

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **HIGHFIELDS COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Nantwich

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111081

Headteacher: Mr I. Walton

Reporting inspector: Mr R. J. Greatrex  
19924

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> October 2001

Inspection number: 217523

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Cumberland Avenue Nantwich Cheshire
Postcode:	CW5 6HA
Telephone number:	01270 626125
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs D. Taylor
Date of previous inspection:	1 <sup>st</sup> November 1999

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19924	R. J. Greatrex	Registered inspector	Art and design Design and technology Geography History Equality of opportunity Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Information about the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9898	A. Audin	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
12326	P. Cameron	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
19709	J. Fisher	Team inspector	English Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	
25577	W. Jefferson	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education Religious education Provision for pupils with special educational needs	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Highfields is a medium-sized primary school with 220 boys and girls on roll, from four to eleven years of age. Most pupils enter school with above average attainment levels. There are 26 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, a proportion below the national average. Most of these pupils have learning difficulties and one has a statement of special educational need. A very small number are eligible for free school meals. The vast majority of pupils are white and very few speak English as an additional language.

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

Highfields is a much improved school, no longer requiring 'serious weaknesses' categorisation. Standards are much higher now than in the past, particularly in the older classes. Most able pupils achieve the standards of which they are capable. Leadership and management is much more effective. The quality of teaching is also improved, although more remains to be done. There is a real family atmosphere. Everyone gets on with one another well. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is very good and generates high pupil interest and good pace of learning.
- Target-setting is very well used. Pupils and parents have a clear understanding of what needs to be done next. Consequently, learning has a clear focus.
- The governing body is very active and effective in shaping the direction of Highfields.
- Personal development is very good and relationships are close.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and this is an important reason why Highfields is a happy school with a positive climate for learning.

#### **What could be improved**

- Provision and much of the teaching for the Foundation Stage is unsuitable for these children.
- Although teaching is satisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2, and has improved over the last two years, there are still some shortcomings which are affecting how well pupils do in some subjects.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The satisfactory improvement made between inspections in 1999 and 2000 has been maintained and built upon effectively. The good local education authority support has been used well. Change from one headteacher to the next has been particularly smooth. The will and determination to succeed is common to all staff and governors. Leadership and management is much better. The governing body is particularly effective. The new permanent headteacher has made a good start. Although the role of the deputy headteacher is much clearer and more effective, in other management roles such as that of the senior management team and subject



co-ordinators, much remains to be done. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is much better and a very important reason why standards have improved so much. Teaching in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 is better but some minor weaknesses highlighted in the 1999 and 2000 inspections have not yet been resolved. Elsewhere much has been done, but staff now need time to fully understand and implement these changes. Given the improvements made, the school is well placed to improve further.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	A	A	B
mathematics	C	A	A	B
science	E	A	A	C

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average    E

Overall standards reached by eleven-year-olds in English, mathematics and science were much improved in 2000 from 1999, and generally maintained in 2001. With a relatively small number of pupils taking the test each year, results can vary greatly. Results over time can give a more accurate picture. The proportion of pupils reaching standards above and well above those expected for pupils of this age has increased dramatically over the last two years and is now what it should have been all along. Targets for 2001 were exceeded in English and nearly met in mathematics. Targets for 2002 are realistically challenging for this group of pupils.

Standards reached by seven-year-olds in reading, writing and mathematics have improved overall. More now reach above average standards. However, this is a recent improvement.

Learning in lessons, pupils' previous work and assessment shows that the vast majority of pupils are making satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 and very good progress in Years 3 to 6. In the older classes, pupils are currently reaching the standards that can be expected of them. The most and least able generally do as well as expected. In Years 1 and 2, important improvements have taken place since the school was inspected in 1999 and 2000. In mathematics, and generally in English, pupils now do better. However, in some aspects of English and more often in subjects such as science, some pupils could do better still. In these subjects, relative weaknesses in teaching reported in the 2000 inspection continue to affect pupils' progress.

In other subjects, standards are satisfactory except in ICT, art and design, history and geography where they are good.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very positive. When challenged and enthused by their teachers, pupils are very keen to learn and interested in everything the school offers. Pupils play a full part in making the school a happy community. They show great respect for each other's feelings and values. They are generally keen to learn and persevere to complete tasks that interest and enthuse them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Generally good. Even in large classes, pupils behave well when tasks are interesting. Pupils in the younger classes are occasionally restless. All pupils behave well around the school.
Personal development and relationships	A strength of the school. Relationships, both between pupils and between pupils and adults, are particularly strong.
Attendance	Attendance is good. Pupils are punctual to school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	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 quality of teaching has improved over the last three years and this is a significant reason why standards have risen. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is particularly effective. As reported in the 2000 inspection, teachers in these years have a clear understanding of how to convert planning into effective teaching. They know how to vary methods to meet learning objectives and enthuse and stimulate their pupils. Consequently, pupils behave well and persevere to complete even very challenging tasks. English and mathematics are both taught well. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 has improved since both the 1999 and 2000 inspections. In important subjects such as mathematics and English, it is much more effective. Even so, some weaknesses reported in 2000 remain. These lead directly to pupil restlessness and lower standards of work and behaviour. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is often unsuitable for these children's needs. Initially, they are over-directed; during tasks they are often given too little guidance. Although they are keen to learn, they are rarely given the opportunities they need to make choices and to begin to develop good learning habits.

Literacy and numeracy are taught well. The most able pupils are given good quality teaching in Years 3 to 6. In Years 1 and 2 they are given better teaching than in 2000. Even so, more remains to be done if they are to be given the opportunities to learn at the appropriate level. In many tasks, the most able reception children are restricted. Younger pupils are often not given the climate for learning or tasks they

need to achieve the levels of which they are capable. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are given good quality support by teachers from the school and outside.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is much improved since the 1999 inspection. Particularly beneficial to pupils' learning is the very good use of visits and visitors to enrich, enliven and extend the curriculum. The very good links made between subjects helps pupils understand better. What is learnt in one subject is often practised and extended in another. The curriculum, using nationally-recognised schemes of work, is far more cohesive than when the school was inspected in 1999. Activities out of lessons are good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils' needs are quickly and accurately identified. Individual education plans are clear and parents are involved in setting learning targets.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Provision in lessons is good and generally meets the academic needs of these pupils and they make good progress. Staff and other pupils do much to help these pupils settle quickly and easily. However, more could be done still in the school generally to make them feel more at home.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	A strength of the school and much improved since the 1999 inspection. Moral and social development are very good. Pupils are actively involved in writing the 'code of conduct', giving them an awareness of both their responsibilities and rights. Older pupils help younger ones. Spiritual and cultural development are good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. Staff know their pupils well. Assessment is much improved. Individual pupils' progress is tracked closely and data is used productively. Target-setting is very effective and an important factor in improvements in standards. There is a real 'family feeling' about Highfields. From the time they enter the school, much is done to make sure pupils can flourish. Relationships are very good and pupils enjoy a supportive and positive climate for learning. The school cares for its pupils well.
How well does the school work in partnership with parents	The school works closely with parents. For example, views expressed in a recent parents' survey are already being acted upon.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Much improved and satisfactory overall. Leadership is effective and management clear. The role of the deputy headteacher is much clearer and this is beneficial to the effectiveness of management. Other roles, such as those of the senior management team and subject co-ordinators, still need development if they are to be fully effective. The school looks for 'best value' in all that it does.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is very effective. Governors strike a good balance between supporting and questioning what the school does. They play a full and active role in shaping the school's longer term direction.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Much improved since the 1999 inspection. The school has begun to evaluate its performance closely, and to use this information effectively to make sure it does the best it can for all its pupils.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Governors and staff take a great deal of care to ensure that resources are deployed to maximum benefit, and nothing is wasted. There is an adequate number of staff, resources are satisfactory and the accommodation is good. Within the school, a rolling programme of improvements has responded to the shortcomings highlighted in the 2000 report. Even so, some teaching spaces remain unsuitable and over a quarter of pupils are educated in temporary accommodation outside the school buildings. This adversely affects pupils' learning. The school grounds are a wonderful resource for learning and offer pupils a very pleasant environment in which to learn, play and relax.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions and problems.</li> <li>• Their children behave well.</li> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• The school helps their children mature and become responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside of lessons.</li> <li>• The school working more closely with them.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views of the school. Inspectors feel the range of activities outside of lessons is good. The new headteacher has already consulted parents about a wide range of issues, and taken note of their views.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

What is done particularly well

- Standards are much better now than in 1999.
- A much higher proportion of more able pupils are achieving well.
- Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress.

What could be improved

- Although the proportion of Year 2 pupils reaching above average levels has improved, more still needs to be done to meet the needs of these pupils fully.
- Many children do not make as much progress in the reception class as they should.

1. Overall, standards in the school are much better than when the school was placed into serious weaknesses in 1999. At the time, year-on-year results at the end of both key stages were falling for no discernible reason. Since then standards have risen markedly. This improvement has continued following the 2000 inspection. There is now a much greater, and increasing, proportion of pupils who are gaining levels above that expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. A good number are reaching levels well above those expected by the end of Year 6. Standards are better than those of similar schools, except in science where they are average.

2. In the national tests for eleven year olds in 2001, nearly every pupil reached the level expected nationally in English and nearly half exceeded it. In Mathematics, eight in every ten pupils reached the expected level and four in every ten went on to reach a higher level. In Science, nine in every ten pupils reached the expected level and half exceeded it. In all three subjects, these proportions are above the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching a higher level than that expected for their age in all three subjects was much higher in 2000 than in 1999, and this higher level was maintained in 2001. The school exceeded its target in English, but fell slightly below its target in mathematics. Targets set for 2002 are challenging, but achievable.

3. In the national tests for seven year olds in 2001, nine pupils in every ten reached the expected level in reading and nearly half exceeded it. In writing, nearly every pupil reached the expected level, but only three in every twenty pupils exceeded it. In mathematics, every pupil reached the expected level, and a little over half exceeded it. Results are improving over time; in 2000 they were better than 1999, and in 2001 better than in 2000. Given that pupils enter and leave the school with above average attainment levels, this is what should be expected.

4. Children under five enter the school with a wide range of attainment levels. Overall, they are above average. They are particularly good in key skills such as speaking. Many also have wide experience of being with other children. Their

curriculum is not well planned, lacking appropriate range and being too teacher-directed and generally more suited to older pupils. This restricts their progress and understanding. The progress of the more able is particularly badly affected, because they are given few opportunities to think for themselves. By the time they enter Year 1, most have not made as much progress as they should. In the 2000 inspection, writing standards were particularly low. This lack of challenge adversely affects standards and achievement.

5. Inspection evidence suggests that current standards in Year 6 are generally above average, although a smaller proportion of these pupils are working at a higher level than last year. This is largely because this is a different cohort of pupils which includes a smaller proportion of pupils of higher ability. This is clearly demonstrated in their work in class and through the very good and careful tracking of their progress through the school which demonstrates that far more of them are of average ability than in Year 6 last year.

