

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOHN'S C of E INFANT SCHOOL

Leigh

LEA area: Wigan

Unique reference number: 106517

Headteacher: Mrs L M Worthington

Reporting inspector: Mr L Garner
25507

Dates of inspection: 16th – 19th October 2000

Inspection number: 224080

Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Kirkhall Lane Leigh Lancs
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs E Watson
Date of previous inspection:	February 1997

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr L Garner 25507	Registered inspector	Maths Science Art and design Design and technology Music Equal opportunities English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? The school's results and achievements Teaching Leadership and management Efficiency Staffing, accommodation and resources
Mr J Acaster 9970	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Pupils' welfare, health and safety and child protection Links with the community Support and guidance
Mrs P Kime 25350	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Geography History Physical education Foundation stage Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress and development

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St John's is a Voluntary Aided Church of England Infant School situated in Leigh. There are 105 pupils on role in school, 58 boys and 47 girls. Pupils live in an area with a mix of homes, some owner-occupied and some rented. They are placed in three classes but usually taught in four groups, with children from the reception class and Year 1 often taught together. The school population is almost entirely of white ethnic origin. Twenty-one per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals which is broadly in line with the national average. Twenty-three per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and, again, this is broadly in line with the national average. The attainment of the children on entry to school is below that seen in most schools. The percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals and identified as having special educational needs have increased during the last two years. The school population has increased during the past three years. The school is becoming more popular with parents. An extra classroom is being built and should be completed by the end of the year.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school. Very good leadership by the headteacher, and good teaching, means that pupils make very good progress and achieve high standards. There is a caring atmosphere in which all members of the school community are valued. There are very good relationships between adults and pupils which contribute to the 'family' atmosphere. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are well above national average in reading and mathematics, and above in writing. Pupils do much better than those in similar schools.
- Teaching is good. There is a high proportion of very good teaching for reception children and the pupils in Year 2.
- The headteacher and her deputy provide very good leadership. Their skills complement each other very well and they make a strong team.
- The school cares for its pupils very well and provides very good opportunities for their social, moral and spiritual development.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and generally behave well in lessons and during playtimes.
- The school has built a strong partnership with parents.

What could be improved

- The balance of work in information and communication technology to ensure that all aspects of the subject are covered to an appropriate depth.
- The whole-school plans of work for many subjects need to be updated and subject leaders need more opportunities to monitor these plans and the standards pupils achieve.
- The provision for multicultural education to prepare pupils for life in a multicultural society.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has dealt very well with the issues identified in its last report and has also made good progress across a wide range of school activities.

Standards in English have risen from average to above average. Standards in mathematics have risen from average to well above average. These higher standards have been maintained for the past four years. The quality of teaching overall has improved from satisfactory to good. The leadership of the school has improved and is now very good. The provision for children in the reception year is now very good. Standards in art and design and technology have been improved and are now in line with national expectations. Parents have become much more involved in their children's work. The school has improved its reputation in the community and numbers on roll have risen substantially. Plans for all the subjects of the curriculum have been written. Assessment procedures have been extended to all subjects. The role of the school governors has been developed, so they now have a good oversight of the work of the school and take a more active role in leadership.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by seven-year-olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Reading	B	A	A	A*
Writing	A	B	B	A
Mathematics	A	B	A	A*

Key	
very high – in top 5 per cent in country	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The table shows that in 1999, pupils achieved standards in reading and mathematics which were well above those seen in schools nationally. Standards in writing were above the national average. When compared with similar schools, standards in reading and mathematics were in the top five per cent in the country. Standards in writing were well above the average for similar schools. The National Curriculum test results for year 2000 show that these standards have been maintained, and in reading have been improved. The school has done well to sustain such high standards over several years.

Assessment by their teachers in 1999 showed pupils' attainment in science, by the age of seven, to be in line with the national expectation at the end of the key stage. Inspection evidence, in particular examination of pupils' work, shows that pupils are working at this level. Inspection judgements show that standards in the other subjects in the curriculum are as expected for pupils' ages. Some areas of subjects such as mapping skills in geography exceed expectations.

Pupils enter school with levels of attainment below that seen for most children of their age. They make very good progress because of the good and very good teaching they are given. Consequently, by the end of the reception year, most pupils have at least achieved the national expectation for children their age in all areas of their learning. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Year 1 and then, because of the quality of teaching, make good progress in Year 2.

Attainment in information and communication technology generally meets national expectations but the progress pupils make is not as good as in some other subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to do well. In most lessons they try very hard to do their best work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in classrooms is good overall and, when pupils are taught well, often very good. Pupils also behave well in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good. It is encouraged very well from their first weeks in school. They are given many opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning. Relationships between pupils and all school staff are very good. There is a mutual respect and trust.
Attendance	Good. Better than the national average.

The very good relationships between all staff and pupils encourage pupils' very good personal development and their very good attitudes to their work. These strengths contribute greatly to the very good progress pupils make and their high attainment.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall, the quality of teaching in school is good. Teaching was at least satisfactory in almost all of the lessons seen during inspection. It was good or better in 75 per cent of lessons and very good or better in 34 per cent of the lessons seen. Nearly all the teaching of the children in the reception year was good or better, and in nearly half of the lessons was very good. This very good teaching is the main reason why the children make such a good start at this school. High quality teaching is also a feature of the class for the oldest pupils and this contributes to high standards which pupils achieve by the time they leave school. Teachers have high expectations of the standards of work their pupils should achieve. Pupils are willing to contribute to lessons knowing their contributions will be valued. In the parts of lessons which are less effective, teachers have not matched the work which pupils are asked to do to their ability levels. The teaching of English and mathematics is particularly effective. The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies well. Teaching and learning are most effective in subjects where the subject plans give clear guidance to teachers. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, and teachers plan work well so that higher attaining pupils are usually given tasks which challenge them.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. Pupils are offered a broad and balanced range of opportunities for learning. The reception curriculum is very good and the national strategies for literacy and numeracy are used well all through the school. In Key Stage 1, the provision in other subjects is too dependent on informal discussion between teachers and some written plans are out of date.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are identified at an early stage. They are well taught and their individual learning plans meet their needs. A small number of pupils have difficulties with their behaviour. Their difficulties are addressed well most of the time but practice throughout the school is not consistent.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. The school promotes very good moral, social and spiritual development. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall, but there are few opportunities given for them to prepare for life in a multicultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good overall. Teachers know their pupils very well and are committed to their well being. There is very effective support for pupils in all aspects of school life. Teachers assess the standards of pupils' work accurately. This has a positive effect on pupils' progress because work is generally well matched to their needs.

The school has established a very good partnership with pupils' parents and carers. The information provided and the arrangements for communication between home and school are very good. The school enables parents to make a good contribution to pupils' learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and is supported well by her deputy. She has led the school successfully through several staff changes. At the same time she has secured improvements in standards and enhanced the reputation of the school in the community. Recently appointed subject managers have not yet been able to check planning or standards in many subjects. The effective management of literacy and numeracy has successfully helped to improve standards in English and mathematics.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors know the school well and the areas of strength and those for development. Key governors play an active part in school life. The governing body has greatly improved the way it works in recent years.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Teaching and learning are evaluated well. The school management plan is detailed and well thought out. Priorities are informally agreed but not detailed in documents. Results of

	national tests are analysed well.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Specific grants are used effectively for their designated purposes. Educational priorities are supported well through careful financial planning.

Staffing levels and resources are satisfactory. The accommodation is presently being extended with an additional classroom being built. This has meant that temporary arrangements for teaching classes in the hall and library are in place.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They think that standards are high. • They think the school is well led. • They think teaching quality is good. • They find the school approachable and their views valued. • Their children are expected to work hard. • Their children like school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some would like more homework. • The range of activities outside lessons.

