. They control a ball using a hockey stick and are developing an appropriate awareness of attacking and defending. In football practice the boys and girls learn how to control a ball by keeping it close to their feet. The teacher intervenes well and makes good use of his expertise and training to give pointers about how the angle of the body helps to increase balance. No gymnastics lessons were seen and the school has limited resources for this aspect of the subject. However, the school compensates for this by providing good opportunities for the pupils to take part in adventurous activities and sports. The pupils say that they regularly practise skills such as running, jumping and team games. There are some opportunities to take part in competitions against other schools and the pupils achieve

moderate success. They have very good sporting attitudes and show much appreciation for the success of others. Behaviour in the lessons seen was excellent and the pupils responded to instructions well. The teachers kept the pace of the lessons moving briskly and the pupils applied good physical effort and in dance showed themselves to be creative and imaginative.