6. Current standards in Year 2 are a little above average. For some pupils they could be higher. This is largely because, although teaching is satisfactory overall, it is not as consistently good as in the older classes. There are some shortcomings in teaching and expectations are occasionally too low. This was highlighted by the 1999 and 2000 inspection reports and in the monitoring undertaken by the local education authority. In some lessons and subjects, these pupils do not learn at the rate appropriate to their ability.

7. Standards in literacy are good overall. Teachers introduce pupils to a wide range of texts and pupils benefit from good home-school links, so that their learning in school is extended at home. Reading skills are generally good and most pupils have developed a range of strategies appropriate to their age for working out unknown words. In writing, older pupils, particularly, write for a good range of audiences and purposes, using a wide variety of styles. Much of their work relates to work in other subjects and reinforces their interest and understanding. Spelling and punctuation are taught methodically, and the teaching of handwriting has improved since the last inspection and has raised standards.

8. Standards in numeracy are good. Standards have improved, and continue to improve, largely because the national strategy is implemented effectively and teaching is good. Pupils' mental computation is quick and accurate. They know how to go about tackling problems. Numeracy skills are used well in other subjects, such as science and design and technology.

9. Pupils with special educational needs reach the standards of which they are capable. Nearly all make good progress in relation to clear targets set in their individual education plans. This is because tasks set by their teachers are well matched to those plans and pupils' progress is well supported during lessons by the class teacher or support assistants.

10. Standards reached by the most able pupils are much better than in the past. In Years 3 to 6, they are good and often very good. National test results show a good proportion are reaching levels above and well above those expected by their age.

In Years 1 and 2, standards reached by the more able are beginning to improve. In reading and writing, teaching is beginning to meet the needs of these pupils. In mathematics, standards are good and teaching is more consistently effective. In other curriculum subjects, standards achieved by the more able vary. For example, in art and design, where teachers' knowledge and understanding is particularly good and very good use is made of the skills of the co-ordinator, standards are high. As



reported in the 2000 inspection, the insight and application that pupils bring to their work in art and design is in contrast with their progress in some other subjects, where they could clearly do better.

11. Pupils for whom English is an additional language also do well. Good teaching in lessons ensures that work is well matched to their ability, and English competence is not allowed to detract from the level at which they learn other subjects. Good teaching when they are withdrawn meets specific needs so that their knowledge of English, particularly, is progressing at a fast rate. Other pupils, too, do much to help them. Both in lessons and at social times, these pupils explain patiently and do much to raise understanding and thereby the standards these pupils are reaching.

12. Standards in science in older classes are good. Practical work and well planned investigations give pupils many opportunities both to learn firsthand and to use and apply their existing scientific knowledge in new situations. In younger classes, teachers have lower expectations of how pupils will work, particularly in group and practical activities. In ICT, standards are also good. Although the school has yet to complete planned improvements in equipment and teacher training, good use is made of what is currently available. Furthermore, in many ICT activities, pupils' standards and rate of learning benefit from one-to-one tuition with skilled and knowledgeable parents. In art and design, standards are good. Pupils know and understand a good range of techniques and media. They benefit particularly from working with outside expertise. Although rather more work is undertaken in history than in geography, standards in both are good. A significant factor is the good use of visits and visitors. Pupils' understanding is greatly enhanced through this direct learning. In all other subjects, standards by the age of eleven are satisfactory.

13. Nine in every ten parents who replied to the questionnaire feel that their children make good progress in the school. At the meeting for parents held before the inspection, and during the inspection, parents noted that standards had improved in the recent past. They were particularly aware that the more able pupils are doing better.

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

What is done particularly well

- Pupils' attitudes to school and lessons are positive.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in the classroom, and outside, even when they are not being directly supervised.
- Personal development and relationships with each other and adults is of a very high standard.
- These are all major strengths of the school which contribute to the 'Highfields family' atmosphere in the school.
- Attendance is good.

What could be improved

- Some pupils in the younger classes occasionally become restless.

14. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are eager to learn. They concentrate well in lessons, are enthusiastic in their approach to learning, and are confident in putting forward their own ideas and opinions. Most teaching staff have high expectations and encourage pupils to do their best. The positive encouragement given by staff, particularly in Years 3 to 6, encourages pupils to have the confidence to answer questions and to try again when their answer is incorrect. Pupils in the younger classes occasionally become restless when teaching is slow and laborious, or the lesson introduction is too long. This is unchanged since the school was inspected in 2000, when work habits of Year 1 and 2 pupils were considered a relative weakness. When teachers expect it, all pupils take pride in their work and treat books and resources with respect. They play a full part in caring for their school. For example none of the wrappers from their morning break 'tuck' are dropped as litter. Pupils appreciate the very attractive outside environment of the school.

15. Pupils are polite and respectful to each other and to staff and other adults. Parents are very pleased with the standards of behaviour in school and on outside visits. Although there is no consistent 'whole school' approach, pupils are generally calm and orderly. There were no exclusions in the last school year and no incidents of bullying or racial harassment were seen during the inspection.

16. Relationships within the school are excellent and this has a very positive effect on pupils' learning. Staff listen with interest to pupils and show respect for their views. Praise is often given, and this encourages pupils to be confident and learn from their mistakes. Pupils show respect for each other and listen to different opinions. They work co-operatively on tasks such as in Year 5 science. Break times and lunchtimes are very harmonious. Midday assistants encourage pupils to play together, often joining in or starting games. Pupils take turns using apparatus on the adventure playground and resources during wet break times. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and those for whom English is an additional language play together happily.

17. Pupils willingly accept responsibility. Older pupils have many opportunities for this, younger pupils few. Older pupils, for example, look after reception pupils during their induction period and also on outings. Older pupils thrive on the opportunities they are given to develop learning skills by choosing activities and resources and undertaking research. They enjoy demonstrating their work and telling others about their achievements.

18. Pupils value each other, including those from different backgrounds. Pupils are keen to learn about different faiths. They regularly raise money for charities.

19. The attendance of pupils is good, well above the national average. Pupils enjoy coming to school. The main reasons for absence are sickness and holidays taken during term time. Punctuality is good for most pupils.

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

What is done particularly well

- Teaching is generally of a good standard.
- The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is particularly good and improved since both the 1999 and 2000 inspections. Lessons are lively and stimulating, pupils respond enthusiastically and do their best.

What could be improved

- Although satisfactory overall, and improved since the 2000 inspection, there remain one or two shortcomings in teaching in Years 1 and 2.
- Teaching in the reception class is often not suited to the needs of the children.

20. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Nine in every ten lessons seen were satisfactory or better, six in every ten good or better. In Years 3 to 6, teaching is consistently good and in about a third of the lessons very good. This is very beneficial to pupils' learning and is a significant reason why standards at the end of

Year 6 have risen. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is generally satisfactory, but the inconsistencies outlined in the previous inspection reports of 1999 and 2000 remain. This leads to a slower rate of learning. Teaching in the foundation stage is unsatisfactory overall and leads to inappropriate provision for these children. Nine in every ten parents who replied to the questionnaire feel that teaching at Highfields is good.

21. Since the 2000 inspection, teaching has improved in Years 3 to 6, and is more consistent year-on-year. Specific weaknesses in teaching in Years 1 and 2, however, remain. The quality of teaching in the reception class has declined, particularly since the 1999 inspection when it was judged good.

22. In Years 3 to 6, teachers' expectations are very high. They make realistic but challenging demands of all of their pupils, both in the standard of work they achieve and in their behaviour. Pupils rise to this challenge very well. In a very good Year 4 literacy lesson, for example, pupils were enthralled and enthused by their teacher's dramatic interpretation. This enlivened the text and brought it to life. Consequently, they understood better and worked hard to persevere and complete the demanding task. In Years 1 and 2, teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and presentation and quality of work are not consistent. These pupils are not always expected to do their best.

23. English is taught well overall, particularly in Years 3 to 6. In these classes, planning is good, lessons well managed and teaching methods chosen both to teach the lesson objective clearly and to enthuse pupils. Teachers are confident and effective in teaching literacy and provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills in other subjects. Mathematics is also taught well. Lessons generally start well, with good mental agility sessions that pupils enjoy and fully participate in.

24. The most effective teachers make very good use of the well written targets that each child has. For example, in a very good Year 5 literacy lesson, once the discussion was completed, the teacher reminded the pupils to look at their targets before they began work. This focused their attention on one or two particularly pertinent areas they should address. It led to clearer learning, at a good rate.

25. Teachers' planning continues to be effective. Lessons are clearly organised, with stated learning objectives and consideration of how best they should be taught. Resources, and the use of additional staff and volunteers, are also considered. This supports teaching throughout the school. However, it is particularly effective in the older classes, where teachers have a clearer understanding and insight into what their children will learn and how they will teach it.

26. Teaching in the foundation stage is often inappropriate. Lesson organisation is often more suited to much older pupils. These children are often given too much direction and instruction, and their creativity and spontaneity is restricted. Although most lessons have clear learning objectives, there is too little teaching to meet them. There are few opportunities for children to work imaginatively or independently, or to

select their own resources. Learning is rarely with lively enjoyment, and the more able are particularly restricted.

27. Although teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall, the weaknesses highlighted in the 2000 inspection remain in many subject areas. This has improved in important subjects such as mathematics. However, in a small proportion of lessons, the pace continues to be poorly judged and the approach to be over prescriptive. This is particularly so during the introduction to lessons. Discussions led by the teacher are sometimes laborious. Pupils can become restless and lose interest in the lesson, almost before it has begun. This then impacts on these pupils' behaviour, thus slowing the rate of learning for the whole class, as the teacher has to spend time disciplining a minority.

28. In Years 3 to 6, teachers make particularly good use of a wide range of teaching methods. They develop their pupils' learning skills so that they can become independent of the teacher. This is particularly the case when these pupils research for themselves. In these classes, good use is also made of group work. Pupils learn to collaborate, share and listen to one another's points of view. They often present their findings as a group, as in a very good Year 4 history lesson. Their personal development is extended, and they learn key skills that will be useful to them throughout their education. By contrast, in Years 1 and 2, the way teachers organise activities often makes pupils more dependent upon the teacher and other adults. In several lessons, such as science investigations, they are not developing the thinking skills that they should to an appropriate level.

29. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. When they are withdrawn from class, pupils work on areas that are being covered by the class but at a level appropriate to their abilities. All teachers and the well-trained learning support assistants give good support to these pupils.

30. Throughout the school, good use is made of homework to extend pupils' learning and raise standards. The home-school partnership is strong. Parents are fully involved and active partners in their children's learning. This is very beneficial. Particularly impressive is the partnership between teacher, parent and pupil that leads to setting of individual targets. All three groups express the view that this is very beneficial to the pupils' rate of progress and overall achievement.