The response rate to the inspection questionnaire was high with very little dissatisfaction with what the school is doing. The inspection team agrees with all the positive views and considers the school's arrangements for homework and out-of-class activities are similar to that seen in most infant schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The standards achieved in the 1999 tests by pupils in Year 2 were well above those seen nationally in reading and mathematics, they were above the national average in writing. When results are compared with schools with a similar number of pupils entitled to free school meals, results are even better. They are in the top five per cent in reading and mathematics and well above average in writing. Pupils' standards in science are assessed by their teachers. They assessed their pupils to be in line with national expectations and to meet national averages. Data is not available to make a comparison with similar schools in science.
2. The results of year 2000 tests are now available, but not the comparisons with other schools. These show that standards have at least been maintained in writing and mathematics, and in reading significantly improved from the previous high standard.
3. In 1996 standards were below the national average in mathematics and writing and slightly above average in reading. In 1997 results improved dramatically and were above and well above national averages in all three areas. In the last three years the school has maintained these high standards, and this is a significant achievement. The national standards have improved and St John's has matched these improvements. Standards have risen much more quickly than in most schools.
4. Standards seen on inspection are in line with those identified by the national tests.
5. Pupils' speaking skills are satisfactory, and listening and writing skills are above average. Reading has been given a priority by the school and results are well above average. Standards in mathematics are well above average. The high standards in English and mathematics are a result of the good teaching of pupils, in particular in Year 2, and the way the school has adopted the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Standards in science meet the national average but are not as high as in English and mathematics. Curricular plans are not as detailed or consistent between year groups and therefore progress is satisfactory rather than good.
6. Standards in information and communication technology generally meet national expectations although, because of weaknesses in planning, pupils make less progress in some aspects of the subject than they could do.
7. In the other National Curriculum subjects, standards of work generally meet those expected for pupils of their age.
8. For the majority of children, attainment on entry to the reception class is below average. They now achieve very well in this class because of improved provision and teaching. The majority of children reach the national expectation for their age in all areas of learning.
9. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning. Teachers quickly identify children who make a slower start than most. Individual education plans help pupils to overcome their difficulties. These pupils benefit from good teaching and make good progress. A few pupils have behavioural difficulties. Progress in

addressing their problems is affected because not all teachers use the same approach to improve their behaviour.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils like their school very much. They generally behave well and have very good relationships with each other and their teachers. Their personal development is very good, with many opportunities for the development of independence. Attendance is better than the national average. Standards are mostly higher than at the time of the previous inspection.
11. Pupils find their work interesting. They enjoy the friendly atmosphere of their school and are enthusiastic to attend. They readily conform to the standards expected.
12. Behaviour around the school is very good. Pupils are very orderly and generally good-natured. They frequently show great politeness. Play-times are lively but pupils behave in a sensible way. Lunchtimes in the hall buzz with friendly conversation. Pupils are attentive in assemblies and respectful in church. Behaviour in lessons is often very good with high levels of attention and keenness. A small minority of pupils has difficulty in the self-discipline needed to follow instructions consistently, and occasionally the progress of lessons is slowed by the attention necessary to keep all pupils on track. Pupils always respond obediently to direct instruction. Behaviour in classrooms is good overall, often closely matching the quality of the teaching.
13. Relationships throughout the school are very good, with a strong sense of shared values. Pupils willingly co-operate with their teachers and with each other. They are helpful to visitors. They treat school and personal property with respect. Their personal development is much enhanced by the good opportunities provided for independent learning in lessons from the reception classes onwards. Pupils are given many opportunities to choose the material they use in lessons and whom they will work with. Pupils in Year 2 sensibly undertake responsibilities such as the control of doors when many pupils are moving through the school. Pupils are often purposeful, and respond with thoughtfulness and sincerity.
14. Attendance is better than the national average. A small amount of unauthorised absence principally results from parental neglect on the part of a few to conform to the school's guidelines concerning notification. There is now very little lateness. Lessons begin punctually.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. Pupils are taught well. Almost all of the teaching in the 29 lessons seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory, with 75 per cent being good or better. Teaching was good in 41 per cent of the lessons and very good in a further 31 per cent. In three per cent of lessons teaching was excellent, and in only three per cent was it unsatisfactory. This is a significant improvement on the position at the last inspection when ten per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory and only one third judged to be good or better. The high proportion of good and very good teaching is a strength of the school. It enables pupils to make very good progress in their learning and achieve high standards in English and mathematics.
16. For children in the Foundation Stage (the reception class), teaching is very good overall. Teachers have a very good understanding of the needs of young children. The

areas for learning in the reception classroom are very well planned and this helps children to develop their skills. Children make very good progress.

17. The teaching in Key Stage 1 is good overall. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Year 1 because of the sound teaching they receive. The very good, and sometimes excellent, teaching provided for pupils in the Year 2 class means that pupils make very good progress in their final year in school. This high quality teaching is the main reason for pupils' high attainment when they complete their time at the school.
18. When the teaching is good or very good, teachers have good strategies for keeping pupils' attention on the work in hand. They maintain good order in the classroom. They have high expectations of what pupils might achieve and make it clear to pupils what they are to learn in each lesson. They pitch work at a challenging but achievable level, and use good questioning to make pupils extend their knowledge. The very good relationships which have been built up between teachers and pupils also affects the quality of teaching. Pupils enjoy their lessons and concentrate hard in them. In the final parts of lessons teachers often use the work that pupils have done to consolidate their learning. For example, in an art lesson in Year 2, the teacher points out what pupils have done well when drawing plants.
19. In effective lessons teachers use resources well. This was seen in Year 2 when a variety of fruits were supplied for pupils to investigate seeds, and in Year 1 when interesting picture maps were used to show pupils how symbols could also be used.
20. Teachers usually match work well to pupils' learning needs. Simpler tasks are provided for pupils who find learning difficult, and harder work for the higher attainers. This means that pupils at all levels make at least good progress throughout the school.
21. When teaching is satisfactory, and when on the rare occasion it falls below a satisfactory level, its quality is affected by one or both of the following factors. Firstly, the tasks which pupils are asked to undertake do not match their attainment level; and secondly, on rare occasions pupils' behaviour is not managed well. When this happens, some pupils do not make the progress they make in most lessons.
22. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. They all benefit from good teaching in class lessons. Those with significant learning difficulties have additional teaching in small groups. This is of a good quality overall and some is very good. Teachers are helped to support these pupils by good advice from local education authority staff but none of the school's own teachers have had training in how to teach pupils with special educational needs.
23. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is generally good throughout the school. Teachers have benefited from school based and local authority courses. They have a good understanding of the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies. This helps pupils to make very good progress in English and mathematics and achieve high standards.
24. There is good provision for the homework pupils are given. The 'Reading Partnership' effectively encourages parents to help their children. In Year 2 pupils are given extra work to do according to their needs, and in Spring and Summer terms are asked to do some mathematics and English comprehension work.

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

25. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school are very good for children in the reception year and good for pupils in Key Stage 1. Despite complex arrangements for organising pupils into teaching groups, all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and equal opportunities to learn. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and fulfils the requirement to teach all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The teachers work closely together to ensure that in all subjects pupils undertake worthwhile interesting work, that builds on what they have previously learned. However, the whole-school planning documents to underpin this are out of date in several subjects.
26. Aspects of curricular planning were a key issue for action at the last inspection. The school needed to complete schemes of work (whole-school plans of work) in all subjects. It was also required to match the planning for children under five to the nationally recommended programme for this age group. The school has made satisfactory progress on these matters and produced adequate schemes of work. There is only a small number of teachers and they have worked hard to do all that was required. However, there have been significant national developments since, and the school's plans do not take full account of some of them. Consequently, the good provision is not securely underpinned; it is over-dependent on informal arrangements.
27. The curriculum for children in the reception year has been significantly improved since the last inspection. It is now very good and it is very well organised. The responsible teacher has produced clear, coherent plans for all areas of children's learning and they are implemented very well. These plans take full account of the new nationally recommended programme for children in the Foundation Stage of their education (from three years of age to the end of the reception year), only introduced in September 2000.
28. The school is implementing the national strategies for literacy and numeracy very effectively. As a result, pupils make very good progress, and by the time they leave the school their attainment is above average in English, and well above average in mathematics. Pupils have good opportunities to use literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.
29. Most of the other subjects are taught through topics. There are strengths in the links made between subjects; this makes work meaningful to the pupils. However there are some shortcomings in the school's approach. The quality of the schemes of work and the guidance provided for teachers vary between subjects. Nationally recommended schemes of work for Key Stage 1 have recently been produced. The school is beginning to use some parts of these schemes of work alongside its own. However, at present the school's plans of work are not clear because parts of both systems are being used at the same time, but neither is being fully implemented. This leaves the potential for gaps in provision to pass unnoticed and for an imbalance in the work. Furthermore, in several subjects the school's schemes of work do not provide equally good plans and guidance for all aspects of the subject. This has a direct impact on the standards pupils achieve. For example, in geography, work about place and map work is planned well and pupils achieve above average standards in these aspects of the subject, showing the effectiveness of good curricular planning on their attainment. However, their achievement in other less well planned aspects such as human

geography and environmental change, is less good. The history scheme of work does not directly address all the key elements of the subject as identified in the National Curriculum.

30. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Children who make a slow start are identified in reception and their progress is watched closely. Good quality individual education plans are drawn up for those who continue to have difficulties. Targets for these children's learning are clear, and in lessons teachers adapt work for them to take account of where they are up to.
31. The curriculum is enriched by a very good range of well planned educational visits and visitors, contributing to the quality of provision in English, art, history, geography, science, music and physical education. For example, reception pupils produced some very good pictures when they visited Drumcroom Arts Centre. Year 2 pupils' understanding of the differences between places has been enhanced by a visit to Coniston. The physical education curriculum includes football coaching by a trainee professional coach.
32. The provision of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory for the age of the pupils. There are no out-of-school-hours clubs. Nevertheless, the school provides a very good range of educational visits, and judo and violin classes are run on the school premises. Parents are charged for these.
33. The school's provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. Up to date whole-school plans for progressively more demanding content have yet to be written for most parts of this aspect of the curriculum. However, effective promotion of pupils' personal and social development permeates all aspects of the school's work, through its very caring atmosphere and the values it upholds. Appropriate health education is provided in science and physical education.
34. Inclusion in the Educational Action Zone has been a major factor in producing very effective partnership. The school has sought to maximise the advantages which can be obtained. Other schools consult to do likewise. The 'Inspire' pre-school programme derives from this initiative and has been very successful with parents and children. Parents have appreciated the visits associated with the home-link worker. Leads provided by the Education Business Partnership have been exploited.
35. Links with the local education authority, for instance helping pupils with special educational needs, are effective and have provided good support. Good relations exist with the local junior school. The usual liaison prior to transfer takes place, and at other times the junior school makes available helpful resources, such as access to their artist in residence and to their information technology software library.

Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

36. The provision for this aspect of the curriculum, taken overall, is very good. This makes a strong positive contribution to pupils' very good attitudes to learning and personal development and their good behaviour, strengths that underpin their good learning. The provision for spiritual, moral and social development has improved since the last inspection.

37. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Religious education and collective worship (assemblies) were not inspected. They are subject to a separate Section 23 inspection. Nevertheless, inspectors were invited to assemblies in school and in church and were offered the school's plan of work for religious education. Both these elements of the school's provision make a strong positive contribution to pupils' spiritual development. They have good opportunities to reflect on how the themes of assemblies apply to their lives. Assemblies also provide opportunities for pupils to listen to music in an atmosphere of quiet contemplation. Assemblies in church give pupils a good experience of worship and an awareness of the significance of faith in believers' lives. In religious education, they learn to value others' beliefs. In other subjects pupils learn to appreciate the power of technology, and to respond sensitively to the beauty of the natural world and to works of art. However, the most significant element of the provision for this aspect of pupils' development is the school's ethos of care and concern for each individual that is rooted in its Christian character.
38. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The promotion of sound moral values permeates all aspects of the school. High standards are set for pupils' behaviour. All staff set a very good example for the pupils and they make the most of the incidental opportunities to reinforce moral teaching that arise in everyday school life. Assembly stories and themes are carefully chosen and the moral teaching behind them is clearly explained to pupils. Pupils are involved in drawing up 'rules' for behaviour in their classes. As a result of this high quality provision, pupils have a very good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. The only minor weakness in this provision is the absence of clear guidance for staff to ensure they all deal effectively and consistently with the small number of pupils who have behaviour difficulties.
39. Pupils' social development is very well provided for. Children's good progress in personal and social development, in their first year of school, is built on effectively in Key Stage 1. Teachers expect pupils to use their initiative and they provide good opportunities for them to grow in independence. For example, they are taught to put out the apparatus for physical education lessons. Classrooms are organised to promote independence. Year 2 pupils take a very good degree of responsibility. For instance, they answer the telephone at times and act as door monitors. They carry out these duties very responsibly. In lessons, all pupils have good opportunities for co-operative and collaborative work.
40. The school makes satisfactory overall provision for pupils' cultural development. Some aspects of this provision are good. However, the provision to educate pupils about cultural diversity and to prepare them for life in a multicultural society is barely satisfactory. This aspect of provision has not improved since the last inspection. Pupils learn about life in the local area through a very good range of educational visits. For example, they visit a local sports centre and the local football and rugby clubs, and they visit the town centre and a local supermarket. Their appreciation of Western European culture is enhanced by a rich variety of visits and visitors. Pupils visit two local arts centres and the Lowry Art Centre in Salford. They have worked with an artist in residence at a neighbouring school. Musical and puppet performances take place in school. Musical appreciation is promoted well by the playing of recorded music as pupils leave assembly. Their attention is drawn to it and, as a result, they learn to recognise some classical pieces.
41. The school makes good use of the community in furthering pupils' learning. Pupils are often reminded of the Christian basis of the school's attitudes and are closely linked

into the parish. All attend services in St John's church adjoining the school fortnightly, usually taken by the vicar. A range of visitors from the community enriches the curriculum. A former pupil, now a governor, speaks about the past. Theatre and dance groups give dramatic stagings. Pupils visit the two local rugby clubs, Leigh and Wigan, and use the experience for exercises in English and mathematics as well as for physical education and health matters. The local town centre is used particularly for history and geography learning. The community supports the school well in several different ways. The school also manages to use this to raise its profile, which has led importantly to increased demand for places. The school hopes to help promote an after-school club planned by a local nursery.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. Overall, the school's standard of care has improved since the previous inspection, and is now very good. Under the leadership of the headteacher the staff combines very well in supporting and nurturing pupils' development. Pupils are treated as individuals. Teachers promote good social and learning habits. The school possesses a warm sense of community.
43. As pupils enjoy their school life they are keen to attend. Parents are reminded frequently about the importance of consistent and prompt attendance. Teachers monitor attendance very carefully and speak to parents if necessary. Reasons for absence are meticulously obtained. Any cases of particular concern are discussed with the education welfare officer. Assisted by these very good procedures attendance is running at above the national average, although a few families take holidays during term time to the detriment of their children's learning.
44. The school has also very successfully established a climate in which high standards of good behaviour are natural. In the reception classes children aged under five are very pleasantly and carefully encouraged towards good social and learning attitudes. Early each year through the school pupils agree upon rules for good behaviour for their class. These are written and displayed as a reminder. Teachers are generally very alert in managing behaviour, and some have to work hard at this. The headteacher maintains a keen presence. She is often to be found encouraging and supporting individuals and groups. Relationships throughout are very warm. In this climate pupils are characteristically happy and positive, even though a small minority find it difficult to maintain attention and self-control for extended periods in lessons. No oppressive behaviour was observed during the inspection week, and reported instances of bullying do not extend beyond name-calling. The school has a firm anti-bullying policy should the need arise.
45. Overall arrangements for welfare are good. Procedures for child protection are well established, and arrangements for further training are in hand. Health and safety awareness among pupils is effectively promoted in lessons and by visiting specialists, such as the school nurse. First aid and other medical provision are in place. Fire drills are regularly held. The advice of the appropriate local education authority officer has several times been taken concerning risk assessments.
46. The school environment is thus very encouraging to pupils' well-being and confidence. The small size of the school enables staff to know all pupils well. Staff friendliness and team-work is infectious: it produces a strong community spirit, and within their individual classes, teachers are informally very effectively concerned in monitoring and supporting the personal development of each pupil.