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

What is done particularly well

- Good use is made of visits and visitors to extend and enrich the curriculum.
- Good links are made between subjects.
- The school involves parents, playgroups, other schools and the local community well.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

What could be improved

- The Foundation Stage curriculum does not give the breadth of activities needed by the children.

31. The curriculum from Year 1 to 6 is broad and generally balanced and enriched through extra-curricular activities that include good links with the community. The curriculum reflects the school's aims and supports the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Since the last inspection, much work has been undertaken, so that subjects such as ICT now fully meet statutory requirements. Good links between subjects are made to provide coherence across the curriculum. The study of the local area is good through teaching in history and geography. Literacy and numeracy are being developed more effectively through work in other subjects. There are good links with parents when their children first join the school and with local nurseries and play groups. There are well-maintained links with secondary schools, which helps prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education. For example, pupils from both schools work together on 'citizenship'.

32. Provision in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory overall. Neither the nationally-recognised curriculum, the 'early learning goals', nor a suitable alternative is fully in place. This makes it very difficult for activities to be planned that fully meet the children's needs.

33. All curriculum policies are in place and regularly reviewed. Where possible, good links between subjects reinforce learning in one whilst extending learning in the other. There is good cohesion. In Years 3 to 6, year-on-year progress is good, partly because teachers plan well together. There is consistency in the pupils' experiences as a result. There are some differences in planning between Year 1 and 2 classes, particularly in the expectations teachers have of their pupils' achievements.

34. Provision for sex education, drug awareness and pupils' personal, social and health education are good. Pupils understanding of health-related matters benefits from visitors such as the school nurse and a 'life education' caravan.

35. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The needs of these pupils are quickly and accurately identified. Individual education plans are clear and parents are informed about learning targets. The school ensures equality of access and opportunities for all pupils. Withdrawal of pupils from classes to work with learning support assistants, for example, is generally well organised, so that pupils rarely miss important teaching points, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

36. The school has a policy for identifying gifted or talented pupils which, though it is new and not fully and consistently implemented by all staff, is helping to raise standards in the higher levels in English, mathematics and science. As yet this does not include other subjects, but is still an improvement since the last inspection.

37. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities overall, with good provision for sport. The school undertakes a good range of visits to extend and enrich the curriculum. Visitors, too, make a positive contribution. The school has very effective links with the main secondary school, which ensure an easy transition between schools and link the curriculum of one school into that of the next. Even so, a large proportion of parents would like to see a greater range of extra-curricular activities.

38. Overall, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when provision for spiritual, moral and social development was only satisfactory.

39. Provision for spiritual development is good. Many aspects of the religious education curriculum make a significant contribution. For example, throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to consider the concepts of belonging, believing, symbolism and faith. They are encouraged to reflect upon the effect that these ideas have on their own lives. During whole school and class assemblies, pupils are given good opportunities for reflection. For example, in the reception class, the teacher demonstrates how easy it is to recognise differences between people from their appearance, but then encourages pupils to consider how people are different on the inside. The very good school grounds, including a pond and nature walkway, provide very good opportunities for pupils to reflect upon the wonders of nature and their own place in the world.

40. Provision for moral education is very good. Responsible attitudes are encouraged and fostered when, at the beginning of the year, pupils discuss with their new teacher the rules by which they wish to work. Good work is celebrated, promoting self confidence and self esteem. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate the efforts of others. All adults are very good role models for pupils. Almost every parent strongly supports the values that the school promotes.

41. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. A good range of extra-curricular activities adds significantly to developing pupils' social skills. Funds are raised to support local, national and global charities, further developing pupils' awareness of their social responsibility. Events such as the carol service in support of a hospice, extend this. Very good opportunities to promote Year 6 and 4 pupils' social awareness, are provided when pupils take part in residential visits. Older pupils are given responsibility to care for younger children by helping them settle into school and they look after them on a number of social occasions, including a visit to the theatre.

42. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. They learn about many cultures through art and design, geography, history and music. Visits, for example to museums and theatres, extend this provision. Visitors, such as an environmental artist, also contribute well. Pupils study a very good range of western artists and musicians, but little opportunity is provided beyond this. This is especially disappointing given that some pupils come from other cultures.

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

What is done particularly well

- There is a real family atmosphere about the school. Right from their first day, much is done to give pupils the support, guidance and encouragement they need to flourish at school.
- The system for setting targets for pupils-involving them, their parents and teachers-is very beneficial to their progress.
- Monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress is much better than when the school was inspected in 1999.

What could be improved

- The use of assessment in the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils would benefit from a more consistent approach between teachers to monitoring and promoting good behaviour.

43. The school has a good range of policies and procedures in place to provide effective welfare and guidance for pupils. The school actively seeks to promote a sense of belonging to the 'Highfields Family' with good standards of care. Teachers know their pupils well and deal with any concerns raised in a caring and responsive manner. The excellent relationships throughout the school allow pupils confidently to seek assistance from all staff. New pupils have a well-thought-out induction to school that enables them to settle in quickly and feel secure in their new school.

44. Procedures for child protection are satisfactory. The policy is currently being updated so that it closely follows the latest guidelines. Child protection has been discussed at a staff meeting and staff know what procedures are in place. Topics about pupil safety, feelings and bullying are covered effectively in assemblies and personal, social and health education lessons.

45. There are a good range of procedures in place to ensure the health and safety of pupils. The current policy is being updated, and issues raised in a recent risk assessment have been dealt with. There are regular checks of equipment and regular fire drills. There are good first aid procedures in place. The inside and outside of the school are very clean and well cared for. There are some concerns about health and safety aspects of the mobile classrooms.



46. Pupils with special educational needs are cared for well. Their needs are identified early and they are well supported. Effective targets are set and progress towards them is assessed regularly. Outcomes of such assessment are used successfully to plan pupils' next stage of learning. Most parents of pupils with special educational needs attend review meetings and older pupils themselves are encouraged to attend reviews. Parents are kept well informed.

47. Teachers know their pupils well and monitor their personal development on a daily basis. Older pupils particularly are encouraged to understand what they have learnt during lessons by skilful questioning and answering sessions, and demonstrations of work. Pupils are involved in the process of setting targets for themselves, with assistance from teachers and parents. This enables pupils to value their own achievements, and gives them a greater insight into how well they are doing and where they need to focus their energies.

48. Pupils' academic progress is tracked very closely through individual target setting, which is beneficial to the good rate of pupils' learning.

49. The school has made very good progress since the 1999 and 2000 inspections on how it monitors and supports pupils' academic progress. Evaluations are used effectively by the school to identify high achieving pupils and those pupils who are struggling. Extra support is carefully targeted to meet these pupils' needs. In addition, all pupils have individual targets which are set and agreed by the pupils, teachers and parents and reviewed regularly. This effectively ensures that the information gained is used to plan the next steps in pupils' work. More able pupils are made aware of what they need to achieve in order to move to the higher levels. In the Foundation Stage, however, assessment is used less well. Progress is not checked using the 'stepping stones' and much more could be done.

50. Although there is no clear approach throughout the school, there are good procedures in place to monitor behaviour, which are known to parents and pupils. For example, pupils help to form their class' rules, and the school involves parents at an early stage if there are any problems with behaviour. Bullying or unkind behaviour is discussed in personal, social and health education lessons and assemblies. A new policy is in the process of being developed which will bring greater consistency to the systems of rewards and sanctions in each class.

51. There are satisfactory systems in place to monitor attendance and punctuality. Any concerns are quickly identified and discussed with parents.

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

What is done particularly well

- Parents are pleased with the progress made by their children.
- The school has established good relationships with parents who feel welcome and valued by the school.
- Parents appreciate the caring family atmosphere and hardworking staff.

- Parents feel that their suggestions will be considered seriously, and find class teachers very approachable.

What could be improved

- Parents are fully involved in setting targets for their children, but they would like more information about how well their children are doing in school.
- Some parents feel the style of the reports is bland and unhelpful.
- Some parents feel the school does not work closely with them.

52. Parents have regular involvement in the work of the school and make a strong contribution to their children's education. A small number assist in the classroom with a variety of clearly-defined tasks. They also assist with extra curricular activities and on visits. There is an active parents' association, which organises fundraising and social events. They raise large amount of funds for additional resources and improvements to the school environment. Their work is greatly appreciated by staff and governors.

53. Both the new head teacher and parents are keen to develop and extend the good partnership that already exists. The headteacher has already sought parents' views through a questionnaire. These were considered before the school improvement plan was updated, ensuring parents' views were included from its earliest stages. Plans were made to address specific issues, such as homework policy and information about pupils' progress, quickly. An updated home study policy has been sent to parents giving more detailed information.

54. A small but significant number of parents feel they are not well informed about their children's progress. The school intends to build on the present good practices, such as target-setting with pupil and parent, to give parents a clearer understanding of year-on-year progress. In addition, the existing informative curriculum letter sent out each half term are planned to include more information about ways in which parents can help their children out of school.

55. Parents like the quality of information provided by the school. This includes regular newsletters and a clear and informative prospectus. New parents have an induction meeting and meet members of staff. They can raise any concerns and receive useful information about preparing their child for school. The home-school agreement clearly and simply shows the role of parent, child and the school.

56. Some parents find the annual report less informative. Although giving useful information about attainment and progress, and showing targets for achievement and improvement at home and school, they find the style bland and impersonal. Parents' evenings are useful, particularly in enabling parents to share and understand the targets set for their children.

57. Parents of pupils' with special educational needs are kept well informed about their children's individual education plans and progress. They are regularly and fully involved. They are appreciative of the good support given.

58. In the questionnaire to parents, about one third felt that the range of activities outside of lessons was not enough. Inspectors feel that the range, including sport, music and residential visits covering outdoor pursuits and environmental activities,

is good. Pupils also go on visits to museums and theatres, and artists and musicians come into school.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

What is done particularly well

- The school is much better led than in 1999 and improvements highlighted in the 2000 inspection have been built upon effectively.
- Staff are much more involved in the school's development, particularly of the curriculum.
- The governing body is very effective in shaping the school's direction.
- The school grounds are a stimulating resource for learning.

What could be improved

- The school has had many staff changes, including four headteachers in two years. This has inevitably caused some disruption and the implementation of some policies and procedures is disjointed.

59. The quality of the leadership and management has steadily improved and is now satisfactory overall. The 1999 inspection judged leadership and management a serious weakness. When the school was re-inspected in 2000, satisfactory progress had been made. During this time, and until the recent past, the school had a series of temporary headteachers. The skills and expertise that have been brought to the school have been very beneficial and steady progress has been made. As reported in 2000, in most respects, change has been generally well-managed. The new headteacher, although only recently in post, has recognised some of the areas needing improvement and made a good start at remedying them. He has recognised the importance of working in partnership with staff, parents and governors and the vast potential of the school and its pupils. Particularly noteworthy is the effectiveness of the governing body, which is now very good. About nine parents in every ten who responded to the questionnaire agreed the school is now well led and managed.

60. Action plans are clear and good support given by the local education authority. However, because of the temporary nature of the recent headships, there has been a lack of consistency in certain areas which has inevitably slowed the rate of progress. For example, roles of senior management team and subject co-ordinators have not been built sufficiently.

61. Staff have responded positively to the lead given. Many changes and improvements have been introduced that have been effective, for example, raising the levels of attainment of the more able pupils by the end of the Year 6. Many new policies and procedures have been introduced that have been beneficial. However, the speed and rate of their introduction and the different emphasis given to them under different headteachers, has led to some inconsistencies. In several important areas, such as how pupils' behaviour is managed, there is not a consistent approach throughout the school.

62. Responsibilities shared amongst staff are now much better than in 1999 and the new permanent headteacher has continued to build upon the good practices outlined in the 2000 Inspection. The role of the deputy headteacher is much clearer.

His impact on the work of the school is consequently much greater than it was in 1999 and 2000. The senior management team is in place, and recent improvements demonstrate that it is becoming a more effective team. Much, however, remains to be done before it is contributing fully to the school's improvement. Subject co-ordination remains in its infancy. Although good practice exists, such as in ICT, and the permanent headteacher has already begun to widen and expand staff's roles so that they are far more effective, only satisfactory progress has been made since 2000.

63. The governing body, ably led by the chair of governors, is very involved in school life and gives very good support to the school. Governors have a much firmer grasp of what is happening in the school now than in 1999, for example, through their direct links with different curriculum subjects. They have rigorous systems and procedures that are carefully followed to enable them to be very effective, particularly in shaping the direction of the school. Committees, such as that for curriculum, are beginning to be more productive, although more remains to be done. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's relative strengths and areas for improvement, for example, teaching in the younger year groups.

64. The plans drawn up following the 1999 inspection have done much to enable the school to make the progress it has. All of the key issues were effectively addressed and good progress made to meet them. However, by necessity this was a reactive response. The school is now in a position to be far more proactive in its development and to look beyond these issues. The draft school development plan is very comprehensive and includes reference to all the different areas of the school. Much of what is included is appropriate if the school is to continue to build upon its recent improvement. However, it is very ambitious and would benefit from refined planning so that it is clear precisely what the school is focusing on at any given time. Very successful to the shaping of the school's development is the 'strategy committee'. This small group of senior staff and key governors gives a very useful forum for debate so that the views of staff, governors and parents are clearly aired when developments are planned. Uppermost in their thinking is marrying school improvements to the school's aims and objectives.

65. The school has a strong commitment to equal opportunities. For example, through the analysis of data they have identified the differing needs of pupils and targeted additional support for them, to raise levels of achievement.

66. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed. There is good governor involvement. Pupils' progress towards targets and their individual education plans is monitored on a regular basis. There is a good level of support in classes for pupils identified as having a need.

67. The quality of financial planning is good. Educational priorities are well supported. Areas for development are fully costed so that improvements can take place in line with the school development plan. The school is beginning to address the 'best value' principles in the management of resources. The relatively large carry forward is for good reasons such as the development of ICT in 2002 and the development of a new library.

68. Staffing levels are satisfactory with appropriately qualified teachers. Performance management procedures are in place and becoming effective. There are appropriate induction procedures for staff new to the school and for newly qualified teachers. Staff are generally deployed to make best use of their skills, expertise and experience. Learning support assistants are skilled and well trained. This is of benefit to their work with pupils. Training undertaken by all staff is carefully tailored to meet their needs. This is also beneficial.

69. Administrative staff are efficient and effective. They do much to enable the school to run smoothly and effectively, and to enable the teaching staff to concentrate on educational matters.

70. The school makes good use of its accommodation. All teaching areas are attractive, well organised environments for learning. The school is kept clean and tidy. There are particular problems created by the school's original design that lead to some disruption in learning. Governors and staff are well aware of this and a programme of improvement is already underway. Where these improvements have been made, they have been beneficial to pupils' learning. Shortcomings exist in temporary classrooms; too hot in summer, too cold in winter they are a relatively poor learning environment. The outside environment is excellent. Space is plentiful, and there are carefully developed areas offering a wide range of stimulating learning environments. Learning resources is satisfactory, overall, and generally well used.

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

71. The school should continue to build upon the good progress made in the recent past to:

- (1) Improve the quality of education provided in the Foundation Stage by:
  - providing a more suitable and broad curriculum fully incorporating the areas that children should experience, including the opportunities to make choices and be imaginative;
  - use assessment to check on children's progress more closely, and help to ensure they are making the progress they should;
  - linking teaching methods to lesson objectives more closely so that children have appropriate guidance and support;
  - continuing to improve the physical environment and the range of equipment available to these children.

(Paragraphs: 4, 72-74, 77, 79-82, 85, 87-91, 93, 94)

- (2) Continue to build on recent improvements in the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 by:
  - - pacing lessons better, particularly introductions some of which are overlong;
  - - raising teachers' expectations of pupils' standards of behaviour;
  - - raising teachers' expectations of the standards of pupils' work so that it is always their best.

(Paragraphs: 3, 6, 10, 12, 14, 17, 20-22, 27, 33, 96, 99, 106, 123)

Other issues which should be considered by the school:

- Fully and consistently implement the good policies, such as that for the most able pupils, introduced in the recent past.

(Paragraphs: 15, 36, 44, 45, 50, 61)

- Build upon the recommendations of previous inspections and current plans to widen and strengthen the roles of subject co-ordinators.

(Paragraphs: 60, 62, 108, 118, 127, 145, 164, 168)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	34
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	8	13	11	4	0	0
Percentage	0	22	36	31	11	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	220
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	2

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	25

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

### *Attendance*

<b>Authorised absence</b>		<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	
	%		%
School data	2.6	School data	0.8
National comparative data	5.2	National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	18	15	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	17	18
	Girls	13	15	15
	Total	30	32	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (93)	97 (90)	100 (90)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	16	18
	Girls	15	14	15
	Total	33	30	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (93)	91 (93)	100 (97)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	15	17	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	12	13
	Girls	16	13	16
	Total	30	25	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94 (91)	78 (98)	91 (98)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	13	13
	Girls	16	13	16
	Total	29	26	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91 (91)	81 (98)	91 (98)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	184
Any other minority ethnic group	6

*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)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.6
Average class size	31.6

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	118.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### *Financial information*

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	463 851
Total expenditure	440 623
Expenditure per pupil	2 040
Balance brought forward from previous year	25 546
Balance carried forward to next year	48 774

### *Recruitment of teachers*

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

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	220
Number of questionnaires returned	89

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	33	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	46	6	4	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	51	1	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	53	15	1	0
The teaching is good.	48	45	5	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	51	14	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	44	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	40	7	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	30	56	1	13	0
The school is well led and managed.	42	51	6	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	41	55	4	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	36	25	7	1

## **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**

What is done particularly well

- Children have very positive attitudes to learning and try their best.
- Learning out of school makes a good contribution to how well these children do in school.

What could be improved

- Provision is not good enough.
- The curriculum is not sufficiently broad to give these children the breadth of experience they need.
- Lessons are too narrow and prescriptive, opportunities to make choices and use the imagination too few. The most able are particularly restricted by this.
- Teaching methods are sometimes unsuitable for the activity so that children make limited progress.

72. The overall provision for children in the foundation stage is unsatisfactory. When the school was inspected in 1999, provision was judged to be satisfactory overall. Currently, the school has not yet put fully in place the broad curriculum which reflects the nationally approved curriculum for this stage. Consequently, it is difficult for adults to plan the relevant activities to support the needs of individual children.

73. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall, and this limits the quality and pace of learning. The use of assessment data to record progress according to the 'stepping stones' criteria is not in place. Opportunities for activities and imaginative play where the children make choices for themselves are very limited. Accommodation, such as the new indoor extension, is not utilised fully to aid children's independent learning. Whilst there are opportunities for imaginative play such as role-play, and use of sand and water to support children's personal independence, these activities are often initially over-directed and later lack appropriate adult intervention to extend children's learning. Literacy and numeracy provision is satisfactory overall, but lacks challenge for the most able. The provision of large, out-door play equipment suitable for these children has improved since the previous inspection. However, there is still a lack of outdoor climbing frames and slides specifically for these young children to develop their gross motor and social skills. The children listen very well to adults, are polite, compliant and well behaved. The teacher and learning support assistant work well together. All children have equal access to all learning activities and children who speak English as an additional language are generally well supported. Whilst there is adequate resource provision overall, children are given few opportunities to choose what they will use and develop their independence. Furthermore, there is a lack of purposeful adult intervention to take children's learning forward, particularly in their creative development. Tasks done out of school, such as reading activities, are shared with

parents and are used effectively to revise and extend what the children have learned in class. Few parents help in the reception class.

74. Children enter school in the autumn term in the year in which they become five, initially part time. No attainment on entry data had been completed at the beginning of the inspection. Inspection findings indicate that the majority of children enter school with a range of skills which are generally above those expected for their age. Most children make broadly satisfactory progress during the Foundation Stage. Many therefore exceed the level expected by the beginning of Year 1. However, the most able make unsatisfactory gains in learning because of the lack of opportunities to work independently and progress at their own level. Assessments are used to track the progress of individual children, but the criteria to determine the next stage of children's learning is not fully in place. Particular weaknesses affect the rate of children's learning. Firstly, because attainment on entry data and the 'stepping stones' criteria to mark children's gains in learning are not used purposefully, activities are not sufficiently closely matched to children's needs. Secondly, tasks and teaching style and methods do not develop children's independence and creativity. Both limit progress, particularly hindering that of the most able.

75. There has been a satisfactory improvement in the provision for children in the Foundation Stage since the previous inspection. There is an extended classroom area that is beneficial, although its potential has yet to be fully realised. A recently appointed and enthusiastic governor is well suited to specifically support the development of the Foundation Stage.

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

76. Children make satisfactory progress overall in their personal, social and emotional development and exceed the 'early learning goals' by the end of their reception year.

77. Activities are organised so that children have access to all opportunities whether working individually, in groups, or with the whole class; however, there are less opportunities to make choices and take decisions, because of the teaching, which at times is over-directed. This inhibits the children from building up their confidence about what they can achieve and, as a result, some children lack positive attitudes towards their learning. For example, in a movement lesson, children moved creatively and with pleasure in a 'wiggerly path', as opposed to the previous directed 'four steps forward, four back' dance sequence. Children learn the importance of sharing toys. There are well-established, ordered routines which offer children security, such as registration, completion of the weather chart and returning toys after play. Most children have formed good relationships. The majority look after themselves responsibly, reflect upon their actions and behave very well, even when their interest wanes during long sessions of teaching. Both adults develop good relationships with the children and as a result the atmosphere in the reception class is positive and all children respond well by being polite, kind and helpful to others.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

78. Children make satisfactory progress overall in communication, language and literacy and exceed the 'early learning goals' by the end of their reception year.