47. The school's arrangements for assessing pupils' learning are good and teachers assess the standards of pupils' work accurately. Assessment has a positive effect on pupils' progress because it helps teachers to set work for pupils that takes proper account of what they have already learned.
48. For children in the reception year, assessment is very good. There are several effective systems operating to judge how well each child is getting on, and to decide how best to move them on in their learning. Staff undertake a thorough check of what the children know and what they can do when they start school. They use this baseline information well to plan the next steps in the children's learning. The same tests are used at the end of the year to find out how much progress children have made and to compare this with children across the country and in other Wigan schools. Staff take note of what children are learning on a day-to-day basis and keep very thorough records of each child's step-by-step progress towards the nationally accepted targets for the end of the reception year. They make very good use of these records when they plan each week's work. These strengths, combined with high expectations of what the children are capable of achieving, underpin the very good learning in reception. The results of the end of year re-testing show that the children make considerably better than average progress in their learning.
49. In Key Stage 1, there are very good procedures for keeping a check on the progress pupils are making in their learning in English and mathematics. Test results are used to determine targets for each pupil's achievement and to set targets for them. Pupils' progress is assessed systematically and regularly in all the other subjects but the quality and effectiveness of these assessments, though never less than satisfactory, varies between subjects. The use of information obtained from day-to-day assessments to decide what to teach next is less consistent in this key stage; it is better in Year 2 than Year 1. Some potentially very useful approaches are being introduced. For example, from time to time teachers focus on a group of pupils and record what they learned in a lesson, or a series of lessons on one topic. They note which children achieved more than expected, and which ones failed to grasp some of the work.
50. Pupils who have special educational needs are identified quickly. Their academic and personal progress is monitored and assessed well and good records are kept of pupils' progress. Day-to-day procedures are good and they are backed up by regular reviews of each pupil's progress. These review procedures exceed requirements.
51. Three factors stop assessment playing as full a part as it might in promoting the most effective teaching and learning. Firstly, some of the school's systems are cumbersome, making it harder than it needs to be for teachers to extract useful information. Secondly, the shortcomings in curricular planning mean that some assessments are not sufficiently closely linked to the plans of work. This is a weak link in an otherwise strong aspect of the school's work. Thirdly, the use of samples of pupils' work is not as effective as it could be. Teachers keep samples of each pupil's work in their individual record files and identify what level of the National Curriculum the work is at. However, they do not indicate why the samples are levelled as they are, or what the pupils need to do next to achieve a higher level. Furthermore, samples of work in each subject, from across the school, are not kept together so it is not easy for teachers to get a picture of how work becomes progressively more difficult or to refine their assessment in subjects which are not their specialisms.
52. At the last inspection, improving assessment procedures was a key issue for action. Satisfactory progress has been made on this in the intervening three and a half years.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. Parents are very pleased with the standards now being achieved by the school. They strongly consider it to be well led and managed. They much appreciate the strong feeling of partnership that the school has promoted. They can approach the school with confidence. They see themselves as making a valued contribution to it, and note that their concerns and suggestions are acted upon. Parents consider the teaching to be good. Their children are expected always to work hard and achieve well. Parents identify with the school's values and they support its positive relationships. They think it has altogether noticeably improved under the new headteacher. The inspection team shares all these positive opinions.
54. The response rate to the inspection questionnaire was high but very little dissatisfaction with what the school is doing emerges from parents. A significant minority however, expresses doubts about two matters. The first concerns the provision of homework. Most parents consider their children get an appropriate amount of reading and spelling, but some are worried that no writing or mathematics homework is set. The second area of uncertainty relates to extra-curricular activities, and whether more should be provided. The inspection team considers that the school's arrangements for both matters are not significantly different from those commonly found in similar infant schools.
55. The school has made it a high priority to encourage a warm partnership with parents in the education of their children. Parents are provided with a broad spread of very good information. The school seeks to understand the difficulties parents may be having, and is active in providing educational resources which may help them. It is responsive to parents' suggestions and wishes. Parents are very appreciative of these supportive attitudes. They are responding well to the opportunities offered.
56. Written information is comprehensive and inviting. Newsletters are frequent and lively. New parents receive a selection of guidance booklets to inform them about what is involved these days in subjects such as mathematics, reading and writing. Plans have been drawn up for all parents to receive half-termly an outline of what their children are to be taught. Pupils will also be issued with target books to indicate their individual objectives. Parents should, by these measures, be able to track their children's learning more closely. End-of-year academic reports are of a good standard. They address what each child knows, understands and can do, and often contain suggestions for improvement.
57. The school places at least as much importance on more informal, two-way, methods of communication. Taking advantage of inclusion in the Educational Action Zone, the school has received the benefit of an 'Inspire' programme. This encourages children and parents intending to join the school to get together and enjoy some pre-school learning. The results have been very successful. Teachers, children and parents have got to know each other well. A link worker has facilitated home visits. Parents have learnt about what goes on in reception classes, and many have been able to have 'hands on' experience. Teachers have been able to make surer and swifter progress from the start of term.
58. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are properly involved and consulted. They are informed how they can best contribute to their children's learning and are invited to annual reviews of their progress.

59. The school has provided many other opportunities for parents to understand what is being taught and how they might help. These have included a SHARE group, THRASS training, Better Reading Partnership, and courses run by a local college but within school, on mathematics and literacy. From day-to-day parents are able to keep an eye on their child's progress through the home-school reading diaries. There are two formal parents' meetings a year, but parents may raise any queries or concerns informally at any time. Through these measures parents consider they are enabled to make a positive effect on progress in the school.
60. Parents feel welcome. They are invited occasionally into school assemblies and may attend the fortnightly services in St John's. Coffee mornings are held. A few parents help with learning in school and more support visits. The school consults parents informally and also by questionnaire as part of its self-evaluation process. Parental suggestions are taken up. For instance, a 'Friends' organisation has recently been started, managing a variety of social activities. By accessing further funding, parents have organised a rota among themselves to provide toast at morning break. An after-school club is planned. The active support of fathers has been obtained. A keen parent governor has recently been elected.
61. The school has very effectively been developing its links with parents. In response, parents are already producing a good level of impact on the work and activities of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

The contribution of the headteacher, key staff and the governing body

62. The leadership and management of the school are very good overall. This is an improvement on the situation reported after the last inspection.
63. The headteacher has led the school very well through a period of considerable change. She has set the quality of teaching and learning as a top priority. She has been largely responsible for the improvements in many aspects of school life which have been seen since the last inspection. She has formed a strong partnership with the experienced deputy head and they have a shared commitment to achieve the highest standards. The headteacher takes every opportunity to use expertise from outside the school to improve standards and has taken advantage of additional funding for specific school projects. She has built a strong staff team with experienced and inexperienced staff working very well together for the good of their pupils.
64. All teachers carry responsibility for leading and co-ordinating work in at least one subject area. This is a small school with a small number of teachers. Most teachers have responsibility for a number of subjects. The recent changes in staff and the changes in the National Curriculum provision have meant that in some subjects subject leaders have not yet been able to affect standards. However, when staff have had the opportunity to monitor standards and teaching well they have helped to raise standards. This is seen most clearly in the very good lead given in the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.
65. The contribution of the governing body to the leadership and management of the school has improved considerably since the last inspection. Governors take their responsibilities seriously and are strongly supportive of the school. They monitor performance effectively and are clear about the areas for improvement. Key

governors, such as the chair and vice-chair, have a good understanding of their roles. They know the school well, and make a positive contribution to the very effective leadership. Governors monitor the school's budget efficiently and fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. They apply the principles of best value to spending decisions.

The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources

Staffing

66. There are sufficient, suitably trained and qualified teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum. Teachers have undertaken considerable extra training and the benefits can be seen, for example, in the good teaching of literacy and numeracy skills. The support staff work effectively with teachers.

Accommodation

67. The school's accommodation is currently broadly satisfactory. An increase in the numbers on roll has caused teaching to be conducted in every available room this term, including the hall, which would not be satisfactory for any extended period of time. However, the need for expansion was foreseen. A new classroom is currently being built for occupation after Christmas, which will solve the immediate problem. In ordinary circumstances classrooms and other facilities are of sufficient size to cope with numbers and the demands of the curriculum. The hall and library are of good size and attractive. Important alterations and refurbishments have been carried out since the previous inspection making the school, with its bright displays of pupils' work, a pleasant and effective learning environment.

Learning resources

68. There are good resources to teach the National Curriculum and implement the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Resources for information technology have been recently improved with the acquisition of new computers. There is a lack of suitable programs for the computers. The reception class is well equipped but lacks a suitable outdoor play area of access to large play equipment.

Strategic use of resources

69. The resources available to the school are well managed. There is good financial management. Funding targets appropriate educational priorities. This has been seen in the way management has used funds to maintain staffing levels during a time of increasing pupil numbers and building work. Governors plan ahead well to meet future requirements. They monitor spending effectively and, with the headteacher, are active in seeking additional funding for the school. Funds allocated for specific purposes, such as special educational needs, are used appropriately. The day-to-day financial management is very efficiently managed by the school administrator who uses information technology well for this. She also makes a good contribution to the wider life of the school. All the recommendations of the latest audit report have been followed. Resources for learning are used well and the use of time is almost always very effective. Lessons start on time and usually move along at a brisk pace. This is one factor in the good progress which pupils make.
70. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is soundly managed. Documentation is in good order and has recently been improved with effective support from local education authority staff. A proper register of all these pupils is now

maintained. Teachers know which of their pupils have special educational needs, what these needs are and what they should do to help the pupils achieve as well as they can.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to further raise standards of achievement and continue to improve the quality of education, the headteacher, staff and governors should build on the school's many strengths by:

- Improving provision and raising standards in information and communication technology by:
 - reviewing planning to take account of national requirements;
 - assessing pupils' standards of work against the expectations of the National Curriculum;
 - ensuring that all aspects of the subject are covered in appropriate depth and activities build on previous work;
 - improving the range of programs which pupils can use.
(paragraphs 133, 134)

- Strengthening curricular planning and leadership by:
 - reviewing subject policies to meet the requirements of Curriculum 2000;
 - giving subject leaders opportunities to monitor planning and standards.
(paragraphs 25, 26, 29)

- Improving the cultural development of pupils by providing them with more opportunities to learn about the multicultural nature of Britain.
(paragraph 40)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	29
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	31	41	22	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR–Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	105
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	26

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR–Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	25

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1999	16	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	13
	Girls	18	18	19
	Total	32	32	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (95)	91 (95)	91 (92)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	13	13
	Girls	19	19	17
	Total	33	32	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (95)	91 (92)	86 (84)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	104
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR–Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.3
Average class size	26.1

Education support staff: YR–Y2

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	45

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	189,465
Total expenditure	166,754
Expenditure per pupil	1,985
Balance brought forward from previous year	17,603
Balance carried forward to next year	40,314

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	104
Number of questionnaires returned	40

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	28	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	63	28	3	0	8
Behaviour in the school is good.	63	30	0	0	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	33	5	3	33
The teaching is good.	75	23	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	38	3	0	8
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	20	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	28	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	83	18	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	88	13	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	33	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	30	10	0	20

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

71. The Foundation Stage covers education from three years of age to the end of the reception year. At St John's, children start school in August, at the beginning of the school year in which they become five. At the time of the inspection there were 38 reception children. They were grouped in different ways for different work. At times, groups from the reception year work with Year 1 pupils. Children had some of their lessons in the hall. This is a temporary arrangement whilst a new classroom is being built. These arrangements work effectively. The children are happy with all the staff and they know where to go. The teachers have worked hard and successfully to ensure that all the children have equal access to a full range of learning opportunities, and an equal chance to progress in their learning during this time of upheaval.
72. When the children start school their level of attainment, taken overall, is below average. About two-thirds of the children have experience of some form of pre-school education. For several, speech development and understanding of language are delayed. Some have very limited personal and social skills. The children gain ground rapidly and make very good progress in their learning. They benefit from very good teaching. Their teachers have a very good knowledge of the needs of young children and how they learn. Consequently, by the end of the reception year the vast majority of children have at least achieved the national expectation for children their age in all areas of their learning. All are enabled to achieve as well as they can. They are ready to benefit from the next stage of their education in Key Stage 1. Standards at the end of reception are better than would be expected in view of the children's attainment when they start school.
73. The quality of education for reception children and their progress has improved significantly since the last inspection. Then it was a key issue for action to plan the curriculum for these young children to the nationally recommended programme for children their age. This has been done well and the reception curriculum is now very good and fully up-to-date. However, one shortcoming remains: there is still no suitable outdoor play area for reception children.

Personal, social and emotional development

74. The provision for this area of learning is very good. The children make very good progress and develop into confident, eager and independent learners. By the end of reception, they comfortably meet national expectations in this important area of learning. This is a very good achievement in view of the children's poor personal and social skills on entry.
75. Staff settle the children into school routines quickly and help them contribute to school life. For example, the children discussed with the teacher what would be needed in the imaginative play area to create the 'Three Bears' House'. After just half a term, the children know how to behave in the classroom, how many children can use different activity areas and where day-to-day equipment is kept.
76. The reception classroom is organised to promote children's independence and initiative and the staff expect them to do as much as possible for themselves. For example, children 'self-register' by sticking their name cards on a board to show they

are present. Resources for learning are easily accessible so children can get on with their activities as independently as possible.

77. Children develop a good awareness of others. They are helped to understand their own feelings and be sensitive to others. For example, in one lesson they considered how they could help baby bear who felt scared about starting school because he might not have a friend to play with. Children offered to show him where to put his lunch-box and to look after him at playtime. The children develop very good relationships with staff and each other. They share equipment and take turns, and they participate willingly in school activities. They are keen to answer questions in lessons and show their teachers how much they know. Staff are very encouraging and they take every opportunity to give earned praise and acknowledge the children's achievements. By the time they move to Year 1, children have good learning habits, and the confidence to tackle new learning with enthusiasm and belief in their own ability to achieve.
78. The children have very good concentration for their age. In the reception class, children persist at self-chosen activities very well. For instance, they co-operate in good quality sustained imaginative play in the 'Three Bears' House' and they work on 'writing' in the classroom office with quiet concentration.

Communication, language and literacy

79. Children make very good overall progress in speaking and listening and in acquiring early reading and writing skills. When they start school many have a limited vocabulary and they speak in brief phrases, or at best very simple sentences. By the end of reception, the children's listening skills are good. They listen very carefully to teachers and the other children, and they learn a lot this way. Their speaking skills are in line with expectations for their age. Their standard of reading is a bit better than average for their age. Writing standards fully meet expectations for the children's age.
80. Staff promote speaking and listening well. They take every opportunity to engage children in discussion and to extend their vocabulary. They pursue points with children in discussion, expecting them to explain their answers. They provide some very good carefully planned opportunities for the children to use spoken language purposefully. For instance, guided by the teacher's good questions, children describe items in a 'feely bag' for their classmates to identify. Very good provision for imaginative play makes a strong positive contribution to children's developing speaking and listening skills. Support staff are used effectively, often working with small groups of children. They are skilled at questioning children in ways that get them thinking and talking. However, at times groups for speaking and listening activities are too large, and not enough children get a chance to speak.
81. The children make very good progress in learning early reading skills. The reception classroom encourages reading. There is a very attractive reading area, and plenty of easily accessible appropriate books. The staff are good at interesting children in books. For instance, the children helped to choose books for display. Staff use questions well to get children to look closely at books, and to fully appreciate stories. The direct class teaching of reading is very good overall. The teachers have a very good understanding of how to set young children off reading, and they have high expectations of what the children can achieve. In every lesson they know exactly what they want the children to learn. At this early stage of the school year, staff are using parts of the National Literacy Strategy programme appropriately to meet the children's

needs. As a result of this very good provision, reception children already take a good interest in books. They enjoy story sessions. They choose to 'read' in the book area, often concentrating on a book for quite a long time. They know to start at the beginning and turn pages in order. They know that readers read the print not the pictures. Letters and key words are taught well. For example, in one lesson the teacher reinforced the name and sound of 'f' and 'F' and taught the children how to write the letters. The lesson was organised to give children lots of practice. They even wrote the letters in shaving foam! All the children, including those with special needs, learned to form and name the letters correctly. By the end of reception, almost all the children have at least achieved most of what is expected for their age in reading. The majority have confident knowledge of, and skills in, everything that is expected at their age. They know the sound made by each letter and use this knowledge to read simple unfamiliar words. They read simple books without help. Parental support is used well. The good home-school reading partnership is established in reception and parents make a good contribution to their children's reading progress.

82. The reception classroom provision for children to develop early writing skills is very good and they progress well. The 'office' is well organised and offers a very wide range of writing materials and teachers create believable reasons for children to write, such as making a birthday card for baby bear. Children enjoy writing and make good attempts to produce letter shapes in separate words. They make letter-like shapes and the higher attainers form recognisable letters which they 'read'. By the end of reception, they know about sentences and how to punctuate them but most do not yet apply this knowledge reliably in their independent writing. The higher attainers know when to use question marks and exclamation marks. All the children write in sentences. They form most letters and spell simple words correctly.

Mathematical development

83. Children make good progress in learning about mathematics. The classroom provision for this area of learning is good. Mathematical learning is built into many of the activities provided for children to choose from, and numbers are incorporated into displays. For instance, laminated number cards are provided for children to practice writing numbers and there are good opportunities for children to match sets of objects to numerals. The very well planned 'Three Bears' House' provides very good opportunities for children to learn about size and numbers while they think they are merely 'playing'. The direct teaching of mathematics seen during the inspection was very good. Teachers use a good variety of methods effectively to give the children experience of working with numbers and other mathematical ideas. For instance, one lesson was conducted in the hall. Children played simple games using small games apparatus, worked out their scores and got the equivalent number of counters. Some children's comments, for instance 'I scored two more', showed a good understanding for their age. Teachers make effective use of appropriate parts of the National Numeracy Strategy. Children make very good progress in this area of learning during the reception year. The higher attainers already have good knowledge of shapes and their properties. They have learned, through guided practical work, that only shapes with flat faces can be stacked and that not all three-dimensional shapes roll. By the end of the year, their overall standard in mathematics meets the expectations for children their age. In the number aspect of mathematics the majority exceed expectations. They order numbers to 20. They understand addition and subtraction and are beginning to do 'sums'. They use the mathematical symbols for these processes and calculate accurately with the aid of pictures.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

84. This area of learning helps children to make sense of the world around them and lays the foundations for later study of science, design and technology, geography, history and information and communication technology. The children make good progress, and by the end of the reception year they achieve the standards expected for their age. Teachers capitalise on opportunities that arise incidentally to promote children's awareness and understanding of the world around them, as well as planning a good range of activities in this area of learning. The children are learning about building and materials as they observe the progress of the new classroom. They learn about geographical features in the immediate environment. They are taught about the needs of living things when they feed the class goldfish. They have good opportunities to use computers in their day-to-day work and they have good control of the mouse and familiarity with the keyboard. By the end of the reception year, they have an appropriate understanding of what makes a healthy diet. They have learned about the weather and can correctly select pictures of clothes suitable for hot and cold weather. They learn about the properties of materials. They correctly sort materials according to whether or not they are waterproof, or whether they sink or float. They succeed in these tasks because teachers provide them with lots of good opportunities to explore and investigate various materials, including sand and water. Design skills are good for their age. Children draw simple labelled designs for models before they make them. Early geographical and historical skills are good. Children produce plans of their routes from home to school. They have a good sense of the passing of time and how things change from one historical period to another. Consequently, early in Year 1 they order pictures of dwellings from caves to modern houses in correct chronological order.