79. Most children get off to a good start in acquiring communication, language and literacy skills. As a result, they achieve well over time and most make good gains in their learning. This is a small improvement since the last inspection. Average and less able children do well, largely because tasks are more closely matched to their abilities and they are given good adult support. However, the most able make insufficient progress, largely because tasks are less well matched to their abilities and they are less well challenged. This inhibits their gains in learning in reading and writing. For example, in one lesson, all the children completed a writing activity on the pictorial sequencing of the story 'The Little Red Hen'. Some higher attaining children completed the task correctly, but lacked the opportunity to 'write' independently, relying on the teacher.

80. Speaking and listening skills are taught satisfactorily through songs, jingles, games and stories, questioning and answering sessions and the use of the relevant vocabulary throughout all activities. However, there is over emphasis on listening skills in most lessons when children are required to sit and listen to adults talking for an inappropriate amount of time, such as in literacy, science, drama and religious education. Children listen closely to stories. They discuss letters and their sounds from A to K. In these lessons, children interact satisfactorily with each other, but many show disinterest and exhibit restlessness because of the pace at which the lesson is conducted, the length and inappropriate level of teacher talk and the lack of opportunity to speak themselves.

81. Parents make a very effective contribution to their children's progress in reading. They are encouraged to read books with their children. Staff instill a love of books, the appropriate use of a book and the fact that print carries meaning. Children are given opportunities to appreciate the main characters and events in books. They read together, often modelling their reading on that of the teacher, but sometimes lacking appropriate, dramatic emphasis on the repetitive endings of lines. Children rarely select books from the classroom reading corner, largely because they are not given many opportunities to do so. Reading activities, such as 'shared reading' and recognition of letter sounds, are used well to promote children's understanding. Most children talk in general terms about the stories, with the most able recognising single words and letters.

82. Children are introduced to writing and handwriting skills methodically. However, there are limited opportunities to 'have a go' independently, using a range of materials. They learn well when making lists, notes, and other forms of recording, but staff do not encourage them as a matter of course. Consequently, the confidence to write independently is limited. Children do not attempt to 'write' without adult prompting and even then are hesitant at putting pencil to paper, in case they are 'wrong'. Resources are adequate overall. The learning support assistant is effective. Children with special educational needs are not formally identified, but receive adequate support.

## **Mathematical development**

83. Children make satisfactory progress overall in their mathematical development and exceed the 'early learning goals' by the end of their reception year.

84. Over time, children develop good mathematical skills through the effective use of practical activities, number rhymes, games and songs. They sing a range of songs and nursery rhymes which reinforce their understanding of number. Most children count confidently, forwards and backwards to ten, and they are beginning to recognise these numbers. The most able recognise numbers to ten, most to seven, as do less able children because of good adult support. The children co-operate well, treat the resources with respect and are confident when talking to adults. Most use circles, squares, rectangles and triangles and sort and match objects into large, medium and small sizes, and use mathematical vocabulary of number, time, shape, pattern and measures appropriately.

85. However, in the one lesson seen, children's gains in learning were unsatisfactory. Although the lesson was well resourced and pupils were very well managed, the pace was too quick and the language used was at too high a level for the children. In this lesson, many children were unable to place seven snakes in numerical order because of the quick pace of the teaching and the use of language difficult to understand such as 'in relation to'. This confused many children. The difficult concept was not made easy for children, for example by the use of pictorial representation to further develop the finger counting activity. There was a general lack of understanding by children of the concept of 'shorter' and 'longer' and confusion when the terms 'long', 'longer' and 'longest' were introduced. The learning support assistant is well deployed and supports the children satisfactorily. More adult intervention to support sand and water play would enhance children's mathematical experiences.

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

86. Children make satisfactory progress overall in their knowledge and understanding of the world and exceed the 'early learning goals' by the end of their reception year.

87. The teacher provides satisfactory opportunities for all children to learn within the classroom, during outdoor activities and on visits out of school. As a result, all children make satisfactory gains in exploring, investigating, designing and making and in information and communication and technology skills. There are good opportunities for children to learn more about themselves, other people and the environment through topics such as 'The Senses', when they investigate the tastes of different fruits, such as pineapple, apple and oranges. They identify features in the natural world such as leaves and seeds. They gain a sense of the passing of time through the regular use of significant times of the day, days of the week and daily routines. Children learn about significant events in the calendar year and the church year, such as 'Harvest' and 'Christmas'. All children have access to, and are



eager to use, the computer and with support are beginning to learn how to control the mouse and the cursor. There are opportunities for children to understand their own culture and beliefs and those of other people through the study of other countries and religious celebrations. These opportunities enhance their knowledge, and understanding of the world and different cultures, although they found this difficult to understand because of the depth at which it was taught.

88. In the one lesson seen, teaching was unsatisfactory. The lesson was very teacher-directed with a high proportion of it focused on the teacher talking, with limited opportunity for the children to express their thoughts at length. At times, the children found it difficult to adjust to the activity of tasting the variety of food independently, because their previous learning had not equipped or prepared them to do so.

### **Physical development**

89. Children make satisfactory progress overall in their physical development and exceed the 'early learning goals' by the end of their reception year.

90. All children, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in developing physical skills as a result of satisfactory teaching and the opportunity to experience a range of appropriate resources. All children are acquiring satisfactory skills in movement, have a developing sense of space and bodily awareness and use tools and equipment with increasing dexterity. The provision available for physical development is used satisfactorily, but specific outdoor provision for climbing, sliding and balancing and large equipment for imaginative, energetic, outdoor play is limited. The school has responded to the criticisms of the last inspection, but is aware more needs to be done. Children make good use of a variety of tools for drawing, colouring and cutting and show increasing dexterity as they work with pencils, crayons, and paintbrushes. They roll, squeeze, push and kneed malleable materials and their manipulative skills are developing appropriately.

91. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory and impacts positively on standards in physical development. Children learn to develop control and coordination, to express their feelings and emotions and work co-operatively in groups. For instance, children learn to link movement together, in lessons when they carry out formal dance routines, such as 'the Barn Dance' and where they move in a 'wigglerly path'. However, the radio lesson used was designed for older children and most children found it difficult to remember the dance sequence. This led to loss of concentration and uncertainty as to what was expected. Standards in writing, colouring, cutting out, painting and sticking are improved by the attention given to children's physical development. Most are able to use pencils and scissors well for their age; however, children choose left-handed scissors indiscriminately, and are given no direction or instruction to do otherwise. This impairs some children's cutting skills. Due regard is given to safety when children handle tools. Overall, satisfactory intervention by adults helps to support and extend children's ideas and understanding in this area.

## **Creative development**

92. Children make satisfactory progress overall in their creative development and exceed the 'early learning goals' by the end of their reception year.

93. There are good opportunities for children to express their feelings through exploring media and materials, music, dance, story making and imaginative play. They have opportunities to experience colour, texture, shape, form and space in two-dimensional art and regular opportunities to explore colour through painting, printing, collage and crayoning. Children make models using large and small construction equipment to create imaginative structures in connection with their other work. They use crayons, effectively, to decorate their writing. Children recognise familiar songs, nursery rhymes and jingles, and sing them in unison. Planning shows that children use a range of constructional equipment to design and build models and have opportunities to cut, stick and join. There are opportunities for imaginative play, but lack of adult intervention to extend the children's learning and lack of quantity and quality of resources inhibits the triggering of children's imagination, language extension and decision-making skills. Children use a painting program on the computer to create satisfactory imaginative artwork. Their experience of the computer is at an early stage, but is being used with enjoyment and increasing confidence.

94. In the three lessons seen, teaching was unsatisfactory overall. In the most effective lesson, the teacher gave satisfactory support to all children, interpreting the taped instructions and stressed the importance of cooling down after exercise. The children were generally well behaved and moved with pleasure, spontaneously, but found it difficult responding to detailed, sequenced instructions. There were few opportunities for the children to work imaginatively or independently and select their own resources when appropriate to do so. In one lesson, all the children were given the opportunity to leaf print, but all were required to precisely follow the adult-model to produce identical work.

## **ENGLISH**

What is done particularly well

- Standards are good and improving.
- The most able pupils are doing well in Years 3 to 6, an improvement since the last inspection.
- Teachers develop pupils' skills, for example in speaking, well.
- Parents and teachers work closely together, so that pupils learn basic skills such as reading well.

What could be improved

- Standards in the younger year groups have improved, but more needs to be done.
- Although improved recently, the role of the co-ordinators could be widened, so that they have a clearer grasp of what is successful and what can be improved.

95. By the age of eleven, standards in English are improving. This is largely due to better teaching, improved curriculum and better use of assessment to check pupils' progress. In the national tests in 2001, results were well above the national average and above average when compared with those achieved by pupils in similar schools. This was similar to 2000 and a significant improvement from the 1999 results.

96. By the age of seven, standards are also improving, but at a slower rate than in the older year groups. The improvement is largely due to an improved curriculum and better use of assessment. The quality of teaching has improved, but is not as good as in the older classes. In the national tests in 2001, standards in reading and writing were well above the national average, and above when compared with similar schools. There was little difference between the performance of boys and girls. Writing standards have been adversely affected by a lack of challenge, particularly for the most able pupils. This has restricted the proportion reaching levels above those expected for their age.

97. Inspection findings indicate that by the age of seven, standards are a little better than those expected nationally, and pupils are making satisfactory progress. Progress, since the last inspection, has fluctuated, largely because of staffing and teaching problems. By the age of eleven, standards are above those expected and pupils are making good progress, with a significant minority of pupils likely to reach higher levels in the 2002 national tests.

98. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They have detailed, realistic individual education plans and do well in achieving their targets. This is due in part to the provision of appropriately planned work by teachers, combined with the good support given during lessons by learning support assistants. All pupils have full access to the curriculum.

99. By the end of Year 2, pupils have made satisfactory progress in their listening and speaking skills and achieve standards that are typical for their age. Many pupils are confident speakers and readily engage in discussions during lessons. In a satisfactory

Year 1 lesson, pupils engaged happily in discussions during an imaginary journey in 'Bears' Wood', and worked co-operatively. In a satisfactory Year 2 lesson, pupils spoke coherently as they responded enthusiastically to questions about shared stories. Pupils listen carefully to the views and opinions of others, although sometimes speaking and listening skills are curtailed by restlessness and lack of interest when the teacher's 'talk' is too lengthy. They cooperate sensibly when working in small groups on shared reading or writing activities.