Physical development

85. By the end of the reception year, children's physical development is in line with what is expected for their age. They make sound progress in this area of learning. The provision for children to develop manual dexterity is good. They learn to control pencils and crayons, and to use small tools such as scissors and glue spreaders. The provision for children to develop skills at larger movements and early gymnastic and games activities is less than recommended. Children do not have free access to a suitably equipped outdoor play area and there is little equipment appropriate to the age group, such as wheeled toys and play tunnels. The children have daily opportunities to play with small apparatus like bean bags and small balls, but teachers do little in these sessions to extend the children's skills. Nevertheless, they achieve what is expected by the end of the reception year.

Creative development

86. Children achieve above average overall standards in this area of learning. By the end of the reception year they achieve higher than expected standards in their artwork and in imaginative play. Achievement in music is broadly in line with expectations. When they start school, many of the children produce immature drawings. In reception they have good opportunities to develop imaginative and observational skills. As a result, they produce some high quality work. They have good observational skills and make good efforts to reproduce what they see accurately. Their self-portraits, drawn with the aid of a mirror, are of a good standard. Many of the children produced very good pictures with pastels in the style of Susan Wilson after studying one of her pictures with an artist at Drumcroon Arts Centre. The children join in singing familiar songs. They match actions to words reasonably accurately. They recognise and name some untuned percussion instruments, such as tambourines and drums. Children respond

very well to the high quality provision for imaginative play. They sustain good quality play in role. For instance, when they put on headbands with furry ears, they act out parts of the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears.

ENGLISH

87. Pupils achieve high standards by the time they leave the school. Reading is given high priority and the seven-year-olds achieve well above average standards in this aspect of the subject. Standards of speaking are average, and listening and writing are above average. Standards have risen since the last inspection, despite the decline in children's levels of attainment when they start the school. Improved standards are the result of better quality teaching and the effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy.
88. There has been a dramatic improvement in standards over the last four years. In 1996, pupils' test results were slightly above average in reading, and a little below average in writing. Since then standards have risen much more rapidly at St John's than nationally. Pupils' test results are very high compared with those achieved in similar schools. In the year 2000 tests, writing standards were very similar to 1999 but in reading there was a further improvement. The standards seen on inspection broadly reflect the test results.
89. When pupils enter Key Stage 1 after completing the reception year, their levels of attainment are average for their age in speaking and writing, above average in listening and a little above average in reading. They make good overall progress in learning English in Key Stage 1, and in reading their rate of progress is very good. Their overall achievement in English is very good. They progress from average to above average attainment. They gain more ground in Year 2 than Year 1 because, in Year 2 there is a high proportion of very good teaching of literacy skills. The good home-school reading partnership makes a good contribution to pupils' reading progress as the vast majority of parents read with their children several times each week.
90. Year 2 pupils listen well with good understanding to their teachers and to each other. This contributes to their learning in several subjects. Speaking skills are satisfactory. The vast majority of pupils talk with a fair degree of confidence and speak clearly. They usually keep to the point but their vocabulary remains limited for their age, in spite of teachers' efforts to widen it by drawing their attention to interesting words as they arise. Only the higher attainers are articulate and confident speakers who adapt their style according to who they are talking to. Speaking skills are improving as pupils get a good range of planned opportunities for purposeful talk. For example, in a drama lesson Year 1 pupils achieved very good standards for their age. They spoke in the roles of different pigs in the 'Three Little Pigs' and varied their volume and intonation appropriately. They were able to hold an imaginary telephone conversation with the teacher who took the role of the pigs' mother.
91. Year 2 pupils' reading is well above average for their age. The majority of pupils are already reading confidently at the level expected by the end of the year. They have a good understanding of what they read, and a good range of ways of tackling unfamiliar words. However, there is a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this year group. Some of these pupils are unlikely to achieve the standard expected for their age. Their knowledge about sounds and their comprehension is less good than for the majority. For instance, they do not realise they have made mistakes, and have a second try when what they read does not

make sense. Nevertheless, these pupils and others with special educational needs throughout the school, make good progress in relation to what they have already learned. Their individual education plans are clear about what they need to learn in English, and are generally followed in class lessons and group sessions to give these pupils extra help.

92. By seven years of age, most pupils' writing is at least at the level expected in a range of tasks, such as writing stories and letters and making cards for special occasions, like a retirement. They have a good grasp of punctuation and spelling for their age and they use dictionaries effectively. The present Year 2 pupils are already just at the expected level by the end of the year. They are making good progress in all aspects of writing. Most are beginning to choose words thoughtfully. The higher attainers do this well, a typical example being 'the gushing of the river'. These pupils also consistently use appropriate punctuation correctly. The lower attainers have weaker spelling and, although they grasp the idea of a sentence, they do not yet use capital letters and full stops reliably.
93. Pupils gain confidence in their ability to read and spell. This is largely due to the school's systematic teaching both in literacy hours and in the use of a commercially produced programme for teaching handwriting, reading and spelling strategies (THRASS). For example, around half the Year 2 pupils know four different ways of spelling the sound 'o'.
94. The teaching of English is good. In the most effective lessons, teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and inspire them to want to do well. They combine this with high expectations for all pupils' achievements and interesting, varied lesson content that is matched well to the pupils' levels of achievement. Lessons move along at a good pace so that no time is wasted, and pupils' attention is held through all the different parts of literacy hours by effective use of appealing resources, such as puppets. Throughout Key Stage 1, teachers use good quality children's literature in the class reading part of literacy hours. In the best teaching these 'texts' are used very effectively to teach pupils different ways of tackling unfamiliar words. They apply this learning well when they read independently. The effectiveness of the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy varies but is good overall. There are common features to the small amount of less effective teaching. Firstly, teachers setting work that is too hard or too complex for the pupils. This sometimes leads to too much time being given to explaining how to do complicated tasks rather than getting pupils down to productive tasks quickly. The teacher concentrates on what the pupils will do rather than what they are to learn from their work. Secondly, teachers not keeping the majority of pupils fully involved in the whole-class teaching part of literacy hours, and not doing enough direct teaching of reading skills in this part of the lessons. Furthermore, teachers occasionally do not use effective strategies to deal with pupils' behaviour. This slows lessons down, and means that on these occasions pupils do not learn as well as they could. The school has not yet arranged for all teachers to benefit from the expertise of the most effective ones.
95. The school's implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has had a positive effect on standards. However, the planning of other aspects of English has yet to be reviewed in the light of recent changes. For instance, pupils use their literacy skills well in several subjects but opportunities for the development of these skills across the curriculum have not been identified and planned systematically. Information and communication and technology (ICT) skills are used in English but as yet there is no whole-school planning for this so progression in the tasks pupils undertake, and the range of ICT skills they use, are not assured.