100. By the end of Year 6, pupils' speaking and listening skills are well developed and they achieve standards above those expected for their age. All pupils make good progress. Many pupils speak fluently, lucidly and with confidence. The least able communicate their ideas satisfactorily. The teacher encourages a high level of discussion and in response the pupils include relevant details and express their ideas clearly. For example, Years 4, 5 and 6 pupils listen attentively to stories, plays and biographies such as 'Osiris', 'Abducted by Aliens' and 'Jacques Cousteau' and are given the opportunity to read to the class and discuss the feelings evoked. The majority of pupils are confident when entering into discussion and debate and presenting their points of view. They listen with increasing attention, sustain longer conversations and make mature contributions to class discussions. Pupils perform publicly in school productions and assemblies and these experiences offer valuable opportunities for them to use spoken language in more formal settings.

101. Teachers are successful in using many opportunities to develop and extend vocabulary, not just in English but in other subjects as well, where the correct use of appropriate religious, historical and scientific terms is a feature of many lessons. For example, Year 4 pupils, use Egyptian terms such as 'embalming' and 'pharaoh' knowledgeably, as a result of the very good teaching they receive. In Year 6, written texts are used effectively to discuss the life and work of a wide range of people.

102. By the end of Year 2, the most able pupils have developed a good range of strategies for working out unfamiliar words. Most of them combine the sounds of individual letters and groups of letters successfully. Most pupils read simple texts accurately to themselves and with satisfactory understanding. Others, the average in the class, read hesitantly and find working out unfamiliar words such as 'climbed' more difficult. Less able pupils read very hesitantly and sometimes inaccurately, but appreciate the humour in books. Good home-school links and the wide range of reading activities continue to be effective and to make a positive contribution to standards. There is an adequate selection of books to introduce children to reading and to rouse their interest. The school is aware of the need to extend the number of library books and the range of non-fiction books to give pupils a wider range.

103. By the end of Year 6, standards in reading are a little above the national average and good progress is made. The most able read fluently, expressively and with confidence. They understand the significant ideas in passages from books. The average pupils read fluently and accurately and can use a good range of strategies to self-correct but these skills are used less well by the less able. Many of these pupils have developed the ability to read in complete phrases rather than reading word by word. This demonstrates their ability to 'read ahead' and understand what they are reading. All pupils enjoy and talk with enthusiasm about books they read. The Year 3 to 6 library is well ordered and the books are appropriately classified. However, there is little space for pupils to carry out individual study, although there are plans in place to improve this area. The number and range of non-fiction books available throughout the school is insufficient, particularly to meet the needs of the most able.

104. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in writing, spelling and punctuation is broadly similar to that expected nationally by this age. They make satisfactory

progress. The most able pupils now have work set according to their ability and this is beginning to raise standards. They are beginning to organise their writing satisfactorily and show a growing understanding of capital letters and full stops. They spell simple words correctly and make good attempts at longer ones. Good use of the national strategy ensures that pupils gain confidence and develop skills in a logical progression throughout Years 1 and 2. Pupils write regularly during formal and informal activities such as in literacy lessons and in role-play. They write simple plans before they start their story writing. A few write in coherent sentences. Year 2 pupils write using a satisfactory range of styles; re-telling familiar stories, writing instructions about vehicle construction, or recounting their holiday experiences. The conventions of English are developed satisfactorily throughout Years 1 and 2. The most able pupils are beginning to punctuate their writing with capital letters and full stops. Spelling is well developed by concentrating on specific letter groups or looking at particular word patterns. Handwriting is good overall. Most pupils are beginning to write in a clear, legible style and present their work well. A few cannot yet present their work neatly with regularly formed and equally sized letters.

105. By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve standards in writing that are above those expected nationally, because of the good and very good teaching in Years 3 to 6. The basis skills of writing are taught very well. There is a clear focus on the different types of writing, such as fiction, persuasive writing, play-script or formal letter writing and pupils examine in detail their characteristics and relevant styles. For example, in a Year 4 class, very good teaching encouraged pupils to learn how to recount a story. Pupils showed a high level of interest, as they wrote of the conflict between Osiris and his brother Seth. Much writing is linked, successfully, with other curriculum areas such as science, history and religious education.

106. Teaching is good overall. In the majority of lessons, particularly those in the older classes, it is good or very good. In the best lessons, pupils are left in no doubt as to what they are to do. Skilled choice of teaching methods and effective management ensures that all pupils work with interest and enthusiasm. Lessons are well planned, teachers' knowledge is good, and the effective use of good resources stimulates pupils' interest and enhances their learning. For example, Year 4 pupils listened engrossed to the teacher's dramatic interpretation of an Egyptian story and their interest was maintained by the good use of resources to illustrate specific points. This resulted in pupils producing work of very good quality and quantity. In contrast, in a satisfactory lesson, some pupils contributed enthusiastically to the lesson, but others showed little ongoing interest in what was being taught, because of the length of the introduction to the lesson and the slow pace. The pupils' use of whiteboards, used for brainstorming, planning and drafting purposes, helps pupils to write confidently, knowing that mistakes can be erased and rectified easily.

107. Strategies to teach spelling and punctuation are well established and are taught systematically. The teaching of handwriting has improved since the previous inspection. It now has a clear focus consistently used throughout the school. Classroom assistants are used effectively to support the learning of the less able. Pupils' work is marked regularly and comments extend pupils' learning.

108. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The two co-ordinators have worked effectively with teachers, governors, pupils and parents to raise standards. The literacy governor takes an active interest in the subject. This helps inform governors' decisions. Tests and assessments are analysed effectively and information used to improve standards and track the progress of individual pupils. Challenging but realistic targets are then set to raise standards. Parents are encouraged to support homework and reading activities. Computers are used well to support spelling and reading, and to word process finished items. Pupils draft work directly onto the screen, edit and redraft work before completion. There is some use of the Internet to develop research skills.

## **MATHEMATICS**

What is done particularly well

- Over time, standards are improving.
- More able pupils are given challenging tasks that enable them to make the progress they should.

- The quality of teaching is consistently good, an important factor in pupils' good progress.

What could be improved

- Subject co-ordination needs further development, particularly to gather information that will enable relative strengths and areas for improvement to be identified.
- There is insufficient handling of data in most classes, including the use of ICT.

109. Test results have improved over the recent past. In this year's national tests, the proportion of Year 2 pupils achieving the expected standard, and also the proportion achieving higher than expected standards, increased in comparison with 2000. In the Year 6 tests, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard was about average, whilst the proportion exceeding it was slightly above average. This significant increase in Year 2 and slight fall in Year 6 is largely because the abilities of the year groups were different. This is clearly shown in the year-to-year progress of pupils.

110. At the time of the previous inspection, standards in Year 2 and in Year 6 were judged to be above average. The higher ability, older pupils were underachieving. This has now been largely rectified and both the least and most able pupils are doing as well as can be expected. Pupils for whom English is an additional language also do well.

111. Inspection evidence indicates that standards, both in Year 2 and in Year 6, are above average. The overall, well-developed implementation of the national strategy, supported by some very good teaching, is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. All pupils, including the most and least able, make good progress.

112. The quality of teaching seen in mathematics was all satisfactory or better. A high proportion of good and very good lessons were seen, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Clear lesson objectives are consistently shared with the pupils at the beginning of lessons but, in a small number of lessons, they are not always revisited during the plenary session to identify the learning that has taken place. The start of lessons is well used to develop the pupils' mental agility, but in some lessons insufficient attention is paid to varying questions to extend pupils of all abilities. Where lessons are good or better, group tasks of differing levels of difficulty are set to challenge all levels of ability and class management skills are very well developed. Most teachers evaluate their lessons effectively as they progress, by identifying those pupils who are experiencing difficulty and giving immediate support. This is very good practice.

113. In a very good lesson in Year 3, pupils learned to identify shapes with more than one line of symmetry. The teacher's good subject knowledge, high quality questioning skills and clear explanations gave pupils a good understanding and a high level of information that was challenging but familiar, because it was developed from previous lessons. Pupils were excited by the tasks and responded very well to the high expectations set by their teacher. Similar, high quality teaching was seen in Year 2, when pupils sorted and classified three-dimensional shapes, using correct mathematical language, before making triangular prisms, cubes and cuboids with rolled newspaper or straws. The task was sufficiently challenging for the more able pupils, enabling them to achieve much. Very good teaching was seen in Year 6, where the teacher adjusted the teaching activities, following a close assessment of the previous day's work. Some pupils had not understood well, so extra tasks were planned to give further explanation and clarification, in a clear and supportive manner, before all pupils continued working on a menu of progressive tasks.



114. The quality of marking is good overall, with clear guidance written in a positive and encouraging style. In many classes, marking clearly shows pupils what they should do in order to improve.

115. By the age of seven, almost all pupils understand pattern in number to one hundred and place value of tens and units. Most understand the concept of inverse operations. All pupils understand division as a process of equal sharing and the process of multiplication as counting 'lots of'. Pupils make sensible estimates of length, weight and capacity, before using both non-standard and standard units to measure. Understanding of the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes is good and many pupils know and recognise these shapes by an examination of faces, edges and corners. Pupils use a good range of skills to solve problems. Most pupils understand reflective symmetry and interpret pictographs and block graphs well.

116. By the age of eleven, pupils use their knowledge and understanding of number including money, measures and shape, to solve problems in a good range of real life situations. These include function machines, magic shape, missing number problems and the interpretation of Venn Diagrams. High and average ability pupils can subtract thousands, hundreds, tens and units using decomposition. They can multiply three digit numbers by two digit numbers accurately. All have a good understanding of fractional parts of shapes and countable objects. Higher and average achieving pupils understand the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages. They develop their vocabulary and understanding of three-dimensional objects well and can measure accurately the area and perimeter of regular and irregular shapes. Nearly all pupils recognise and accurately name different angles. The more able pupils can measure radius and diameter and understand their relationship with circumference. All pupils have a good understanding of reflective and rotational symmetry. Pupils have more limited knowledge and understanding of handling data. Although pupils can answer questions by using information in graphs, very few can explain how they would choose the most suitable type of graph to use to represent any data they collected.

117. Tasks presented in an interesting way invariably lead to good, and more often very good, attitudes and behaviour. Most pupils enjoy mathematics. Year 6 pupils, for example, included the subject amongst their favourite curriculum areas. Most pupils are keen learners.

118. Subject co-ordination is good overall, although there is no opportunity for direct monitoring. This limits knowledge of what is done well and what could be improved. Assessment is used well to identify the overall attainment of pupils. Specific groups of pupils receive extra support and this helps them make good progress.

119. Resources for the subject are very good. ICT is generally insufficiently used to support mathematics, particularly in the area of data handling, although in some classes-such as Year 5-it is used well.

## SCIENCE

What is done particularly well

- Pupils of all ability levels in Years 3 to 6 are doing well, an improvement since the schools last inspection.
- Thinking skills are developed methodically in Years 3 to 6.