96. The school has a very well-stocked library. This helps pupils to learn about using non-fiction books for reference.

MATHEMATICS

97. In 1999, the seven-year-olds at the end of the key stage, had standards well above the national average in the national tests (SATs). Results were very high, in the top five per cent in the country, when compared with similar schools. Pupils' skills in number when they start school are generally below average. Therefore the school enables pupils to make very good progress in mathematics from entering to leaving school. The test results for the year 2000 confirm that the school is maintaining these high standards. Test results have not only been well above the national average for the last four years but have matched the improvement seen nationally. The judgements made during the inspection confirm these high standards.
98. When pupils move to Key Stage 1 from the reception class, their attainment in mathematics is generally in line with that seen in most pupils of their age. The very good progress they make in the key stage is largely because of the effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, and the high proportion of good and very good teaching they receive, particularly in the Year 2 class.
99. Year 2 pupils have a good understanding of number. They can add, subtract, multiply and divide numbers well. They apply this knowledge effectively when solving number problems. They have a good understanding of the vocabulary used, such as 'share between' and 'how many less than'. They explain clearly how they have tackled problems, and have good mental mathematics skills and know their tables very well. They have a good understanding of two- and three-dimensional shapes. At the beginning of this school year pupils accurately name shapes such squares, circles and semi-circles, and solid shapes such as cubes, spheres and cuboids. They recognise the number of faces, edges and vertices of the solid shapes. They order data accurately to produce graphs on information, such as the months when members of their class have been born.
100. Year 1 pupils are developing their skills well. They count accurately on and back in tens, and add or take pence from items on a shopping list. They are beginning to write 'number sentences' after hearing a story: 'Mary has three books, and on her birthday gets one from mum and one from aunty'. They write: $3+1+1=5$.
101. The quality of teaching is good overall in all the lessons seen. Some very good teaching was observed in the Year 2 class. Teachers have worked hard to implement the National Numeracy Strategy and use it effectively. Basic skills are taught well and teachers have high expectations of the standards their pupils should achieve. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils help when demanding targets are set, pupils are confident their answers will be valued. Praise is used well when appropriate: 'You've remembered that, I'm impressed.' Clear objectives are set at the beginning of each lesson which help pupils to understand what they are to learn. Teachers assess the work pupils have done well and use this information when planning future lessons. Pupils enjoy mathematics because of the way it is presented to them. Learning is a challenge but fun! They co-operate well, sharing ideas as well as resources. They try hard in lessons and record their work neatly and accurately. They know they are doing well and grow in confidence as they move up the school.

102. The subject leader has ensured that the documentation of the National Numeracy Strategy has been fully implemented. She monitors planning and teaching well. Resources are good, partly because of the recent funding to support the National Numeracy Initiative. These resources are used well and this makes a good contribution to the progress pupils make.

SCIENCE

103. The seven-year-olds' standards were assessed by their teachers at the end of Key Stage 1, and found to be in line with the national average by the age of seven. Inspection evidence, scrutiny of pupils' work and observation of lessons agree with this judgement, pupils are meeting the expectations of the National Curriculum.
104. Year 2 pupils have studied living creatures and looked at their differences and similarities. For example, 'A slug and a snail both live under stones but only a snail has a shell'. They have classified materials and grouped them appropriately into hard or soft, dull or shiny, will it bend? They have investigated well the suitability of materials to do different jobs. For example, decide which will be most effective as a damp course. They make predictions and then carefully experiment to find which will stop water best. In one lesson in Year 2 pupils look at various fruits, estimate where the seeds might be and then how many seeds there might be. They then check their estimations by carefully cutting open the plants and counting the seeds and record the results accurately.
105. Year 1 pupils are studying living creatures. They know that turtles live in water and tortoises on land. They suggest which children might, for example, be able to jump furthest. Would it be the biggest or the oldest? They work in groups to see if they can design a fair test to check their ideas. 'We will all have to jump from the same place!' They are developing their skills in investigation well. Pupils are making good progress throughout, from below average attainment on entry to meeting national averages.
106. Pupils enjoy science lessons. They are interested in the activities and share resources and ideas well. They behave well, even when working independently in small groups. Good teaching was seen in the lessons observed. Teachers presented suitably challenging tasks, asked good questions to help pupils develop their ideas and planned the work so that the tasks matched the different levels of attainment.
107. The curricular plans are in the process of being reviewed. The recently appointed subject leader is aware of overall standards, and those which match those seen nationally. She recognises they are not as high as standards in English and mathematics. She is looking to link assessment more closely to future planning. She has not yet been able to monitor science in any class other than her own. Future training has already been planned for her. There is a satisfactory range of resources available and teachers often produce their own resources for particular topics. Visits to the nearby woodland are used well when pupils are studying plants or animals.

ART AND DESIGN

108. The standards of work seen were in line with that usually seen for the pupils' ages by the end of Key Stage 1. This is an improvement on the standards reported in the last inspection. This judgement is based on the observation of art activities in a small number of lessons, pupils' work and the art displays around school.

109. By the end of the key stage pupils use a good range of media, including pencil, pastels and paint, with appropriate skill. This was seen clearly in the work the Year 2 pupils had done after looking carefully at plants and flowers from the school grounds. They painted them well using water colours and colour mixes well. They use pastels well to illustrate plants in different ways. They blend pastel colours well using their fingers to produce interesting shades. In the final session portraying plants, pupils use pencils well to show the details of leaves and flowers. Some of this work is of a standard above that seen in most schools.
110. Pupils enjoy art activities. Children in the reception year use paint confidently and produce work with good pattern and colour. Pupils in the Year 2 class persevere well as they carefully look at the plants they are drawing. They sustain concentration well, producing good quality drawings.
111. Art makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. Reception pupils have worked with artists studying, and then producing, portraits at a local art centre. Other pupils have visited the Lowry Centre to extend their knowledge of their local culture.
112. Little direct teaching was observed during the inspection so no overall judgement is made. However very good teaching was seen in one lesson for the oldest pupils. The teacher encouraged pupils to develop and refine the work they were doing. Pupils were shown examples of good quality work their friends had produced at the end of the lesson. Pupils' work is displayed effectively throughout the school.
113. The curricular plans for art are currently being reviewed to link more closely with the targets of the new National Curriculum. However there are suggested activities identified for each year group which give teachers satisfactory guidance. Assessment of pupils' work has recently been introduced. The subject is soundly led and the areas for development, such as three-dimensional work, have been identified.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

114. Only one lesson was seen. Judgements are based on an examination of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with pupils and staff. Inspection at the beginning of the school year meant that a limited range of work was available. However, the standard of pupils' work seen was in line with that usually seen in pupils of this age.
115. The Year 2 pupils do not begin their design work until the second part of the term so no work was available. Planning shows that during the year pupils cover work on textiles, structures and mechanisms making models such as mini-beast puppets. Pupils in Year 1 are making pigs with moving limbs. They have produced good plans, drawings with labelled parts and simple lists of resources. They have thought how they will decorate the finished product. They transfer their plans to sheets of card and cut out the six parts accurately. They identify where holes should be punched to join head and limbs to the body. Children in the reception class have started to use material to make models, some have used paper plates, wool and fabric to make faces.
116. When pupils were seen making models or asked about the models they have made in the past they show interest and enthusiasm for the subject.
117. The last report identified lack of teachers' subject knowledge as a problem. Staff training has addressed this issue, and staff are now more confident in teaching the design topics. Teaching seen in the one lesson and of groups in other lessons, was

always satisfactory. The subject leader has a clear view of how the subject should develop, for example forming closer links with art. She recognises that the detailed plans to help teachers need revising to meet the new curriculum.

118. An assessment procedure is now in place and will be used this school year. There are sufficient materials available for work in the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

119. Few lessons were seen. Judgements are also based on an examination of pupils' work, including some from last year's leavers, work displayed around the school, discussions with staff and pupils and scrutiny of teachers' planning.
120. The work seen was mainly on mapping skills. By the time they are seven years of age, the standard of pupils' work in these aspects of the subject is above average. They achieve well in their knowledge about places, and in their mapping skills. These aspects of the subject receive most attention. The coverage of human geography and environmental change is less thorough. Pupils have above average mapping skills. By age seven, they are confident using plans at different scales. They use two-figure co-ordinates to locate features on plans, and they are beginning to use symbols on the plans they draw, for example, of their routes to school. They use geographical vocabulary correctly and they know about features of particular places. For example, they talk about the lake at Coniston and the motorways they travelled on to get there. They know and use the four main compass points, and they name and correctly locate the countries of the United Kingdom.
121. Too few lessons were seen to make a valid judgement on the overall quality of teaching. The teaching seen was satisfactory. However, examination of pupils' work suggests that there is a significant amount of good teaching. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' mapping skills. The educational visit to Coniston was planned very well. Pupils were well prepared to gain maximum benefit from the visit and their learning was consolidated well afterwards.
122. Pupils make effective use of their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in geography. For instance, Year 2 pupils use a graphics computer program to produce pictures of a landscape similar to the Lake District.
123. Pupils undertake a sufficient range of worthwhile geographical study. Subject leadership is satisfactory because the responsible teacher knows what needs to be done to meet new national requirements for the curriculum. However, the school has, in recent years, put its efforts into implementing the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Little attention has been given to geography. At present the checking of work in this subject is unsatisfactory because the subject leader has few ways of knowing about standards and the quality of teaching throughout the school.

HISTORY

124. Only one lesson was seen. Judgements are based on this lesson, an examination of pupils' work and teachers' planning and discussions with pupils and staff.
125. Pupils achieve the standards normally seen in children of their age. They make satisfactory progress in their learning and, by the time they leave the school, their attainment meets the national expectation for pupils their age.