What could be improved

- Standards in Year 2 are lower than they should be for some pupils.
- Some teachers' use of planning and assessment could be improved.

120. Standards have improved over time and are now good. All pupils, including those who are very able, are reaching the levels expected of them. Year 6 test results in 2001 were good when compared to the national average, but average when compared with similar schools. Although this is a slight dip from the 2000 results, standards are rising steadily over time and have improved since the 1999 inspection.

121. The proportion of pupils reaching the level expected for seven-year-olds in the 2001 assessments by their teachers was above the national average. The proportion exceeding it was also above average.

122. Evidence from the inspection suggests that current standards in Year 6 are good. These pupils are all working at appropriate levels, with sufficiently demanding tasks to meet their different abilities. Particularly beneficial to pupils' learning in Years 3 to 6 is the emphasis on methodical development of pupils' thinking skills during practical activities, so that they are learning to think scientifically, using a wide range of thought processes.

123. Inspection evidence suggests that standards in Year 2 are in line with those expected and teaching is satisfactory. A small but significant proportion of these pupils struggle to maintain concentration and work well independently or in groups. Teachers tend to accept this so that it becomes the norm. Their expectations of how their pupils will apply themselves, persevere, and use their existing scientific knowledge in what they are currently doing, are all too low. Pupils are unaware of what a fair test is and how to predict what might happen in a practical activity. The methods used and expectations do not challenge or deepen pupils' understanding of the topic. Too little emphasis is given to accuracy in setting up an investigation. Expectations of behaviour and achievement are not made explicit enough to the pupils and, as a consequence, scientific enquiry is often reduced to playing with the equipment rather than investigating predictions.

124. Teaching and learning is good in the older classes. Pupils observe carefully. They understand how to plan a fair test and, by Year 6, they can organise the task to achieve the objective set. These pupils identify the key points for investigation and test and record their results in a variety of ways. In a good lesson, they were able to use their knowledge and understanding about physical processes to determine and describe the key features of the work undertaken. This was largely

because the teacher was very clear about what the pupils were expected to learn and had planned the activities well to support this. Older pupils are given many opportunities to be scientists, to recognise why a test is fair, to set up an experiment, to observe closely and think about how things work. Their teachers carefully support their learning, knowing when to give pupils thinking time and when to intervene and offer further guidance. Learning support assistants are used well, particularly to focus on specific groups or tasks. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress as a result.

125. Work is marked well, correcting misconceptions and clarifying points by posing questions to which the pupils respond. This is beneficial to the rate of pupils' learning, giving them a clear picture of what they are doing well and where they need to concentrate to improve.

126. The curriculum is good. The nationally recognised scheme of work is used well and good links made with other subjects. Planning is much improved, although the way in which it is used by individual teachers continues to vary. This is similar to the position when the school was inspected in 2000. Assessment is used inconsistently. For example, only some teachers use their evaluations of what pupils have learnt in one lesson to plan the next. Better use of assessment would also support the identification of gifted and high achieving pupils.

127. Effective co-ordination of the subject has supported the significant improvement since the last inspection. This has included a good emphasis on evaluating the pupils' performance and sharpening the teachers' planning. Little direct monitoring is done, and this limits understanding of what is done well and what needs to be improved. Even so, other methods are effective. For example, the need for greater support for staff, who are not confident about some aspects of investigation work has been identified in a staff skills audit.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

What is done particularly well

- Standards are high throughout the school.
- The curriculum is rich and varied, good use is made of outside expertise.
- Co-ordination is very good. Good use is made of the co-ordinator's skills and expertise.

What could be improved

- Minor areas, such as the use of sketch books, already known to the co-ordinator.

128. Standards in art and design are above national expectations throughout the school. The good standards reported in 1999 and 2000 have been maintained. A wide range of techniques is taught, and media offered. Pupils have very good opportunities to consider different kinds of art, craft and design.

129. Very good use is made of visits and visitors such as an 'artist in residence' to offer a wide range of stimulating activities to pupils. Imaginative tasks, where pupils work with natural materials, have led to three dimensional work of very good quality. Furthermore, the skills and methods of the 'artist in residence' have been mirrored and used constructively by school staff. During the inspection a learning support assistant was seen working with young pupils using natural materials they had collected and chosen, to create imaginative designs or real life structures, such as a skeleton. Their ideas involved much good discussion too.

130. The curriculum is very good. Based upon the nationally-recognised scheme of work, many interesting and stimulating tasks are provided. Much of the work, such as a very good art and design lesson in Year 1, begins with the consideration of the different styles of various artists. The curriculum is planned to make very good use of a wide range of resources. For example, this lesson was supported by a good number of portraits from different styles and historical periods. Books and the use of the portrait gallery website widened pupils' experiences. Parents often support with Internet activities, giving pupils the benefit of one-to-one guidance and support.

131. Pupils' standards are high. For example, a Year 1 pupil was able to talk about the composition of her family portrait. She had clearly considered how the placement of each person affected the whole portrait, and how she could portray each person's relative importance by their size and placement. Nearly all demonstrated a good sense of proportion and most made a good attempt to use the style of the print as a starting point. The concern raised in the 1999 Inspection, that

there was some duplication of the curriculum in different classes, has been addressed successfully by the school.

132. Although only one lesson was seen, there was much evidence around the school that suggests the teaching of art and design is good. As at the time of the 2000 Inspection, this is throughout the school and teaching of art and design in Years 1 and 2 is of a higher quality than much of the rest of the curriculum and leads to higher standards in this subject. In the one lesson seen, the lesson followed closely on from previous work and built on it constructively. It developed pupils' learning and understanding well. The teacher's very good knowledge and understanding helped pupils understand both the style of the artist and the techniques that could be used with pastels. Pupils responded very well to this enthusiastic teaching and persevered with the challenging task.

133. Co-ordination of art and design is very good. Good use is made of the co-ordinator's knowledge and understanding of the subject. There is a clear understanding of what the school does well and where improvements could still be made. For example, having looked at sketch books throughout the school, further training in their use is planned. Although resources are generally very good, it is recognised that there are a limited number from non-Western cultures. This, again, is an area recognised for improvement.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

What is done particularly well

- The curriculum is carefully planned to offer many stimulating and imaginative tasks.
- There are very good links between subjects, so pupils understand better.
- A carefully analysis following the 1999 inspection has been very beneficial.

What could be improved

- The balance across the different aspects of the subject.

134. Standards in design and technology are in line with those expected nationally. The position is unchanged since the school was inspected in 1999.

135. Good use is made of the nationally-recognised scheme of work to plan tasks appropriate for pupils' ages. There is, however, much greater emphasis on making than on giving pupils the knowledge and understanding of the materials they are using. Whilst in some classes such as Year 2, pupils are given good opportunities to develop their ideas and plan how they might work, this is not necessarily so throughout the school.

136. Pupils' knowledge and understanding is reinforced well through good cross-curricular links. For example, the task to design and build a wheeled toy in Year 2 is linked both to a science investigation about 'forces' and to literacy lessons. What pupils learn in one subject is used and applied in another.

137. Good use is made of support staff and volunteers. Both are used to enable children to have either individual or group guidance. For example, when making wheeled toys, pupils are able to work individually on the computer with a parent to design, type and print various items, such as a registration number. Other pupils, such as those in Year 3, are able to work in a small group with a member of the support staff to extend the general class task. In these ways, pupils are given support that is well matched to their abilities and enables them to make good progress.

138. Pupils' attitudes vary, and this has much to do with the pace of teaching. In Year 2, for example, an interesting task was introduced laboriously. Although this reinforced pupils' learning in a number of areas, many pupils had begun to drift off task and become restless because of the length of time taken. In other lessons, for example in Year 3, tasks are explained quickly and pupils soon get to work. Where teachers feel longer discussion is necessary, in the most effective lessons, they break this down and give children fresh instructions or guidance as the lesson progresses.

139. The tasks and activities the children are given are very imaginative and stimulating learning opportunities, although teachers use them with varying success. Pupils are clearly enthused by the activities. For example, in Year 3, pupils are creating a package for a cake they will make on a visit to a local bakery. However, their learning is limited, because they are given very prescriptive packages to make. They are given little opportunity to explore or disassemble packages for themselves, or to design their own. None had the opportunity to do more than design the lettering for the box. Even so, these pupils had a good knowledge of many techniques and skills, such as 'scoring' to make folds sharper. In Year 2, pupils are similarly enthused when designing a wheeled vehicle to take their teddy bears to a picnic. They use tools and materials effectively to build a wide range of interesting designs. As their work advances, they know what they have done well and most can suggest areas needing improvement, such as the axles and how wheels are attached to them. A few pupils can make suggestions for improvement.

140. Co-ordination is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable. A very clear and thorough evaluation of the subject was undertaken following the 1999 inspection, and this has been very beneficial. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the subject and the relative strengths and weaknesses within the school. Good informal support is given to staff, particularly those less confident in the subject. A 'bank of ideas' has been created to give teachers guidance, for example, in the different techniques of joining materials. When planning the curriculum, very good use was made of opportunities for cross-curricular links to other subjects, so that pupils' new learning in one reinforces and extends their learning in others. Other current plans, such as more staff training, are appropriate. However, there is very little monitoring of the curriculum currently and this limits the co-ordinator's opportunities to recognise areas that need further development.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

What is done particularly well

- Visits are used well to give pupils firsthand experiences from which much is learnt.

What could be improved

- Some weaknesses reported by the 1999 inspection remain.

141. Standards in geography are in line with national expectations. The concern raised in the 1999 inspection report, that the allocation of time was relatively low and that there was little opportunity for extended writing, with the main thrust of the work directed towards interpretation of information, continues to be the case. There is very good use of visits and particularly good geography work in Year 6.

142. The curriculum is improving and is satisfactory overall, although there is less work in geography than in history. The nationally-recognised scheme of work has been implemented. This is proving to be beneficial. It is supplemented by a good range of visits such as in Year 1 and Year 4, when pupils undertake an overnight stay. The curriculum in Year 6 is particularly well supported by a residential visit

which looks at physical features such as rivers and mountains and, when the pupils return, compares and contrasts them with the local landscape. Through these practical and firsthand experiences, pupils learn much. In discussion, pupils were clearly enthused by the activities and easily recollected what had been learnt.



143. Tasks studied within the school are equally relevant. For example, in Year 4, pupils studied pollution. They are aware of the different forms and terms such as 'acid rain'. They have looked for, and classified, pollution found on a walk in the neighbourhood. Pupils have researched information and designed and presented their findings in a logical format. In their geography work, they have reinforced their literacy skills well, using various styles to make notes about their research or write letters to environmental groups.

144. Little geography teaching was seen during the inspection. In a good Year 6 geography lesson, their teacher's perceptive questions challenge them to think and extend their learning. Geography skills were taught and practised very well. Questions were posed, evidence collected and evaluated. Pupils could explain their views and communicate them, making good use of a wide range of sources of evidence. Learning in Year 6 occurs at a good rate, because of the good curriculum provision and very good use of visits. Pupils know how to use information sources to plan brochures to attract tourists, but also refer back to their firsthand experiences for ideas.

145. Co-ordination is in its infancy, but plans are very clear and appropriate. The subject has a clear action plan that carefully explains what will be done each term. This is very useful for all staff in enabling them to know what is happening. Although plans exist, there is currently no direct monitoring and this limits understanding of what is effective and what needs to be changed. Even so, some areas, such as the way assessment is used, have been recognised as needing change.

## **HISTORY**

What is done particularly well

- Visits are used well to give pupils firsthand experiences, from which much is learnt.
- Teaching is particularly good in the older classes.
- There is a good range of stimulating and interesting tasks.

What could be improved

- There are no significant areas needing improvement.

146. Standards of attainment in history are above expectations at the end of Year 6 and in line with expectations at the end of Year 2. The difference is largely due to good or very good teaching in the older classes.

147. There is a good variety of activities in the curriculum and good use is made of practical or first hand learning. In a very good Year 4 lesson, for example, pupils were given interesting questions to investigate and a wide range of resources, including the Internet, to enable them to research. The practical nature of their work led to much interest and stimulating discussion within the groups. Through good teaching and a wide range of opportunities, pupils developed their learning skills. For example, group members read through text highlighting what was important for their research. In a good Year 5 lesson, pupils used an equally wide range of

information sources to consider a range of questions and find out about the beginnings of democracy in Ancient Greece. In this lesson, careful preparation, clear expectations and good use of a learning support assistant enabled the teacher to focus entirely on teaching, despite the large number of pupils and wide range of abilities. There was a good rate of learning and much was achieved. Pupils showed good attitudes. They behaved well and worked enthusiastically. Groups relate well to one another and are keen to persevere and succeed, even at challenging tasks.

148. The curriculum is good. Work is based on the nationally-recognised scheme of work, and most units are linked carefully to a visit, for example, Erdigg Hall, where pupils dress up in Victorian costume and re-enact school days. Discussions with pupils shows that these visits are very popular, and pupils learn and remember much from them. They are an important reason why standards are high. Visits are supplemented and reinforced by very good use of visitors, such as grandparents, to talk about their own experiences.

149. Assessment is in its infancy. There are now whole school systems in place and a portfolio of pupils' work will give teachers a better understanding of the different levels and of pupils' capabilities. Some teachers make assessments during and at the end of units of work. This is beneficial, but not widespread throughout the school. For example, in Year 4, groups feedback about their research to the whole class at the end of the session or unit. This gives the teacher very good opportunities to assess how well pupils have understood the work. Through careful questioning, she is able to encourage pupils to generalise from what each group has learnt. Her own very good knowledge and understanding of the period enables her to correct the few errors made quickly and to show pupils where they have gone wrong confidently, clarifying their thinking.

150. The strengths outlined in the 1999 inspection have been maintained. Practical, firsthand study and visits continue to be used well to support learning throughout the school. Strengths in teaching, such as teachers' good knowledge and understanding and enthusiasm for the subject, continue to be evident.

151. Co-ordination is satisfactory. Although little was done initially following the 1999 inspection, much is now being done. The co-ordinator now has time to view work throughout the school. This is very beneficial, particularly in assessing strengths and weaknesses in the subject. A clear action plan includes plans to develop this further. Plans for a specific governor to link with the subject are good. Very good use is being made of the governor's own expertise.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

What is done particularly well

- Standards and provision have improved since the 1999 inspection and the good progress highlighted in the 2000 inspection maintained.
- A good range of relevant experiences help pupils to understand the advantages and applications of ICT.

- Parents and other volunteers support activities well, offering good one-to-one guidance.

What could be improved

- There are no significant areas for improvement, and current plans are the right ones.

152. Standards in ICT are in line with those expected, an improvement since the last inspection. Particularly effective is the use made of ICT in other subjects throughout the curriculum. Pupils are taught the advantages of ICT when compared with alternative methods. Consequently, they develop a clear understanding of when it is appropriate to use ICT.

153. The curriculum offers a good range of relevant experiences. For example, pupils in Year 6 worked on importing data and digital images when constructing a tourist information leaflet about the Lake District. In Year 3, pupils were redrafting and editing poetry on their discs. In Year 1, pupils were using the computer in a numeracy lesson to identify shapes and symmetry. Most pupils have well-developed basic skills and are now much more confident and competent users than at the time of the last inspection.

154. Teaching is relevant to pupils' needs. Teachers are beginning to plan for pupils to use and apply ICT skills more often and more effectively to support learning in other subjects. This gives pupils a clear message about the wider applications of technology. Pupils' awareness is successfully raised in several ways. Large classroom displays where ICT in some form is a main focus. There is a station ready and accessible to pupils to visit the school web site. Scanners and digital camera work record important events or work carried out by pupils. These images are stored in the individual folders that all pupils have to record their work in ICT. Use of the Internet to participate in a global mathematical problem solving challenge by Year 6 pupils has produced an award for their success in completing the tasks. The school uses CD-ROMs to record field trips, the work of an artist in residence with pupils, videos of concerts, pupils singing and recording work pupils have completed.

155. Co-ordination of the subject is good. Areas for improvement have been identified and there is a clear direction for the development of the subject. Issues raised in the last inspection have been targeted and curriculum planning has improved, particularly to show when the key skills will be developed. Staff training, including both personal competence and how to make best use of equipment with pupils is beneficial. Plans to further extend this, alongside the development of the curriculum, are good. Assessment is good and is used well to assess the key skills and use the information gathered about what pupils can do to plan the next stages of their learning.

## **MUSIC**

What is done particularly well

- Pupils are given many interesting activities in a well-thought out curriculum.
- Pupils enjoy music.

What could be improved

- Assessment is not well developed and, for example, pupils' talents are not methodically recognised.

156. Provision for music is satisfactory and standards are in line with national expectations. Since the last inspection, the school no longer has a music specialist but teachers offer a satisfactory curriculum and pupils enjoy their music-making activities, especially singing and playing simple instruments.

157. In the small number of music lessons seen, pupils enjoyed the music and listened attentively, answering questions well and suggesting ideas for high and low pitch, singing rounds and controlling sound with their voices. These older pupils followed the music to play simple instruments and were able to improvise while maintaining the beat to add emphasis to their music.

158. In the lessons seen, teachers' knowledge about the instruments being used was satisfactory. Tasks carefully linked work from previous weeks with new learning to build successfully on what pupils already knew. Teachers' sensitive evaluation of their music-making led pupils to a deeper understanding. Instruments were used well, particularly to develop composition into a more complex musical performance.

159. The curriculum is well planned. Lessons are carefully structured so that pupils increase their understanding through a variety of musical activities that combine performing, composing and appraising well. There are good opportunities for pupils to work alone and with others.

160. Co-ordination is satisfactory and is providing good leadership. There is a clear view of strengths and weaknesses in the subject and there is an appropriate plan for further development. Support and guidance for staff is effective and beneficial to pupils' learning. Little assessment is undertaken and, for example, talents of individual pupils are not methodically developed.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

What is done particularly well

- The range of activities is very good.
- Teaching in the older classes is good.
- Swimming is a strength.
- Much has been achieved since the last inspection.

What could be improved

- Co-ordination of the subject is improving but is currently minimal.

161. Overall, standards in physical education are similar to those expected nationally. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Swimming is a particular strength and the vast majority of pupils reach a good standard. This good picture compares favourably with the 1999 inspection report which judged progress to be above average by the end of Year 2, but below average by the end of Year 6. Swimming was poor.

162. Teaching seen was generally good or better. Skills and techniques were well taught, for example the importance of body posture when landing. Teachers of older pupils dressed appropriately to allow demonstration and to motivate pupils to dress correctly themselves. Pupils were given the opportunity to use a very good range of apparatus to practice and hone their skills. High expectations, particularly related to how hard pupils tried, were very well supported by relaxed, friendly but purposeful relationships. Pupils were used effectively to demonstrate good quality movements to the rest of the class. Where the pace of teaching slowed, in younger classes, this was generally because teachers did not manage pupils' behaviour well.

163. Pupils have sound knowledge and understanding of the effect of exercise on their bodies. They can explain the importance of warming-up and cooling-down. They enjoy gymnastic activities and make satisfactory progress in the development of sequences of balancing activities, as individuals, with one partner or in groups. However, there is little evidence of the teaching of specific, more advanced gymnastic movements, either on or away from apparatus. Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes during lessons. The standard of behaviour is good in older classes and satisfactory in Year 2, where teachers' expectations are lower. The oldest pupils have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit, where they experience a very good range of activities such as rock-climbing, abseiling and canoeing. This is very good provision. Swimming standards are good. Once pupils can swim confidently, they undergo training in water confidence and survival techniques. This is very good provision which is built upon effectively.

164. Subject co-ordination is minimal but improving. The policy gives teachers good support and guidance. Planning is good. Resources to deliver the curriculum are satisfactory. Provision is enriched through the use of other expertise, including soccer coaches. Physical education supports pupils' social development well.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

What is done particularly well

- Much is done to develop pupils' understanding of themselves and others.

What could be improved

- Co-ordination of the subject is improving but is currently minimal.

165. Pupils' knowledge and understanding is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. All pupils, including those with special educational needs,

make satisfactory progress. This is identical to when the school was inspected in 1999. The curriculum closely follows the guidelines of the locally agreed syllabus.

166. Personal, social and health education, including citizenship, is well supported by religious education. Pupils know a good number of facts about major world religions. They are aware of the importance of holy books to the members of these different faiths. Pupils can remember many facts relating to Jesus' time on Earth and they have good knowledge of the events leading to his crucifixion. They have a sound understanding of the meaning of faith.

167. In a good Year 1 lesson, the teacher led a thoughtful discussion about belonging to a family or particular group of people. The concept of welcoming a baby into God's family was dealt with in a sensitive but practical manner. What happens during the sacrament of baptism is carefully explained. The teacher uses pupils to re-enact the ceremony. Pupils were eager to give their own experiences. This added to the realism of the lesson and all pupils responded with great respect. In a very good lesson in Year 5, a good quality discussion of the qualities needed in a religious leader took place. Pupils were then encouraged to consider and write about, the qualities of the person who had had most influence on their own lives. This they did with great interest and perseverance, largely because the lesson was introduced in an interesting way and the task was stimulating. High expectations and very good relationships set a very positive tone for the lesson.

168. Subject co-ordination is minimal but improving. Little direct monitoring has taken place and there is consequently no clear understanding of the subject's strengths and weaknesses. Resources are sufficient. The spiritual development of all pupils is very well supported by religious education.