126. Pupils develop a sound sense of how people's lives change with the passing of time. For instance, last year's leavers had a good knowledge of what schools were like in Victorian times and gave sensible reasons why they would not like to attend a Victorian school. This study is related effectively to the pupils' own school and is brought to life for them by very good use of visiting experts who give pupils the opportunity to see and touch a wide range of Victorian artefacts. These pupils were beginning to use dates to identify historical periods. The present Year 2 pupils know that life was different in the 'olden days' than it is today. They talk about how food used to be cooked on open fires, but that gas or electric cookers are used today. They know that computers are a relatively recent invention. Year 1 pupils learn about differences in people's homes from cavemen to the present day, and they recognise that building materials have changed.
127. Pupils learn about famous people from the past. For example, last year's leavers knew about the lives of Florence Nightingale and Guy Fawkes. They put pictures of six important events in Guy Fawkes' life in the correct order. The present Year 2 pupils have a good knowledge of the life of John Ruskin. They have learned about him as part of their study of Coniston in geography.
128. Not enough teaching was seen to form a valid overall judgement on the quality of teaching. However, the lesson observed was taught well and pupils' sound knowledge and understanding of the past suggest that teaching is at least satisfactory. Teachers' work is guided by a satisfactory whole-school plan of work that indicates what should be taught in each school term. However, two shortcomings diminish the effectiveness of this plan in promoting high standards. Firstly, work in all aspects of the subject is not equally thoroughly planned. Secondly, the plan of work has not yet been adapted to take account of very recent changes in the National Curriculum. There is no system in place to enable the subject leader to judge the standards and quality of work in history. This is not having any detrimental effect, but means there is potential for weaknesses to pass unnoticed so the maintenance of present standards is not assured.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

129. Little direct teaching was seen. Judgements are based on this teaching, discussions with pupils and staff and examination of pupils' work and teachers' planning.
130. Standards broadly meet national expectations for the pupils' age by the time they leave the school, and they make sufficient overall progress as at the last inspection. The school has obtained funds to purchase several up-to-date computers. These were installed in February. There are now a good number of computers and pupils are rapidly gaining confidence in basic computing skills. Pupils are aware that they now do more work on computers. However the planning of work does not take account of the changed situation, and consequently pupils' progress in some aspects of the work is not as good as it should be.
131. Year 2 pupils recognise the power of ICT and know it is used in everyday items such as electronic toys and televisions. They have a positive attitude to the subject. This is helping them master new skills quickly. They are confident users of ICT and have sound skills with the mouse and computer keyboard. They appreciate the importance of developing independent computing skills. They know how to use Windows. For example, they know to click on different icons to move through programs, and they close programs and shut down computers independently. They save their work but

some need a little help to do this. Pupils have satisfactory word processing skills. This aspect of ICT presently receives the most attention. Pupils understand the functions of the enter, delete, backspace and shift keys, and use these to change what they have written on screen. However, most are not sure how to move a full line of text. Pupils develop ideas using suitable graphics programs. For instance, after visiting Coniston they produced pictures of landscapes featuring mountains and lakes.

132. Pupils learn to use ICT technology to handle data. For example, Year 1 pupils interrogated the database the class has built up about themselves. They worked determinedly in pairs to find the answers to complex questions such as, 'How many girls with blonde hair like pizza?'
133. Pupils have less experience of other aspects of ICT. They undertake work in all the required aspects of the subject. However, they do not undertake enough work to build up their knowledge and skills progressively in some aspects. For instance, they have infrequent opportunities to use ICT to control objects, such as remote-controlled toys. Also, pupils have few opportunities to use adventure games or simulations in which they can see how changing one or more elements affects the outcome.
134. These shortcomings mean that the subject curriculum, though adequate, is unbalanced. This situation is largely the result of unsatisfactory leadership and management of the subject. The new computers have been installed for eight months but there is no whole-school plan of work in place to guide teachers. This is needed to ensure proper, balanced coverage of the curriculum with pupils undertaking progressively more difficult work as they get older, and effective use of ICT in lessons in other subjects. Plans are in hand to develop suitable plans with support from specialist staff attached to the Education Action Zone. The school has not improved the range and number of computer programs to match the new computers. The combined weight of these factors means that the school is not making the use it could of its ICT resources, in spite of substantial investment.
135. The teaching seen indicates that, taken overall, the teaching of ICT is satisfactory. Teachers make good use of support staff to work with small groups of pupils in the shared computer area. This intensive support makes a positive contribution to pupils' mastery of basic computing skills. Teachers' knowledge of the subject varies but all are competent at teaching the programs they use at present. Staff succeed in enthusing pupils about ICT, and as a result, pupils work hard; concentrate well and persevere at tasks.
136. Pupils use ICT in some other subjects. For example, in geography they use computer-generated maps and undertake some word processing. However, such work is not planned systematically, and in some subjects, such as mathematics, there is insufficient use of ICT. Pupils with special educational needs consolidate basic skills such as spelling effectively using computer programs.

MUSIC

137. Only one music lesson was observed during the inspection, in the reception year. However, pupils were heard singing in a number of assemblies and teachers' planning identified other areas of the curriculum which are taught. Standards by the end of Key Stage 1 are therefore judged to meet those required for pupils of this age.
138. The quality of pupils' singing is good. They sing well in assemblies with enthusiasm and in tune. They vary the way they sing according to the songs they are asked to

tackle. This was seen to good effect in the assembly held in church on the last morning of inspection. Pupils sang in unison and in tune to taped music. They enjoyed the lively song which, in many ways, gives an insight into the school: 'Happy, happy, how we want our school to be; one big family'.

139. The lesson seen showed that musical skills are given a sound start in school. Children are able to alter the pitch and volume of their voices to speak like 'The Three Bears'. They also respond well to the baton their teacher uses to direct their playing of percussion instruments. They start and stop in time, and are beginning to play loudly or softly when asked.
140. Planning of lessons from the Year 2 class shows that pupils are beginning to compose simple tunes and make a record of these using pictures and symbols.
141. The quality of teaching seen in one lesson, and in directing the singing in assemblies was satisfactory overall and good in reception. The school uses plans from the education authority to give satisfactory guidance to teachers about what they teach. The recently appointed co-ordinator has not, as yet, been able to monitor the standards pupils' achieve. Resources for the subject are satisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

142. Lessons were seen in gymnastics and dance, but not in games. Pupils make good progress in physical education. They are taught well, and by the age of seven they achieve above average standards.
143. Year 2 pupils achieve very high standards in dance. They respond very sensitively and appropriately to contrasting music. They move strongly and boldly in time with their teacher playing a tambour, and match their facial expressions very well to their body movements. They create simple dance sequences in pairs, showing good body control and very good co-operation. In gymnastics, pupils achieve above average standards. They have good body control for their age. They make contrasting curled and stretched shapes in floor work and on the apparatus. They have a good awareness of space. They move without getting in each other's way and perform movements at different levels of space. They are confident on the apparatus, climbing high and jumping with good control. They understand the importance of warming up before exercise to avoid injuries.
144. Only a small number of lessons were observed. The quality of teaching varied from satisfactory to excellent and, taken overall, was good. The teaching of dance, seen in Year 2, was excellent. The teacher has very good knowledge of the subject and selected suitable music carefully to promote a thoughtful response from the pupils. She captivated her pupils, and engaged them all fully in the lesson. She communicated her very high expectations for their approach to work and the standards she was aiming for in a sensitive manner. She set a very good example by her own expressive movement and demeanour, and by her obvious enthusiasm for the work. The pupils made very good progress, while delighting in their learning in an enjoyable and productive session with a very positive atmosphere. When teaching, though satisfactory, is less successful than this, it is for two main reasons. Firstly, teachers do not do enough to help pupils improve on their first efforts. Secondly, the tasks set are sometimes not specific enough for pupils to know what to work on. This means their rate of progress is slower than it might be and their concentration on the work slips.

145. The physical education curriculum is enriched by good community links. Pupils visit local football and rugby clubs and have professional coaching in football skills.
146. Responsibility for leading and managing the subject changed in August 2000. The new subject leader has yet to get to grips with how best to develop the subject and ensure that the present good standards are maintained. However, she has sound plans to obtain support from local education authority staff, and to attend appropriate in-service training to equip her to fulfil her new responsibilities properly and produce a suitable whole-school plan of work. The present plan is barely satisfactory. It contributes little to securing pupils' progress in all aspects of the subject. Progress in pupils' learning is currently dependent on very good teaching in some lessons for Year 2, much informal liaison between staff, and by the subject leader taking some other teachers' classes for physical education lessons.